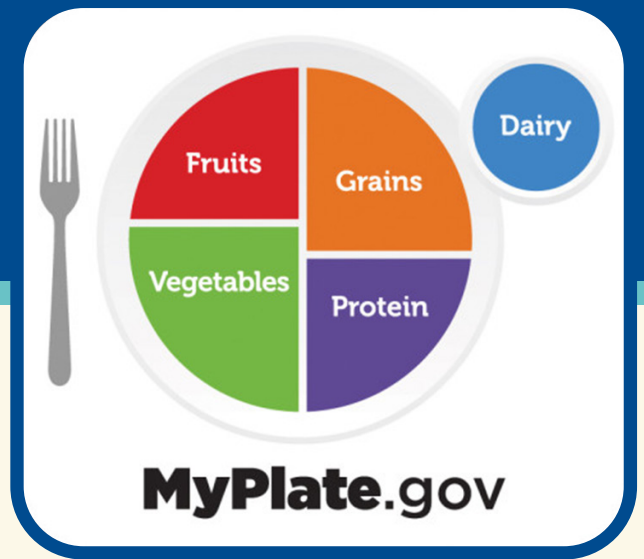


Bite-Sized Lessons: Eating to Grow, Learn & Play



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Bite-Sized Lessons: Eating to Grow, Learn & Play

Welcome to a set of engaging mini lessons plus extended activities for preschool and school-age children on food exposure and nutrition! For toddlers, there are activity ideas, food focused pictures to discuss, and a book list!

For everyone, there are ideas for learning center materials on food, nutrition, and conversation starters for meal and snack time.

To begin start here!



Purpose - The purpose of *Bite-Sized Lessons: Eating to Grow, Learn & Play* is to provide:

- Mini lessons to expand children's exposure to food and nutrition education.
- Resources and ideas for teachers.
- Activities and resources for families to take lessons home to encourage family/child conversations on the day's activities and provide play ideas, resources, and nutrition education.

Assumptions - In conducting lessons, it's assumed that teachers (center-based, family child care professionals, out of school time programs):

- Apply knowledge of age and child development to establish appropriate expectations of children.
- Respect children's decisions.
- Recognize that children of all ages learn by being engaged.
- Monitor health hazards during meal and snack times including choking, allergies, and feeding restrictions due to health conditions and family requests.

Guiding Principles

The writing team committed to a set of eight guiding principles to create lessons that:

1. Align to Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards and the Ohio Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competencies.
2. Apply to early childhood and school-age professionals who provide care and education in different settings.
3. Are based on what is currently known from research and expert knowledge about children and nutrition education.
4. Are culturally sensitive, equitable, inclusive, and respectful.
5. Are reader-friendly to efficiently execute lessons.
6. Integrate opportunities into the environment that support curiosity, nutrition education, and the development of language, literacy, and science skills.
7. Represent an array of foods available in Ohio's communities, including grocery markets and locally produced foods.
8. Stay true to the purpose of *Bite-Sized Lessons: Eating to Grow, Learn & Play*.



Tips on Conducting Lessons

- Adapt lesson and adjust activity time for children's abilities, interest, and attention span.
- Provide drinking water for lessons that include food tastings.
- Do not reward, force, bribe or punish a child for not tasting or eating food.
- Involve the administrator and cook to possibly adjust menus adding foods included in lesson to increase food exposure.
- Check food allergies and family's food requirements before executing a lesson.

Bite-Sized Teacher Education

- Taste food with the children. When they see you taste kiwi, they are more likely to taste kiwi. You shape their future food habits!
- Provide only positive comments about food, even if you don't prefer them. You influence children's thinking.
- Incorporate a child's five senses. This feeds information to the brain to store for current and future learning.
- Ask, listen, validate, prompt, answer, add, and practice conversations. Critical thinking and language development is dependent on your conversations with children.
- Meal and snack times should be made no more and no less important than other activities of the day.

Introducing New Foods to Children

- Provide repeated exposure to new foods. Children need up to 10-20 exposures before they may accept a new food.
- Help children learn about new foods by identifying food groups and describing the foods. They are more likely to accept a new food when they learn about it before trying it.
- Encourage children to use their senses to explore the food before and during tasting. They need to see, smell, and feel the texture before accepting it.
- Allow children to decide what to put on their plate. They may be more receptive to try a variety of foods when they feel in control of what they eat.
- Model tasting food with the children. When they see you taste kiwi, they are more likely to try it, too. Adults shape the children's future food habits. Be positive and encouraging when modeling.
- Never force or bribe a child to try a new food or enforce inappropriate expectations, such as a "two-bite rule." With repeated exposure, they will try it when they are ready. Forcing more than one bite may create a negative experience with the food.
- Offer new foods during meals and snacks with more familiar foods. Do not hyper-focus on the new food.

Behavioral Milestones

The preschool years are an important time for developing healthy habits for life.

From 2 to 5 years old, children grow and develop in ways that affect behavior in all areas, including eating. The timing of these milestones may vary with each child.



2 YEARS

- Can use a spoon and drink from a cup.
- Can be easily distracted.
- Growth slows and appetite drops.
- Develops likes and dislikes.
- Can be very messy.
- May suddenly refuse certain foods.



3 YEARS

- Makes simple either/or food choices, such as a choice of apple or orange slices.
- Pours liquid with some spills.
- Comfortable using fork and spoon.
- Can follow simple requests such as “Please use your napkin.”
- Starts to request favorite foods.
- Likes to imitate cooking.
- May suddenly refuse certain foods.



4 YEARS

- Influenced by TV, media, and peers.
- May dislike many mixed dishes.
- Rarely spills with spoon or cup.
- Knows what table manners are expected.
- Can be easily sidetracked.
- May suddenly refuse certain foods.



5 YEARS

- Has fewer demands.
- Will usually accept the food that’s available.
- Dresses and eats with minor supervision.

Developed from Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion July 2015



Mealtime Appeal

Eating is a time to take in nutrients and enjoy a pleasant, relaxing break from the stressors of the day. Enjoyable meals and snack time help children learn healthy eating habits, develop positive attitudes toward food, increase language skills, and learn and practice social interactions.



Mealtime Child Appeal

Children are more likely to eat well when meals look and taste good to them.

- Serve vibrant colored foods.
- Create an attractive table. Add a centerpiece with a small plastic vase and real or artificial flowers.
- Keep mealtimes pleasant with little stress and confusion.
- Show enthusiasm for food and the children's company.
- Have positive conversations.
- Let children do what they can: set the table, pass out napkins, and serve themselves.

Adult's Mealtime Responsibility

- Relax, don't rush mealtime. Slow eaters shouldn't be hurried.
- Sit at the children's table and eat the same food as them to model appropriate behavior and social interactions. This should not be considered a teacher's meal break.
- Eat slowly, setting the pace for the children.
- Wait patiently while the children eat.
- Enjoy your meal.
- Engage in meaningful conversations with the children.

Child's Mealtime Responsibility

- Decide what to eat from the food options offered.
- Determine how much to eat based on preference and hunger.



Conversation Starters

What To Talk About?

- Children's interests and the day's events.
- Follow the children's lead.
- Limit conversation on food, nutrition, and mealtime behaviors unless children show interest.

How to Have a Conversation?

- Listen, look, and smile at who is speaking.
- Engage quieter children. Include all children.
- Answer, add to ideas, ask questions to expand thinking, and pique curiosity (limit yes/no questions).
- Converse, not quiz. Laugh. Be pleasant.
- Expand vocabulary, for example chilled describes cold food.

Why Converse?

- Builds language comprehension and expression.
- Promotes a language-rich environment.
- Introduces new concepts and vocabulary that may otherwise be missed.
- Provides opportunities for social and emotional development.

Topic Ideas

- Talk about your favorites...colors, foods, animals, activities, books. Start the conversation by saying, "Did you know my favorite color is orange? Sweet potatoes and mandarin oranges are orange foods."
- Talk about pets, their names, what they eat, and what they like to play with.
- Talk about what is happening around their program (grass being mowed, construction, plowing snow).
- Discuss what the children experienced on a walk outside.
- Ask what other foods are similar to those they eat in texture, flavor, and temperature.

Mealtime Conversation Starters

- "What was your favorite part of the story we read today?"
- "I rode my bike last night; what did you do?"
- "What items in the room are the same color as our cauliflower?"
- "Remember that butterfly we saw outside this morning? Where do you think she was flying to?"
- "It looks windy out; the leaves on the trees are moving. What do you think we should wear when we go outside?"
- "These peas grow in a garden. What vegetables could we grow in our garden?"
- "If snow could fall in any flavor, what flavor would you like?"



