



Books and Games Building Healthy Beginnings
www.brainchildpress.com



Date: August 27, 2010
Contact: Dr. Peggy Sissel-Phelan
Telephone: 501-837-5081
Email: Peggy@brainchildpress.com

For Immediate Release

New Photo-Based Counting Book Brings Vegetables into Focus

Release Scheduled for January 7, 2011

Little Rock, AR: The premise behind *Vegetables Count* is simple: the more kids are exposed to new foods, the more likely they are to try them. This new picture book from Brain Child Press, Inc., a small, but growing education publishing company based in Little Rock, introduces numbers and basic arithmetic like other books do, but with vegetables in the starring role. “The idea is to plant the seeds early, to introduce kids to fresh food and good food choices as part of the basic skills lesson,” said Dr. Peggy Sissel-Phelan, the author and designer of *Vegetables Count*. “As kids learn to count, sort, and see numbers being used in different ways, they’ll also learn to identify more than 40 different vegetables. Think about it - everyone expects kids to learn how to count and do math, but we don’t expect them to learn to master one of life’s most basic of skills: food literacy.

Dr. Sissel-Phelan went on to explain why being food literate is important. “It’s not just worrisome if children don’t know the names of fruits and vegetables, or the difference between a red tomato and a red apple. It is more than that. It is a red flag telling us these kids will most likely face a future without knowledge of basic nutrition, and with little or no skill in evaluating, shopping for, or preparing wholesome, nutritious food that benefits their health, not detracts from it.”

The epidemic of childhood obesity this country is facing paints a clear picture of the need for early exposure to nutrition information in the home. “Picture books for 3 to 8 year olds can be important tools in promoting health within the entire family,” she noted. “Children this age are pre-readers or early readers so a parent is often reading the book with them. When the adult gets the nutrition message at the same time as the child, it can prompt the two of them to talk about food and think about what they eat. This is important because the choices parents make at the market, going through the drive-thru, or in the kitchen directly impact the child’s health and well-being.”

- more -



New Photo-Based Counting Book Brings Vegetables Into Focus

p. 2

“But, it can’t be just any type of picture book,” explains Dr. Sissel-Phelan, who holds a doctorate in education and is a lifelong educator and expert in health literacy. “You won’t find any “talking tomatoes,” in *Vegetables Count*, she quipped. “A few years back as I was evaluating children’s food-related picture books to determine which would be appropriate for children ages 0 to 5 in WIC programs, it became clear to me that none of what I found would suffice.”

Instead, she saw booklets using cartoon carrots and cucumbers - complete with hands, feet, and faces, and books with simple, one-dimensional black and white line-drawings. Even the most highly regarded, colorful, and artfully created picture books didn’t fit her perspective of what was needed. “Books need to be beautiful, but a five-year-old isn’t going to make the connection that an abstract swath of green is a lettuce leaf and a purple circle is a slice of onion. Kids’ books need to show real food that can be identified and put into the context of their real lives. If the goal is to educate and motivate youngsters to try to eat better, they need, first of all, to be able to recognize the good stuff, whether it is in the lunch line, in the produce department, or in the fridge.”

Written at the 2nd grade level, *Vegetables Count* introduces more than 40 varieties of vegetables and helps kids develop counting, grouping, and estimating skills, while at the same time addressing the important concept of serving size. Twenty-two pages of colorful photographic illustrations also offer clever opportunities for practicing observation skills, learning new vocabulary, and parent-child interaction.

###

About **Brain Child Press**, Inc.

Brain Child Press was founded to respond to the growing childhood obesity epidemic and the dual crises of poor health and low literacy in the U.S. We saw the expanding need for attractive, easy-to-read, enjoyable educational materials that address topics essential to the healthy development of children. Since 2005 our materials have been used around the nation by agencies, programs, and individuals working toward healthier families and communities. Please contact us for a list of our distributors. info@brainchildpress.com

