

Front-of-package product names and ingredient lists of infant and toddler food can be hard to navigate

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Early exposure to nutritious foods may help children develop more healthful eating habits, but package labels can make it difficult for

parents to understand what they are feeding their young children, according to a new study in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.

Researchers compared products for infants and toddlers, examining aspects of vegetable and fruits contributing to the ingredient lists. They reviewed, for example, whether the vegetable or the fruit in the product was a puree or a powder, and where it was listed among the ingredients and product name.

The goal of the research is to help parents understand how the front-of-package labels indicate the contents of infant and toddler foods. By better understanding packaging and labels, parents can make more informed decisions regarding [food](#) purchases for their children.

"Our hope is that nutrition educators will note differences between the ingredients list and the front label of the package. Many parents use the front of the package to decide on their purchases. So, it's important for nutrition educators who are well-informed to help parents navigate this occasionally challenging infant and toddler food product market," explained Mackenzie J. Ferrante, Ph.D., RDN, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO, USA.

This study's findings demonstrate that inconsistent information exists on some commercial infant and toddler food packages. Food preferences develop early for children by exposures to flavors. Thus, it is important that nutrition educators and [healthcare professionals](#) help parents navigate the marketplace. Their work can help parents improve their children's lifelong health through better nutrition as infants and toddlers.

"We want the front of the packages—where those vegetables might be listed—to accurately represent the primary ingredients, and even the

flavor, of the product. We want to promote more transparency so [parents](#) and caregivers can buy the food they want their children to learn to eat at the family table. Let's make it easier for them to do that," said Susan L. Johnson, Ph.D., Department of Pediatrics, Section of Nutrition, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Aurora, CO, USA.

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