Learning Center Food Focused Materials

Dramatic Play/Home Living

- Play kitchen set, table, and chairs.
- Aprons & potholders.
- Tablecloth, napkins, centerpieces.
- Empty and clean food/spice containers.
- Pretend food.
- Plates, cups, eating utensils.
- Pots/pans and cooking/serving utensils.
- Menus/picture menus, cookbooks.
- Takeout containers.
- Paper, crayons, pencils, small clipboards for grocery lists, menu, and order taking.
- Shopping cart or basket.
- Cash register and play money.
- Reusable grocery bags.
- Pictures of food/meals for display.
- Multicultural dolls.

Early Literacy and Writing

- Food containers and labels.
- Recipes.
- Blank recipe cards.
- Food and gardening magazines.
- Seed catalogs.
- Restaurant menus with pictures.
- Plain paper and small clipboards.
- Crayons, markers, and pencils.

Table Toys/Games

- Puzzles with pictures of foods.
- Food matching/memory card games.
- Food picture bingo.

Science and Math

- Scales for weighing food.
- Paper and pencil to chart the weights of foods.
- Foods to weigh and measure.
- Small clipboards.
- Rulers, tape measures.
- Cash register and play money.
- Magnifying glasses, microscope.
- Clear containers to store pits, seeds, and peels.
- Potted plants or materials for a garden.
(Radishes, leaf lettuce, basil, dill, mint, and parsley grow quickly).
- Natural materials to make table centerpieces.
- Children's books on gardening.
- Seed magazines.

Reading/Library

- Books with realistic images of foods, gardens, and farm-to-table.
- Books with food themes and mealtimes.
- Books about food in different cultures.
- Teacher-made books showing children and families cooking, eating, and grocery shopping.
- Food and gardening magazines.

Art

- Magazines to make food collages and placemats.
- Pottery clay or homemade dough to make pretend food and dishes/pots.
- Paper, crayons, markers, scissors, glue.
- Assorted items to create table centerpieces.

A Note About Food and Art: Food is for eating; art materials are for creating. Food is not appropriate nor recommended for arts and crafts and sensory play. Children may become confused when admonished for playing with food during meal/snack time but then allowed to play with it during activities. Children may come from families where food is scarce. Wasting food sends a negative message and can be considered disrespectful. Cultural beliefs on the use of foods other than eating should be followed.

Family Engagement

Families play an important role in building children's healthy eating habits. Here are some tips to promote healthy eating at every age!

Mealtime at Home

- Have children help prepare meals and set the table. Adjust tasks based on children's age and development (e.g., washing fruit and vegetables, measuring and mixing ingredients, passing out napkins and silverware).
- Introduce new foods at home. Children need to be exposed to new foods multiple times before accepting them.
- Talk about foods' color, feel, and flavor to make them sound more appealing to children hesitant to try new and unfamiliar foods.
- Turn off electronic devices (TV, computer, tablets, phones) during mealtimes.
- Discuss the day's activities. "What made you laugh today? What did you enjoy most today? What would you like to do after dinner today?"
- Try a change of scenery. Have a picnic outside or a nearby park, weather permitting. Or plan an indoor picnic.

Family Activities

- Plant a family garden to get children involved in meals and learning where food comes from. If you have limited yard space, plant a window herb box in your kitchen or a container garden with a few vegetables.
- Create a picture card for a rainbow hunt at the grocery store. Have children find a fruit or vegetable for every color of the rainbow.
- Let children be the chef for a day! Help children design a menu that includes the five food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein) and assist with preparing the meal.
- Search for local farmers markets that offer budget-friendly fresh produce in season. Plan a visit to farms or fruit orchards offering seasonal u-pick experiences (e.g., strawberries, apples, or peaches).
- Visit your local library to find books on nutritious food and healthy eating habits, such as:
 - "Bread, Bread, Bread" by Ann Morris.
 - "Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z" by Lois Ehlert.
 - "I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato" by Lauren Child.
 - "Tops and Bottoms" by Janet Stevens.

Resources

- Visit USDA MyPlate <https://www.myplate.gov/> for information on the five food groups, tip sheets, activities, and recipes.
- Use the Start Simple with MyPlate app to pick simple daily food goals and track your healthy eating progress.
- Search the Ohio Farm Bureau <https://ofbf.org/about/farm-to-table/whats-in-season/> to learn which produce is in-season April-November.



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Toddler Time



Pieces of Yarn and Tongs

Why: Toddlers will practice grasping skills.

How: Place different lengths of yarn in a bowl or on a plate and provide child-sized tongs. Provide an additional plate or bowl for toddlers to place yarn into. Encourage children to pick up the yarn using the tongs. It is okay if they use their hands as well.

Conversation starters:

- “Show me how many pieces of yarn you can pick up using these tongs.”
- “Sometimes we eat a food that looks like this yarn. Can anybody guess what that might be?”
- “Spaghetti is long and skinny like this yarn.”

Sorting Food Bags

Why: Toddlers will be exposed to foods of different colors and the names of the foods. Toddlers can also practice matching the foods to the bags and sorting foods by color.

How: Bring one or more bags to the dramatic play table or bring them out as you sit on the floor. Encourage children to examine the foods and talk about what they are and their characteristics.

Conversation starters:

- “Look at this long orange vegetable. This is a carrot. We eat carrots for lunch. Let’s talk about other orange foods.”
- “We have green foods and brown foods. Help me put the green foods in the green bag and the brown foods in the brown bag.”
- “Pick a red food. Can you find something else in the room that is the same color?”

“The Very Hungry Caterpillar” by Eric Carle

Why: This book supports developing counting skills, food recognition, sequencing, order, and how eating certain foods can help you grow. It also touches on the science of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.

How: After reading the book, toddlers will journey like the caterpillar. Children will follow a path through the room by using pictures of the foods in the story and a picture of a caterpillar and butterfly. Secure a caterpillar picture to the floor with tape, then space pictures of an apple, pears, plums, and strawberries on the floor, ending with a picture of a butterfly. Encourage toddlers to follow the trail. In the end, they can pretend to fly like a butterfly.

Conversation starters:

- “The caterpillar sure was hungry, and he ate a lot of fruits. What fruits do you eat? Let’s look at the fruits in the book.”
- “Look at these pictures on the floor. Let’s see if we can find the fruits that the caterpillar ate.”
- “How about we go for a walk like the caterpillar? Let’s follow the trail of some of the foods he ate to grow from a caterpillar to a butterfly.”

How Do They Measure Up?

Why: Exposes children to a variety of fruits and vegetables and promotes beginning math skills (compare, measure, numerical order, shapes).

How: Gather a variety of play pretend fruits and vegetables along with a measuring tape.

Conversation starters:

- “I have a potato and a tomato. What can you tell me about the shapes?”
- “Maybe we should use our measuring tape to see which is larger and which is smaller.”
- “Is there something in our food basket longer than this carrot? Let’s look.”

Supporting Dramatic Play

Why: Toddlers enjoy feeding their baby dolls. Engaging with toddlers in dramatic play is a way to model positive food and nutrition habits.

How: When you see toddlers playing in the dramatic play area, determine how you can join in as another person feeding a baby, as a customer at the restaurant, or as a family member at the kitchen table. Choose a doll to feed and talk about what you are feeding your doll and some of the foods the toddlers are using.

Conversation starters:

- “Regina, you have put food in the big pot and plates on the table. Tell me about what you’re making.”
- “Cassidy, tell me about the food you’re feeding your baby.”
- “Travis, you have two babies to feed at the same time. How can I help you?”

Supporting Creative Arts

Why: Providing opportunities for toddlers to use their imaginations and express their creativity is essential to cognitive and social-emotional development. Foods can be used as inspiration.

How: In the art area, provide images of various foods. Encourage toddlers to use available materials to create their version of a stalk of broccoli, a bagel, or a bowl of rice. Place pictures on the table or clip them to the top of an easel. Provide a variety of colors of paint or crayons and paper of varying textures. Provide homemade clay dough for older toddlers to sculpt.

Conversation starters:

- Encourage toddlers to tell you as much about their pictures or clay creations as possible. Record their descriptions.
- “Lilly, you used a lot of yellow on your paper. Tell (or show) me what food you are drawing.”
- Alex brings you a picture he drew. “Tell me about your picture and the colors you used.”



