



RESOURCE

For everyone at Wageningen University & Research

SCIENCE - JUNE 21, 2016

'Children need to relate to their food'

Text: **Albert Sikkema**

Vision

Health

Youth Food Movement is campaigning this month for compulsory nutritional education in the Netherlands. Children need to learn where food comes from, what a healthy diet is, and how to cook, says the campaigning group. Good idea, says Laura Bouwman, a researcher at the Health and Society chair group.



Tweet



Share



<photo: Laura Bouwman>

Why is it a good idea?

'It is important to give children the chance to relate to their food – at home and at school. Seeing, feeling, smelling and tasting food is crucial to them. You could get schoolchildren to grow some food,

for instance. If you see how a carrot grows, you'll be more inclined to eat it. You can get them experimenting with cooking, which makes them start tasting fruit and vegetables. And you can teach them about food in a playful way through puzzles and quizzes. That makes children more willing to try new foods too. They need to be actively involved with it.'

So no lessons about health and overweight?

'No. At the moment there is too much focus on overeating and wrong dietary choices – in other words, on what is not good. That standard education - scaring children off things - doesn't work very well because children and adolescents are not very receptive to risk communication. It would be better to tell them what *is* good, but only once they have



[READ THE MAGAZINE IN PDF](#)

Related news

POLL: MOST BEAUTIFUL PHD THESIS OF 2017



Science - 14 December 2017 - The last PhD theses of the year have yet to be defended, but the annual...

CREATIVE WITH DATA: WHAT DO YOU DO IF OTHER PEOPLE DISTORT YOUR RESULTS?



Science - 14 December 2017 - Lobbying organizations, institutes, government bodies and companies have...

'I WAS THE SCIENTIST BUT I COULD NOT HELP'



Science - 14 December 2017 - No, he did not do a farm internship himself. But he would have liked to...

[> More Science news](#)

experienced it for themselves. You have to challenge children, get them questioning things. That is really necessary because you hear more and more children saying 'I don't like vegetables.' Vegetables haven't changed but parents and the parties providing them have.

Should schools have a food policy?

'Schools do have a very clear policy against smoking and alcohol but they don't usually have a position on healthy food. That kind of policy could help, making a healthy food choice the easiest choice. But even then pupils will go off to the snack bar in the lunch hour and get a hamburger. So you need to challenge your pupils to develop their own point of view on food.'

Re:act

Reaction

Name*

Please insert the sum of these numbers (use numbers): seven + eight
= *

The official Wageningen Campus app

Find your way around campus and keep yourself up to date on news and activities.



Vision

UNIVERSITY PONDERES ITS FUTURE



Organisation - 30 November 2017 - Is Wageningen University going to prioritize social impact or academic...

> More Vision

Science column

COLUMN: WHAT ARE YOU WURTH?



Organisation - 21 June 2016 - The management has explained the finer details of the WUR system to us. If,...

> More Science columns