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PILOT LIGHT FRESHEALTH  
**SnackTime Explorers**  
FFVP Educational Toolkit



***Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Selected for New SnackTime Explorers Toolkit, Bringing Food Education to the Classroom***

**The New SnackTime Explorers educational toolkit supplements the USDA's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program; Transforms "eating your fruits and veggies" into an exciting adventure.**

**CHICAGO, IL** – This semester, elementary students across Chicago Public Schools (CPS) will be the first in the nation to receive produce passports, beginning a new journey as "SnackTime Explorers." Local food education nonprofit Pilot Light and fresh-cut produce processor FRESHEALTH have teamed up to launch a new initiative designed to enhance the impact of the [USDA's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program \(FFVP\)](#).

FFVP is a USDA-funded in-classroom program that provides a variety of fresh produce snacks to elementary school students outside of designated school meal times, increasing both produce consumption and awareness in public schools. The [SnackTime Explorers pilot](#) launched the second week of January in over 30 CPS elementary classrooms, and will run for 7 weeks. The toolkit brings an adaptable and engaging educational framework to schools receiving FFVP produce. Through the SnackTime Explorers collaboration between Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH, educators will help students develop a healthy and positive relationship with food.

“As a District, we are constantly fine-tuning the food we serve our students to ensure nutritious and delicious meals and snacks. SnackTime Explorers offers our students the opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of fruits and vegetables and develop positive eating habits at an early age,” said Chicago Public Schools CEO Pedro Martinez. “CPS is excited to assist our partners in getting the program on track within our schools.”

A turnkey educational toolkit, SnackTime Explorers has been curated to accompany the FFVP in-classroom fruit and vegetable snacks each week. Teachers are provided a set of bite-sized, prewritten lessons designed to integrate Pilot Light’s [Food Education Standards](#) into classrooms. The standards serve as a guidepost to help students and educators build connections to nutritious food, each other, and their community. In addition to the prewritten lessons, educators will also receive engaging in-classroom materials and the opportunity to participate in professional development programs through Pilot Light. SnackTime Explorers lessons also highlight social-emotional learning skills and allow for a consistent experience for teachers and students alike.

Eileen Torpy, Pilot Light’s Director of School and District Partnerships, is thrilled to partner with FRESHEALTH to support CPS teachers and students utilizing the SnackTime Explorers toolkit. “The holistic approach of the Food Education Standards combined with the consistent, inquiry-based structure of the lessons is designed to support the needs of the whole child. Both food and learning are intrinsically relational, and we are excited to see what this program sparks for young people at this stage in their food identity development inside and outside of the classroom,” Torpy said.

Alex DiNovo, President of [FRESHEALTH](#), also is excited about the partnership and pilot program. “In serving hundreds of school districts, we’ve come to learn that kids actually do love eating their fruits and vegetables,” said DiNovo. “When children are engaged in a multi-sensory learning experience, especially as they try new foods for the first time, we find a jump in adoption and future consumption. We are proud to partner with Pilot Light to provide that experience through SnackTime Explorers, and we could not be more excited to launch this innovative program for the first time in Chicago Public Schools.”

With the support of Chicago Public Schools, SnackTime Explorers is now being implemented in 23 FFVP.-participating elementary schools throughout the district. Pilot Light and FRESHEALTH are committed to supporting CPS teachers with the implementation of SnackTime Explorers this school year and look forward to expanding the offering to additional districts in the 2023-24 school year and beyond. Educators both in and outside of Chicago Public Schools can register their interest in SnackTime Explorers for next school year [here](#).

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### **About Chicago Public Schools**

Chicago Public Schools serves more than 322,000 students in 635 schools. It is the nation's fourth-largest school district. Learn more about their School Meal and Nutrition programs at: [www.cps.edu/services-and-supports/school-meals-and-nutrition/](http://www.cps.edu/services-and-supports/school-meals-and-nutrition/).

### **About Pilot Light**

Pilot Light is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports students as they learn and advocate for informed choices by bridging the lessons, they learn in their classrooms to the foods on their lunch trays at home and in their communities. Learn more about Pilot Light at [PilotLightChefs.org](http://PilotLightChefs.org).

### **About FRESHEALTH**

Based in Columbus, Ohio, FRESHEALTH provides ready-to-eat produce for school districts across sixteen states. More than apple slices and baby carrots, the fresh-cut processor is known for offering innovative, new-to-market products. Crinkle-cut cucumbers, watermelon radish, jicama sticks, and golden kiwi introduce kids to the exciting world of fruits and veggies in an approachable, kid-friendly format. Learn more at [www.dnoinc.com/snacktimeexplorers](http://www.dnoinc.com/snacktimeexplorers).