Preschool Bite-Sized Lessons

- Foods to Explore Unit
- Foods by the Group Unit
- Our Bodies, Our Food Unit
- Eat, Drink & Be Healthy Unit

Overview

The more children are exposed to new foods, the more likely they are to eat these foods in the future. In this lesson, children will explore a stem vegetable, asparagus.

Learning Objectives

Children will be able to state one benefit of eating asparagus. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will define how asparagus supports nutrition, growth, and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Bunch of asparagus; various colors if possible.
- Print picture of how asparagus grows or show on iPad/computer.
- Chart paper and marker.
- Magnifying glasses.

Words to Use

Asparagus	Energy	Raw
Spear	Stem	

Book list:

- "Plants Feed Me" by Lizzy Rockwell.
- "Oliver's Vegetables" by Vivian French.
- "Stems We Eat" by Katherine Rawson.
- "SEE & EAT Asparagus: Helping Your Little Ones to Know and Love Their Vegetables" by Carmel Houston-Price.

Teaching Tips:

- Sharing actual food items instead of pictures is more impactful and can help with concrete learning.
- Writing the new words you use on chart paper supports language and literacy development.

Family Engagement

- Send families a list of the new words children learned in the lesson.
- Display the children's responses to the group questions.
- Share the book list with families; they may be able to find them in their local library to read at home.

Introduce the Lesson

"Vegetables give us energy and help us grow. Today, we are going to explore asparagus, a vegetable that grows in the ground."

Activity Steps

1. Show children the asparagus and share that it is a vegetable that grows from the ground. Show a picture of the asparagus plant. We eat the stem of the asparagus plant. As it grows taller, the flower buds at the top grow and become fluffy. The asparagus we typically see is green but can also be white or purple.
2. Pass asparagus around, explaining that each piece is called a spear. Ask children what they see, feel, and smell and chart their responses. Use magnifying glasses for a closer look.
3. Ask if anyone has eaten asparagus. Asparagus can be eaten raw, like in a salad, or cooked in various ways. It can be roasted in the oven, sauteed in a pan on the stove in a little oil, boiled in water, or grilled.
4. Asparagus is important to our bodies. Asparagus helps us build strong bones and helps the heart pump blood through our bodies. Asparagus also helps our stomachs break down food to use for energy. Ask, “Do you know what energy is?” Energy is the power we get from our food that we use to run, jump, walk, talk, and all kinds of other activities.
5. Ask children what their favorite activity is and chart their responses. Explain that eating vegetables such as asparagus gives them the energy to do those activities and learn to do others.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“How does eating asparagus help your body?”

Closing the Lesson

“Our bodies need energy to grow and be active. Vegetables like asparagus can help us have energy!”

Other Ideas

- Display pictures of asparagus in the dramatic play area.
- Arrange with the kitchen staff to serve asparagus for lunch. Ask children to describe the smell and taste.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat these foods in the future. In this lesson, children will be introduced to all parts of the broccoli plant and use their senses to explore broccoli.

Learning Objectives

Children will be able to recognize broccoli as a vegetable. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model healthy eating habits. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- “SEE & EAT Broccoli: Helping Your Little Ones to Know and Love Their Vegetables” by Carmel Houston-Price.
- Fresh broccoli bunches, including stem and leaves if possible. Frozen can be used if fresh is unavailable.
- Serving bowl.
- Tongs.
- Napkins or paper towels.
- Magnifying glasses.

Words to Use

Broccoli	Floret	Leaves	Raw
	Stem	Vegetable	

Book list:

- “Plants Feed Me” by Lizzy Rockwell.
- “Oliver’s Vegetables” by Vivian French.
- “Stems We Eat” by Katherine Rawson.
- “SEE & EAT Broccoli: Helping Your Little Ones to Know and Love Their Vegetables” by Carmel Houston-Price.

Teaching Tips:

- Eat a sample of broccoli yourself to model desired behavior.
- Offer all parts of the broccoli for tasting – the stems, leaves, and florets, if possible.

Family Engagement

- Encourage families to have children find broccoli in the grocery store.
- Share a photo of their child’s participation in the exploring and taste testing the broccoli.
- Put the book “SEE & EAT Broccoli: Helping Your Little Ones to Know and Love Their Vegetables” by Carmel Houston-Price in lobby area for families and children to read together.
- Share a broccoli recipe with families, such as Chicken Broccoli Alfredo. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/chicken-broccoli-alfredo>.

Introduce the Lesson

“Today we are going to read a book about broccoli, a vegetable that grows from a plant. Eating broccoli helps you from getting sick and helps the body use food for energy.”

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Show the book, “SEE & EAT Broccoli: Helping Your Little Ones to Know and Love Their Vegetables”. Ask children what they think the book is about by looking at the cover. Read the book.
2. Pass around a broccoli bunch (or one or two stalks) for children to explore. Point out the different parts of the broccoli plant – the stem, leaves, and flower, also called florets (tops). Have them smell and touch each part of the broccoli for the different textures. Use magnifying glasses for a closer look.
3. Ask, “What does broccoli look like?” Broccoli looks like little trees. We can eat it raw (uncooked) or cooked. All parts of the broccoli are edible, but people mostly eat the florets or tops.
4. Ask who has seen or eaten broccoli and what they thought about it.
5. Broccoli provides nutrients to our bodies. Broccoli helps our eyes to see well and helps our hearts pump and our bones to be strong. Eating broccoli can also help keep us from getting sick and build strong teeth.
6. Offer children an opportunity to taste the broccoli. Pass out napkins or paper towels. Using tongs, give each child a broccoli sample.
7. Discuss reactions to how the broccoli tastes, record the responses.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Is broccoli a vegetable or fruit?
Which parts of the broccoli can
you eat?”

Closing the Lesson

“I liked tasting the broccoli.
Broccoli is one vegetable that
can help your body do its job.
What other vegetables do you
eat?”

Other Ideas

- After the lesson, display the book in the library area so interested children can read it again.
- Add pretend broccoli or display photos of broccoli in the dramatic play area.
- Print photos of the children tasting the broccoli and post in the eating area. Include the children’s responses to the broccoli on paper or index cards next to the photos.
- Arrange with the food service staff to include cooked or raw broccoli on the program’s menu.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat them in the future. In this lesson, children will read Mari Schuh's "Carrots Grow Underground", examine carrots up close, and share their thoughts about what they see, smell, and feel.

Learning Objectives

Children will be able to state how carrots help our bodies. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/ Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will define ways to support nutrition and children's growth and development.

(Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- "Carrots Grow Underground" by Mari Schuh.
- An assortment of fresh carrots. If available, include carrots with the tops, carrots of different colors, and baby carrots.
- Package of frozen carrots and one can of carrots.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Fiber Peel Root Underground

Book list:

- "Carrots Grow Underground" by Mari Schuh.
- "Growing Vegetable Soup" by Lois Ehlert.
- "The Carrot Seed" by Ruth Krauss.
- "The Vegetables We Eat" by Gail Gibbons.
- "Too Many Carrots" by Katy Hudson.

Teaching Tips:

- Raw carrots can be choking hazards for young children. In this lesson, children will explore raw carrots, but not eat them. You may want to arrange with the food service staff to serve cooked carrots for lunch on the day of the lesson.

Family Engagement

- Share the USDA tip sheet Vary Your Veggies. https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-04/TipSheet_3_VaryYourVegetables.pdf.
- Share a carrot recipe with families, such as Garden Vegetable Soup. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/garden-vegetable-soup>.

Introduce the Lesson

"Today, we are going to explore an orange vegetable that grows underground. Can you guess which vegetable?"

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Read “Carrots Grow Underground” by Mari Schuh. After reading the book, ask, “Has anyone had a carrot before? What did it taste like?”
2. Carrots are root vegetables that grow from carrot plants. This means they grow from the underground part of the plant. The book also named other underground vegetables, like potatoes, radishes, and beets.
3. Pass the whole carrots around, reminding children these carrots are for exploring, not eating. Ask the children to describe what the carrot looks like, feels like, and how it smells. Chart their responses.
4. Show the carrots without the peel (outside) and the carrots with the tops attached. Explain that the leafy greens are the part that we see above ground. Refer to the pictures in the book. If available, include baby carrots.
5. These carrots are orange. Carrots come in other colors, such as white, red, and purple. The substance that gives carrots their color becomes vitamins and nutrients our bodies need to function. They are high in vitamin A, which helps our eyesight, and vitamin B6, which turns food into energy. Carrots have a lot of fiber, which helps us go to the bathroom.
6. Carrots can be eaten raw or cooked. We can grow carrots in our gardens at home or buy them fresh, frozen, or canned at the store. Show frozen and canned carrots in clear containers with lids. Compare size, color, smell, and texture with the raw carrots.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Where do carrots grow? How can carrots help our bodies?”

