Promoting health literacy is gaining momentum but very little attention is given to health literacy of children. Early nutrition has long-term effects on health later in life. Thus, poor nutrition during early stages of life can increase the risk of developing obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Many recipes found in children’s cookbooks are also high in calories and they often omit vegetables.

1. Children’s health literacy:
- Children are able to absorb information fast, they learn quickly and hence childhood may likely be the period when health information is being transformed into action and the other way around.
- Acquiring health literacy is a life-long process that has to be started in early childhood.

2. Children’s nutritional needs:
- Based on gender and activity level.
- Children need additional energy and substrate for body growth.
- Children in the U.S. do not consume sufficient nutrients in their diet. They consume excess amount of added sugars, refined carbohydrates, and total calories.

3. Children’s health status:
- Obesity among children remains too high (1 in 6 children & adolescents is obese). This elevates the risk for type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease –> but fruits & vegetables consumption can lower this risk.

4. Eating habits and preferences:
- People in the U.S. cook less, even though preparing food at home has been linked to healthier dietary patterns.
- Children resonate better with information conveyed to them orally or visually rather than in a written form.
- They filter information using their own personal experience.
- Children’s food preferences can be manipulated.
- Neophobia is common (=fear of consuming new, unknown foods)

5. Nutrition education & existing books:
- Interventions involving home food preparation and cooking may result in favorable dietary outcomes.
- Children cookbooks are a worldwide trend in sales.
- Children’s attitudes and food preferences may be altered.
- Limited research on children.

6. Sports nutrition:
- Limited research on children.
- Children involved in sports consume more fruits and vegetables. Exercise helps prepare as an after school snack or light meal.

The purpose of this directed project was to create a children’s book that includes nutrition education information along with healthy recipes that children can help prepare as an after-school snack or light meal. This book teaches children about the importance of balance and healthier eating, especially when being involved in sports, as well as it improves health literacy in children. In addition, this book serves as a nutrition resource for parents. The intended audience for this project are healthy children of age five to 11, both boys and girls.

In conclusion, this book will help increase health literacy and nutrition knowledge among children. It will motivate parents to prepare their food at home more often. Starting nutrition education early » better health literacy » improved neophobia, ↑ consumption of fruits and vegetables, lower risk for disease.