Closing the Lesson

“Colorful vegetables, like orange carrots, are tasty and good for our bodies.”

Other Ideas

- Grow carrots from seed as a group project. Use well-drained deep pots or containers if there is no space to plant them in the ground.
- Explore other vegetables that grow underground, such as beets, parsnips, potatoes, and onions. How do they compare with carrots in color, size, shape, texture, and scent?

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat them in the future. In this lesson, children will investigate the properties of cucumbers with a magnifying glass, noting how they look, feel, and smell. They will have the opportunity to taste a cucumber, a vegetable that is typically enjoyed raw.

Learning Objectives

Children will be able to describe the characteristics of cucumbers.
(ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/ Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model nutritious eating behaviors.
(Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Fresh cucumbers of various sizes. (Include seeded and seedless, if available).
- Magnifying glasses.
- Measuring Tape.
- Large bowl.
- Tongs.
- Small bowls or paper towels.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Cool Crunchy Cucumbers
Function Investigate Rough

Book list:

- "The Vegetables We Eat" by Gail Gibbons.
- "Plants Feed Me" by Lizzy Rockwell.
- "Oliver's Vegetables" by Vivian French.

Teaching Tips:

- Cut cucumber pieces no larger than ½ inch to prevent choking.
- Sharing actual food items instead of pictures is more impactful and can help with concrete learning.

Family Engagement

- Send families a photo of their child tasting cucumbers and include what the child had to say about cucumbers.
- Distribute the USDA handout Vary Your Vegetables. https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-04/TipSheet_3_VaryYourVegetables.pdf.
- Share a simple recipe using cucumbers, such as Corn and Cucumber Salad. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/corn-and-cucumber-salad>.

Introduce the Lesson

"The vegetable we're going to investigate today is called a cucumber. We will investigate using our eyes, nose, hands, and mouth."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Introduce the lesson by asking, “Does anybody know what ‘investigate’ means?” Explain the word means to gather clues and information. Today, we will use our eyes, nose, hands, and mouth to gather information about cucumbers.
2. Pass the cucumber(s) around the group, encouraging each child to touch and look at the cucumber with their magnifying glass. Use a tape measure to compare the sizes of different cucumbers.
3. Ask children what they notice about the cucumbers – how does it look and feel? Does it look like any other foods they eat? What does the skin feel like? (smooth, rough/bumpy). How does it smell? Chart their responses.
4. Cut one or more cucumbers in half lengthwise. Pass to children to look, feel, and smell. What do they notice? How does it compare with the outside of the cucumber? How many seeds does the cucumber have?
5. Cucumbers are a green vegetable that grows on a vine. They grow from small yellow flowers. There are different types of cucumbers. Some are large, and some are small. Some have seeds, and others don’t. Small cucumbers are often grown to make another food some of us eat – pickles!
6. Cucumbers are mostly water. Eating them is one way to keep our bodies hydrated. Cucumbers are usually eaten fresh or raw and are more nutritious with the skin on. You may have eaten cucumbers on a salad or as a snack with dip.
7. Have children serve themselves a few pieces of cut cucumber from the bowl. As they taste the cucumber, discuss how it tastes and chart the children’s responses. Ask them to describe the temperature and the texture, giving children time to respond and share their thoughts. If not mentioned, explain that the cucumber is more cool than warm or hot. The outside texture is crunchy, while the middle is softer.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Is the skin on a cucumber smooth or bumpy? What does the inside of the cucumber look like?”

Closing the Lesson

“Eating vegetables of different colors, like green cucumbers, keeps us from getting sick and helps our bodies function.”

Other Ideas

- Have a pickle taste-testing using a variety of pickles, including dill, bread and butter, and sweet gherkins. Take a poll on which pickle children prefer.
- Compare cucumbers with other vegetables, such as zucchini, eggplant, and summer squash. Compare size, shape, color, texture, taste, and smell.
- Make a simple vegetable dip with children to serve with assorted fresh vegetables for snack, such as Cucumber, Yogurt, and Herb Dip. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/cucumber-yogurt-and-herb-dip>.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat them in the future. Apples come in a variety of types and colors, and they all provide nutrients we need to help different parts of our bodies. In this lesson, children will explore different types of apples using their senses.

Learning Objectives

Children will be able to describe tasting apples. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/ Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model nutritious eating behaviors. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- At least two different types of apples, such as Red Delicious, Granny Smith, or Honeycrisp. Consider using red and green apples for contrast and enough for children to explore whole and cut for tasting).
- Small bowls or paper towels.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Apples	Heavy	Light	Raw
Sweet	Sour	Tart	Varieties

Book list:

- "Eat'em Up Apples" by Gail Tuchman.
- "Go, go, Grapes! A Fruit Chant" by April Pulley Sayre.
- "Hello, World! How Do Apples Grow?" by Jill McDonald.
- "Ten Apples on Top" by Dr. Suess.
- "The Fruits We Eat" by Gail Gibbons.

Teaching Tips:

- Sharing actual food items instead of pictures is more impactful and can help with concrete learning. Pictures can be used to show different varieties of apples, if apples are unavailable.
- Prepare apples for tasting by removing the core and seeds and cutting pieces no larger than ½ inch to prevent choking.

Family Engagement

- Create an Apple Hunt game. List the common varieties of apples in Ohio. Encourage families to look for these apples in the grocery store and see how many they can find.
- Share resources about local farmers markets or apple orchards where families can pick their own apples.

Introduce the Lesson

"Today we are going to explore a fruit that some of you may have seen or eaten at home – apples! You're going to explore apples using your nose, eyes, hands, and mouth."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Display the whole apples. Apples are fruits that grow on trees. Many varieties of apples are available in Ohio in grocery stores, farmers markets, and fruit orchards. Most apples are red, but they can be yellow or green, too.
2. Pass around the apples and encourage children to look closely at each, paying attention to the shape, feel, and smell. Are they heavy or light? How do they compare in size and color? Chart how the children describe the apples.
3. Cut an apple in half to show the core and seeds. These are parts of the apple that we don't eat. Compare the inside flesh and outside peel of the apple. We can eat the peel and the flesh.
4. Invite children to share how they eat apples at home. Eating apples provides our bodies with nutrients to help our hearts pump blood through our bodies, keep us from getting sick, and give us energy to play and grow.
5. Apples can be eaten raw or cooked. Applesauce is made with cooked apples. Ask, "What other foods are made with apples?" (Prompt children to think of other foods, such as apple cinnamon oatmeal, apple juice, apple pie, apple crisp, or apple banana smoothies).
6. Provide each child with a sample of two or more varieties of apples. Identify the name of each type, such as Red Delicious, Granny Smith, Honeycrisp, etc. Discuss the taste and the texture of each. Does it taste sweet or tart/sour? Is it soft or crunchy? Chart their responses.

Check for Understanding Ideas

"How do apples grow? How would you describe apples?"

Closing the Lesson

"Those apples were tasty! I am going to eat an apple when I go home today."

Other Ideas

- Add a variety of play fruits, including different varieties of apples, in the dramatic play area.
- Encourage children to create apple recipes by placing index cards and writing instruments in the dramatic play or writing area.
- Promote learning through art by providing paper and various drawing tools, such as colored pencils, markers, and crayons, to encourage children to draw what they think an apple tree looks like.
- Place the seeds from the apple tasting in clear containers in the science center. Discuss how the tiny seed becomes apples.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat these foods in the future. In this lesson, children will use their senses to explore bell peppers.

Learning Objectives

Children will describe what the bell pepper looks like under a magnifying glass. (ELDS: Science/Science Inquiry & Application 1.a.).

The teacher will model healthy eating behaviors for children. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/ Health).

Materials

- Three whole bell peppers (green, red, yellow, and/or orange).
- One or more peppers cut in half.
- Pepper Plant picture.
- Magnifying glasses; preferably one for each child.
- Chart paper and markers.
- Samples of bell peppers for tasting.
- Napkins or paper towels.

Words to Use

Bell pepper **Investigate** **Magnify**
Seeds **Skin** **Stem** **Texture**
Varieties

Book list:

- “Plants Feed Me” by Lizzy Rockwell.
- “The Vegetables We Eat” by Gail Gibbons.

Teaching Tips:

- Yellow, orange, and red peppers are sweeter and may be preferable to children than green peppers.

Family Engagement

- Email/text families a picture of their child using a magnifying glass and/or tasting the bell pepper. Share their child's reactions.
- Share a bell pepper recipe, such as Simple Stuffed Peppers <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/simple-stuffed-peppers>. Have families submit a photo of them eating or preparing the recipe.

Introduce the Lesson

“Today we are going to investigate bell peppers. Investigate means to gather information. Using your eyes, hands, nose, and mouth you will gather information about how bell peppers look, feel, smell, and taste.”

Activity Steps

1. Show children the whole bell peppers. Bell peppers are vegetables that grow from the flower buds on the pepper plant. Show the Pepper Plant picture. Bell peppers can be of different varieties, like red, green, yellow, and orange. Green peppers are less ripe and not as sweet as other colors.
2. Explain they will use their eyes, ears, hands, and mouth to investigate and learn about bell peppers. Ask what they notice about the shape and color of the peppers. Identify the skin and stem of the peppers. Show the half pepper and identify the seeds.
3. Ask, “Have you ever eaten a bell pepper? If so, what color did you eat?” Bell peppers can be eaten raw or cooked.
4. Pass the whole and half peppers around the table. Have the children look at the peppers with and without a magnifying glass. Remind them not to take a bite. Comment on children’s responses to what they see, feel, and smell. Have them compare the outside and inside texture of the peppers. Chart their responses.
5. Bell peppers help our bodies in many ways. They contain vitamin C, which helps the body fight off germs. They help our stomach break down food into energy and help our eyes see well.
6. Ask, “Have you ever eaten a bell pepper? If so, what color did you eat?” Bell peppers can be eaten raw or cooked.
7. Give each child a tasting sample of peppers. Encourage children to smell before tasting. Don’t rush children to taste. Allow them to set their own pace to get comfortable with the new food.
8. After tasting the peppers, ask the children what they thought and chart their responses.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What did you see when you looked at the pepper through the magnifying glass?”

Closing the Lesson

“You used your magnifying glass to investigate bell peppers! What vegetable shall we investigate next?”

Other Ideas

- Serve pepper strips with hummus or other dips for snack.
- Have a taste testing of raw and cooked peppers. Compare the taste and texture of each.
- Show pictures or video of pepper plants so children can see how they grow. Plant peppers in a classroom garden.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat them in the future. In this lesson, children will learn about peaches as part of the fruit food group. Children will use their senses to explore the texture, smell, and taste of peaches, and compare peaches to other fruits they eat.

Learning Objectives

Children will describe the characteristics of a peach. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/ Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model nutritious eating behaviors. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Several whole, ripe peaches of different varieties.
- 1-2 peaches cut in half in zip-top plastic bag.
- Cut or diced peaches for taste samples in a serving bowl. (Cut ½ inch or smaller to prevent choking).
- Small plates or bowls.
- Paper towels or napkins.
- Child-sized tongs.
- Child-sized forks.

Words to Use

Fuzzy **Peaches** **Pit** **Ripe**
 Scent

Book list:

- “Go, Go, Grapes! A Fruit Chant” by April Pulley Sayre.
- “The Fruits We Eat” by Gail Gibbons.
- “Plants Feed Me” by Lizzy Rockwell.

Teaching Tips:

- Peaches are more easily available and less expensive during the summer months.
- Model tasting the fruit and share your thoughts using encouraging words.
- Peach pits are not safe to eat but the skin of peaches can be eaten.

Family Engagement

- Share the USDA handout Canned Peaches 5 Ways with families. <https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2020-12/Peaches5ways.pdf>
- Post images of the children tasting the peaches on a family board or in the program newsletter. Include children's comments about peaches.

Introduce the Lesson

“We are going to use our senses to explore a food that is part of the fruit group, a peach!”

Activity Steps

1. Show children whole peaches and explain that peaches are a fruit that grows on trees. Ripe peaches are ready to be picked and eaten. There are many varieties of peaches.
2. Pass whole peaches around for the children to examine. Have children describe what they notice about the peaches' color, texture, and scent. Chart their responses.
3. The outside skin of a peach is fuzzy. It protects the peach from bugs and keeps the inside soft and juicy. Depending on the variety of peach, the skin color can be deep reddish to light pink.
4. Pass around the zip lock bags with the peach halves. Explain that the large seed inside is called the pit. "What color is the inside? Does it look like any other fruit we eat?" The inside flesh is usually yellow, but some varieties of peaches are white. White peaches are sweeter than yellow.
5. Peaches can be bought fresh, canned, or frozen at the grocery store. They can be eaten raw or cooked and combined with other foods, such as sliced on cereal or mixed in a smoothie.
6. Peaches provide nutrients that help prevent illness and help the heart pump blood through the body.
7. Give each child a small plate or paper towel and a fork. Pass around the bowl of cut peaches and tongs for children to serve themselves a taste sample. Ask children to describe the taste. Chart their responses.

Check for Understanding Ideas

"What food group are peaches a part of? What does the fuzzy part of the skin do?"

Closing the Lesson

"The peaches were sweet and juicy. Its fun to try different fruits!"

Other Ideas

- Plan a taste sampling using fresh, canned, and frozen peaches. Have children compare the look, smell, and taste of each. Chart their responses and take a poll to determine which one they prefer.
- Arrange with the program cook to have a snack with peaches and non-fat plain yogurt.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat these foods in the future. In this lesson, children will use their senses to explore and sample fresh pears of different varieties. They will also compare the taste and texture of canned and fresh pears.

Learning Objectives

Children will use their senses to explore pears. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/ Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model healthy eating habits. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Two or more whole pears of different varieties (Bartlett, Basc, Asian pears, etc.).
- One or more pears cut in half.
- Canned pears in 100% juice or water. (Not in light or heavy syrup.)
- Pear picture.
- Paper cups or small bowls.
- Spoons.
- Napkins or paper towels.
- Pictures of different varieties of pears.

Words to Use

Firm Ripe Shape Skin Stem
Texture Variety

Book list:

- "The Fruits We Eat" by Gail Gibbons.
- "Each Peach Pear Plum" by Janet and Allan Ahlberg.
- "Little Pear Tree" by Rachel Williams.
- "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle.

Teaching Tips:

- Use whatever pears are readily available. Different varieties of pears are more abundant at different times of the year.
- Instead of having samples prepared, consider allowing children to serve themselves from larger bowls.
- Exploring real food items instead of or along with pictures is more impactful and can help with concrete learning.

Family Engagement

- Share the results of the class Pear Poll in the program newsletter.
- Create a game using pictures of the different kinds of pears. Suggest families take this paper to the grocery store and encourage their children to search for different pears.
- Share the resource Pears 5 Ways for home cooking ideas. [Pears5ways \(azureedge.us\)](http://Pears5ways.azureedge.us)

Introduce the Lesson

"We're going to talk about pears, which is a fruit that feels and looks like apples on the inside. Many of us have tasted canned pears. Today, we are going to explore the fresh fruit where canned pears come from."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Show children the whole pears. Explain there are many varieties or kinds of pears. Use picture cards as examples if fresh pears aren't available.
2. Ask the children what they notice about the shape and color of the different pears. Pass the pears, allowing each child to feel the skin and stem, how firm it is (hard/soft), how it smells, and describe it. Pass half a pear to show the seeds and inside texture (how it feels). Compare how the different pears look and feel.
3. Pears are a fruit that grows on trees. The fruit is attached to the tree by the stem. Fresh pears are firm or hard. As they ripen and become ready to eat, they soften.
4. Pears are mostly water, which keeps us hydrated by giving our bodies the water they need to function properly. The vitamins in pears help us from getting sick and help our eyes work. Many nutrients are in the pear's skin. We can eat fresh pears with or without the skin; canned pears don't include the skin.
5. Provide a taste sample of each fresh pear variety and canned pears. While sampling, remind children to use their eyes, nose, and mouth to explore the pears. Compare/contrast the texture and taste of fresh pears with the texture of canned pears. Take a poll among the group; ask if they think pears are sweet, like oranges, or sour, like lemons.

Check for Understanding Ideas

"Can anyone name a variety (kinds) of pear? Where do canned pears come from?"

Closing the Lesson

"Pears come in different varieties, shapes, and colors. Whichever kind you choose will make a juicy snack to help you grow strong!"

Other Ideas

- Add a variety of pretend fruits, including pears, to the dramatic play area.
- Prepare a simple snack with the children using fresh or canned pears. Consider placing soft pears in zip-loc bags and allow children to squeeze them into a "pear sauce."

Overview

Children will learn why melon is important for their health. They will use magnifying glasses to explore two types of melons and compare their textures. Through taste testing, children will use their sense of smell and taste and discuss what they think about each melon.

Learning Objectives

Children will participate in tasting a variety of fruits. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/ Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model healthy eating habits. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- One whole cantaloupe.
- One whole honeydew.
- Magnifying glasses.
- How Fruits Grow poster.
- Pre-cut samples of cantaloupe.
- Pre-cut samples of honeydew.
- Pictures of cantaloupe and honeydew.
- Small paper cups.
- Napkins or paper towels.

Words to Use

Cantaloupe	Honeydew	Hydrated
Juicy	Rind	Rough
		Vine

Book list:

- "The Fruits We Eat" by Gail Gibbons.
- "Fruit Bowl" by Mark Hoffman.
- "I Can Eat a Rainbow" by Olena Rose.
- "Mrs. Peanuckle's Fruit" by Mrs. Peanuckle.

Teaching Tips:

- Other types of melons can be used; use what is in season or readily available. Choose melons that the children may not be familiar with.
- Allow children to serve themselves from larger bowls to practice family-style dining.
- Sharing actual food items instead of pictures is more impactful and can help with concrete learning.

Family Engagement

- Share pictures and reactions to their child eating melons.
- Share tips on healthy eating: MyPlate Healthy Eating for Preschoolers. https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-04/TipSheet_16_HealthyEatingForPreschoolers.pdf

Introduce the Lesson

"Today we are going to explore two types of fruit called a melon. First, we will explore each melon, and then we will get to taste each one."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Show children the whole cantaloupe. Ask, “What is this fruit called? It is called cantaloupe. Who has eaten cantaloupe?”
2. Pass the fruit and encourage each child to touch the cantaloupe. Use magnifying glasses for a closer look.
3. Show the children the part of the melon where the stem was attached, explaining that they grow on a vine. Show How Fruits Grow poster.
4. Talk about how the cantaloupe feels. Ask if it feels rough or smooth, heavy, or light. The outside of the melon is called the rind. The rind is the outer skin of the melon, like the skin on an apple or orange. We don’t eat that part because it is hard to chew and digest.
5. Repeat steps 1-4 with the honeydew melon.
6. Discuss the differences between each melon. Then, show a cut piece of each melon and ask the children to guess which pieces go with which melon.
7. Explain that eating melon is a way to keep their bodies from getting sick. Melons help our muscles work well.
8. Pass out samples of each type of melon. Remind the children to use their eyes, nose, mouth, and hands to explore each type of melon. Have them describe the taste and smell of each one.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Which melon did the green pieces come from? Which melon is the cantaloupe?”

Closing the Lesson

“Eating fruit like these melons every day provides us with energy and will help our bodies stay strong.”

Other Ideas

- Provide a measuring tape so children can chart the size of each melon. Talk about which one is “smaller” or “larger.”
- Serve a melon fruit salad for snack or lunch using watermelon, cantaloupe, and honeydew.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat them in the future. In this lesson, children will explore the properties of two kinds of potato: sweet potato and white potato. New vocabulary words such as “tuber” will be introduced, and the ways potatoes can help our bodies will be discussed.

Learning Objectives

Children will be able to share how potatoes help our bodies. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.). The teacher will define ways to support nutrition and children’s growth and development. (Ohio’s Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Raw white and sweet potatoes, whole and cut in half.
- Other types of potatoes, if available: red, purple, and fingerling.
- Picture of a potato plant, if possible.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Peeled	Stem	Texture	Tuber
	Underground	Vitamin	

Book list:

- “SEE & EAT Sweet Potato: Helping Your Little Ones to Know and Love Their Vegetables” by Carmel Houston-Price.
- “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens.

Teaching Tips:

- If actual potatoes are unavailable, posters or picture cards can be used to discuss different types of potatoes.
- Raw potatoes should not be eaten. Choose to serve cooked potatoes during mealtime to coordinate with the activity.

Family Engagement

- Make a Potato Seek game. Copy pictures of different types of potatoes on a sheet of paper. Families can take the game to the grocery store and circle the potatoes they find.
- Share a potato recipe with families, such as Oven-Baked Sweet Potato Fries. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/oven-baked-sweet-potato-fries>.

Introduce the Lesson

“Today we are going to explore two different types of potatoes: white potatoes and sweet potatoes.”

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Activity Steps

1. Show children the potatoes and ask if anyone knows what they are. They are potatoes, which are vegetables. Ask, “Who has seen whole potatoes that look like these? Where have you seen them?” (home, grocery store).
2. Identify the two types of potatoes: white and sweet. Have children describe the difference in color and shape. Potatoes grow from potato plants. They are tubers because they grow underground from the plant’s stem. Other vegetables that grow underground are carrots and radishes. Show a picture of the potato plant.
3. Pass potatoes around for children to explore. Discuss what they notice about each type’s shape, texture, weight, smell, and color. Chart responses.
4. Poll children on what color they think each potato will be on the inside. Will it be the same or different than the outside skin? Show and pass around half of each potato. Discuss how they are the same and different. Inside, the textures are the same, but the colors are different.
5. Potatoes can be cooked and eaten with or without the skin. Unlike some other vegetables, potatoes cannot be eaten raw. They must be cooked before we eat them. Potatoes can be cooked in many ways: mashed, baked, roasted, and boiled. They can also be cut into small pieces to create French fries, tater tots, and home fries. Ask, “Which of these have you eaten? Which do you like best?” Chart responses.
6. In addition to white potatoes and sweet potatoes, there are other varieties of potatoes. Some are yellow, purple, or red, and some are long and skinny, like fingers. They all provide what our bodies need for energy and to grow. Potatoes help our heart to pump blood. Potatoes are high in vitamin C, which helps protect you from getting sick. They help our hearts pump blood and help our stomachs turn food into energy.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What are some ways that potatoes help your bodies? Where do potatoes grow?”

Closing the Lesson

“Potatoes can be eaten in many ways to provide your body with what it needs to do its job.”

Other Ideas

- Post the results of the polls and group discussion on the wall so children can see a visual of their ideas.
- Chart the different ways potatoes are served in the program in a week or a month. Coordinate with the food service staff to serve different varieties of potatoes, such as red, sweet, and fingerlings.
- Show children a video of how potatoes grow and are harvested.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat them in the future. In this lesson, children will use their senses to explore oranges, a citrus fruit that provides our bodies with vitamins and nutrients.

Learning Objectives

Children will be able to state how oranges help our bodies. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/ Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model nutritious eating behaviors. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Fresh oranges. Choose at least two kinds, if available, such as navel, Cara Cara, blood, clementine, tangerine, etc.
- Small bowls.
- Small cups.
- Napkins.
- Paper towels.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Citrus	Peel	Pith	Seeds
	Segments	Squeeze	

Book list:

- "The Fruits We Eat" by Gail Gibbons.
- "Fruit Bowl" by Mark Hoffman.
- "I Can Eat a Rainbow" by Olena Rose.
- "Mrs. Peanuckle's Fruit" by Mrs. Peanuckle.

Teaching Tips:

- Before the lesson, prepare the oranges for sampling by removing the seeds and pith and cutting segments into ½" or smaller. Cut oranges in half for squeezing juice.

Family Engagement

- Post photos of children eating oranges or squeezing orange juice on a family board or in an e-newsletter.
- Share a recipe with families using oranges, such as Fruit Pizza to Go. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/fruit-pizza-go>. Ask them to send in a photo of the family making or eating the fruit pizza.

Introduce the Lesson

"We eat oranges for breakfast, lunch, or snack often. Today, we are going to learn more about oranges, which are part of the fruit group."

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Activity Steps

1. Show children the whole oranges, naming each type of orange. Pass the oranges around for children to examine up close. Ask for their feedback about the texture and smell. Ask, “Are they heavy like a rock or light like a pillow?” Chart their responses.
2. Oranges are part of the fruit food group. They are citrus fruits, meaning they have a tough peel (outer skin) that protects the inside. Oranges grow from the flowers of the orange tree in places where it is warm all year.
3. Some oranges have seeds, others do not. Unlike some fruits, we don’t eat the skin (peel) or the pith, the stringy white part that connects the orange segments to the peel. Oranges can be sweet, like pineapple, or sour, like a lemon. There are many kinds of oranges; some are small, and others are large.
4. Pass around the pieces of orange peel for children to explore. Explain that the peels are for exploring, not eating. Ask children what they think about the peel – what does it feel and smell like? Use a magnifying glass for a closer look.
5. Oranges provide our bodies with vitamin C, which helps prevent sickness. The fiber in oranges helps our bodies break down or digest food and keeps our hearts working.
6. Pass out orange pieces for children to sample. Oranges can be eaten fresh as a snack or on salads. They can also be made into juice. Discuss the taste and record what the children say.
7. Give each child a small cup and a half of an orange. Explain that they will squeeze juice into the container to make orange juice. Encourage children to guess how much juice there will be and mark the side of the cup. Discuss how close the juice came to the line. Drink the orange juice!

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What are some ways oranges help our bodies?”

Closing the Lesson

“Those oranges were juicy. It was fun squeezing our own juice.”

Other Ideas

- Explore other citrus foods, such as lemons, grapefruit, and limes. How do they compare with carrots in color, size, shape, texture, and scent? Do a sample taste of each fruit. Which do the children prefer?
- Coordinate with the food service staff to serve oranges on the day of the lesson.
- Make a simple recipe with children using oranges, such as Tropical Morning Treat <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/tropical-morning-treat>.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat them in the future. In this lesson, children will see how pineapples grow and explore and compare the texture and taste of fresh and canned pineapple.

Learning Objectives

Children will participate in tasting a variety of fruits. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/ Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model healthy eating habits. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- One whole fresh pineapple.
- Pineapple cut in half.
- Canned pineapple in 100 % juice or water.
- Pre-cut samples of fresh pineapple.
- Pictures of pineapple plants.
- Small paper cups or bowls.
- Spoons.
- Napkins or paper towels.
- Magnifying glasses.

Words to Use

Crown **Pineapple** **Pointy** **Prickly**
 Shell **Stiff**

Book list:

- “Watch a Pineapple Grow” by Kirsten Chang.
- “The Fruits We Eat” by Gail Gibbons.

Teaching Tips:

- Before the lesson, prepare fresh pineapple samples, cut into pieces no larger than ½ inch to prevent choking. Remove the eyes, or little black seedlike pieces, under the pineapple skin. Prepare a second sample of canned pineapple.
- Pictures can be used to extend the lesson, especially when actual items are not readily available.

Family Engagement

- Share a recipe using pineapple, such as Summer Fruit Salad. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/summer-fruit-salad>.
- Share the USDA handout “Focus on Whole Fruits” with families. https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-04/Tipsheet_2_FocusOnFruits.pdf.

Introduce the Lesson

Show whole fresh pineapple.

“Does anyone know what kind of fruit this is? It’s a pineapple. We eat pineapple at lunch sometimes. This is where the pineapple we eat at lunch comes from.”

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. The outside of the pineapple is called a shell. Shells are prickly, like a tiny poke. Their leaves are long, pointy, and stiff, meaning they don't bend easily. The top part of the pineapple, including the leaves, is called the crown. Pineapples are one of the tallest fruits. Show the stem end where it is cut from the plant. Ask children if they want to touch or hold the pineapple before passing it around. Some children may not like the spiky texture. Have children use their senses to look, feel, and smell the pineapple. Is it heavy or light? How many different colors do you see? Use magnifying glasses for a closer look at the shell.
2. Show the halved pineapple. This is where the canned pineapple we eat comes from. Offer children to touch and smell. How is the fruit inside the pineapple different than its shell?
3. Pineapples do not grow in Ohio, where we live. They grow very far away where it is hot, and there is a lot of sunshine almost every day. Show and discuss pictures of pineapple plants and pineapple fields.
4. The vitamins and nutrients in pineapples help you from getting sick, help your body grow, and provide energy to play and do activities.
5. Offer children samples of fresh or canned pineapple or both. Discuss the flavor and texture and compare the fresh and canned pineapple. What are the differences and similarities? Which do they prefer? Have children describe the taste and record their responses on chart paper.

Check for Understanding Ideas

"Where do pineapples grow?
How do pineapples help our
bodies do their job?"

Closing the Lesson

"I enjoyed tasting the
pineapple. They taste good
and they are good for our
bodies."

Other Ideas

- Show a video on how pineapples are harvested, such as the "Pineapple Harvest" video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFYEeFpvik8>.
- For groups with older preschoolers, explain that pineapples are a tropical fruit. Show pictures of other tropical fruits, such as mangoes or kiwis. Use a world map to show Ohio and countries with tropical climates, like Costa Rica.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat them in the future. The lesson begins with reading the book “SEE & EAT Spinach: Helping Your Little Ones to Know and Love Their Vegetables” by Carmel Houston-Price. Then, children will use their senses to experience two forms of spinach.

Learning Objectives

Children will be able to describe how spinach helps our bodies. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model nutritious eating habits for children. (Ohio’s Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- “SEE & EAT Spinach: Helping Your Little Ones to Know and Love Their Vegetables” by Carmel Houston-Price.
- Bunch of fresh, raw spinach.
- Frozen or canned spinach.
- Bowls for serving fresh & cooked spinach.
- Small plates, forks, and napkins.
- Child-sized tongs.
- Colander.
- Magnifying glasses.

Words to Use

Fresh Leaves Prepared Veins

Book list:

- “SEE & EAT Spinach: Helping Your Little Ones to Know and Love Their Vegetables” by Carmel Houston-Price.
- “Leaves We Eat (Plant Parts We Eat)” by Katherine Rawson.

Teaching Tips:

- Fresh spinach must be rinsed well to remove dirt that can collect in the leaves.
- Make the book available as a choice if children want to read it again.

Family Engagement

- Share photos, highlights of the lesson, and child’s experience with spinach tasting.
- Share a recipe using fresh spinach, such as Spinach Salad with Apples and Eggs. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/myplate-cnpp/spinach-salad-apples-and-eggs>.

Introduce the Lesson

“Today, we are going to explore a vegetable that is the leaf of the vegetable plant.”

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Introduce children to fresh spinach. Ask if they have seen this vegetable before and if they can guess the name. Explain that this vegetable is spinach, which is the leaves of the spinach plant. Other leafy vegetables we eat include lettuce, kale, and cabbage. How many of these leaves have you tried?
2. Read the book “SEE & EAT Spinach: Helping Your Little Ones to Know and Love Their Vegetables”. Have children observe the images showing how spinach grows and is picked for eating. We can buy and eat fresh spinach, canned spinach, or frozen spinach.
3. Pass the spinach leaves to children to see, feel, and smell. Use magnifying glasses to examine the leaves closer. Encourage them to touch the softness of the leaves and look at the veins that carry water and nutrients to the plant.
4. Eating spinach gives our body many nutrients to help it do its job. It helps our stomach work, keeps our heart pumping blood, builds strong bones, and strengthens our eyes.
5. Provide a taste-sampling of fresh and cooked spinach. Help children use tongs to serve themselves fresh spinach leaves and use spoons or tongs to serve cooked spinach. Discuss how the fresh and cooked spinach look and smell differently. Ask children to describe how each tastes. Chart their responses.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Is spinach a vegetable or fruit?
How does spinach help your body?”

Closing the Lesson

“I’m going to read the book about spinach again. Who wants to join me?”

Other Ideas

- Talk with the program food service staff about adding spinach to the menus. Serve fresh spinach as a snack or meal, raw as a salad with mandarin oranges, or cooked as a vegetable serving.
- Conduct a taste sampling of other leafy vegetables such as lettuce, kale, cabbage, or arugula. Have children describe the taste and texture of each. Use magnifying glasses for a closer look at the leaves.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat them in the future. In this lesson, children will have the opportunity to examine strawberries using their senses to describe how they look, smell, and taste.

Learning Objectives

Children will be able to describe the characteristics of a strawberry. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model nutritious eating behaviors. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition.)

Materials

- Fresh or frozen strawberries (Fresh is preferred. Frozen may get messy as they thaw.)
- Optional – raspberries, blueberries, or blackberries.
- Large bowl.
- Child-size tongs.
- Small plates or napkins.
- Strawberry plant picture and berry picture cards.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Hydrate **Juicy** **Ripe**
Sour **Sweet**

Book list:

- “The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry, and The Big Hungry Bear” by Don Wood.
- “Strawberries are Red” by Petr Horáček.
- “The Fruits We Eat” by Gail Gibbons.

Teaching Tips:

- Whole strawberries may be a choking hazard. Cut them into ½” or smaller bites.
- Using actual fruits is a more concrete way of identifying different berries. Posters or picture cards work well if fruits are not available.

Family Engagement

- Encourage families to play a game of “I Spy” next time they go grocery shopping to look for different berries.
- Post resources on where to go strawberry picking in your area.
- Share a recipe using strawberries, such as Strawberry-Banana Parfait. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/myplate-cnpp/strawberry-banana-parfait>. Ask families to share a photo of them making or eating the parfaits.

Introduce the Lesson

“Today we will be taking a closer look at strawberries, which is a fruit that grows on a strawberry plant.”

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Place a large bowl of strawberries on the table. Using tongs, choose a strawberry from the bowl. Show the whole strawberry: the stem, leaves, and seeds. Cut the berry in half to show the inside. Compare the color and texture of the inside and outside of the strawberry.
2. Show a picture of a strawberry plant. Strawberries grow where we live in Ohio. They ripen and can be picked in late spring and early summer when it starts getting hot. You can buy fresh strawberries all year in the grocery store, but those strawberries come from faraway places. We can also buy frozen strawberries.
3. Eating strawberries helps us fight germs, helps our brains work, and helps our hearts beat and pump blood throughout our bodies.
4. Invite children to use tongs (with help if needed) to pick up a strawberry from the bowl and place it on their plate. Tell the children we will explore this strawberry but won't eat it yet.
5. Have them explore the berry using their sense to look, smell, and touch. Ask children to describe the smell, color, texture, shape, and size.
6. Some fruits, such as apples, have seeds inside, while strawberries have seeds on the outside. Strawberry seeds are ok to eat. Use magnifying glasses to examine the seeds.
7. Strawberries are one kind of berry. Other types include raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries. Display fresh berries, if available, or use picture cards to show images.
8. Use a plastic knife to cut up the strawberry on each child's plate for them to taste. Have children describe how the strawberry tastes (i.e., juicy, sweet, sour, etc.). Record their responses on chart paper.

Check for Understanding Ideas

"Are strawberries a fruit or a vegetable? Where do you find the strawberry seeds? Why are strawberries good for us?"

Closing the Lesson

"It was fun learning more about strawberries and tasting them today. Let's clean up and wash our hands before we go play."

Other Ideas

- Have the children create a fruit snack with strawberries and one other fruit, such as bananas. Provide cut pieces of fruit and a straw. Model how to place the fruit on the straw "skewer", practicing patterns. Provide plain yogurt for dipping.
- Add a variety of play fruits, including strawberries, to the dramatic play area. Post images of different types of berries in the dramatic play or eating area.
- Conduct a taste sampling of different types of berries, such as raspberries and blueberries. Compare the color, size, texture and taste with the strawberries.

Overview

The more you expose children to new foods, the more likely they are to eat them in the future. Vegetables are one of the five food groups. Eating different vegetables makes our food tasty and colorful. In this lesson, children will use their senses to explore tomatoes.

Learning Objectives

Children will describe how tomatoes taste. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/ Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model nutritious eating behaviors. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, and Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Several fresh tomatoes of different sizes (Beefsteak, Roma, cherry, etc.). Choose tomatoes in a variety of colors, if available.
- Tasting samples of tomatoes, cut in ½" or smaller pieces.
- Small bowls.
- Child-size forks.
- Napkins or paper towels.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Juicy **Nutrients** **Sour** **Sweet**
Tart **Tomatoes** **Vitamins**

Book list:

- "Growing Vegetable Soup" by Lois Ehlert.
- "I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato" by Lauren Child.
- "Oliver's Vegetables" by Vivian French.
- "Super Food Power" by Maya Green.
- "The Vegetables We Eat" by Gail Gibbons.

Teaching Tips:

- Nutrients and vitamins are substances from the food we eat that help our bodies function properly.
- Sharing actual food items instead of pictures is more impactful and can help with concrete learning.

Family Engagement

- Share a recipe using tomatoes, such as the colorful Farmer's Market Salsa, <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/farmers-market-salsa>.
- Share resources on local farmers' markets where families can purchase fresh produce, including tomatoes, in season.

Introduce the Lesson

"Today we are going to explore tomatoes, a juicy vegetable that comes in a variety of shapes. After exploring the shapes and textures, we will taste samples."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Show children the large and small tomatoes. Ask if anyone in the group has eaten tomatoes. Give them time to respond.
2. Tomatoes are vegetables that grow on a plant and come in many sizes. Small tomatoes may grow on a vine or a long stem with more than one tomato. As they grow, tomatoes are green. When tomatoes are ripe or ready to eat, they turn bright colors and are juicy. Many people grow tomatoes in their gardens at home in the summer, but we can buy them at the store all year.
3. Pass the whole tomatoes around for the children to explore. Talk about the texture, smell, and shape. Most tomatoes are red but can also be orange or purple. Ask, “What other fruits and vegetables are red? What other foods are shaped like tomatoes?” Chart responses.
4. The part of the tomato that gives it color turns into vitamins and nutrients our bodies need. Eating tomatoes helps our eyes work to see, keeps us from getting sick, helps our heart pump blood through our bodies, and our lungs help us to breathe.
5. We eat many foods made with tomatoes, like ketchup, spaghetti sauce, and salsa. Use pictures to show children different types of tomatoes and food products made with tomatoes.
6. Give each child a sample of the tomatoes. Discuss how the tomato’s inside looks different from the outside, pointing out the juice and the seeds. As you taste the tomato with the children, talk about how it tastes. How does it feel in your mouth? Do the different types or colors of tomatoes taste different? Chart children’s responses.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Where do tomatoes grow? How do tomatoes help our bodies?”

Closing the Lesson

“There are so many ways to eat tomatoes! Their bright colors make our plate so colorful!”

Other Ideas

- Plan a taste sampling using foods made with tomatoes, such as ketchup, tomato sauce, salsa, pizza sauce, or spaghetti sauce. Have children compare the look, smell, and taste of each. Chart their responses.
- Grow tomato plants in the program’s garden. Have children plant, water, and monitor plant growth. Once ripe, use the tomatoes in meals and snacks. Try the colorful Farmer’s Market Salsa, <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/farmers-market-salsa>.

Overview

The vegetables we eat come from different parts of the plant: the roots, stems, leaves, and flowers. Eating a variety of vegetables provides nutrients that help our bodies grow and be strong. In this lesson, children will explore and taste two vegetables that are classified as flowers, cauliflower and broccoli.

Learning Objectives

Children will explain that vegetables come from different parts of the plant. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model nutritious eating behaviors for children. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Small potted plant.
- Vegetables: How They Grow poster.
- One head of cauliflower.
- One head of broccoli.
- Magnifying glasses.
- Small plates and napkins.
- Serving bowl.
- Child-size tongs.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Broccoli	Cauliflower	Floret
Flower buds	Leaves	Roots
	Stem	

Book list:

- "Plants Feed Me" by Lizzy Rockwell.
- "Flowers We Eat (Plant Parts We Eat)" by Katherine Rawson.

Teaching Tips:

- Showing a potted plant is a more tangible way of identifying the parts of the plant. If unavailable, use the Vegetables: How They Grow poster.

Family Engagement

- Email/text families a photo of their child tasting the vegetables and share their child's reactions to the tasting.
- Send the recipe link for Veggie Pizza using broccoli. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/english-muffin-veggie-pizza>. Encourage families to share a photo of them preparing or eating the pizza.

Introduce the Lesson

"Today, we are going to eat flowers! Some vegetables come from the flowering part of vegetable plants. Eating vegetables every day helps our bodies grow and be strong."

Activity Steps

1. Show the small potted vegetable plant or the Vegetables: How They Grow poster to the children and explain that all vegetables come from plants. Identify the four main parts of the plant. The roots are below the soil and take water and food from the soil to grow. The stem grows above ground and carries food and water to the entire plant. It holds up the leaves and flowers. The leaves grow on the stem and turn sunlight into energy. Flower buds look like flowers ready to open. They grow above ground and produce the plant's seed.
2. Explain that they are going to look at two vegetables that are considered flower buds. Pass the bowl around the table and have each child use the tongs to take one broccoli and one cauliflower floret.
3. Ask the children to look at, touch, and smell the vegetables. What do they look like? How do they feel? What is different or the same? Use the magnifying glasses for a closer look.
4. Encourage children to taste each floret. Take a bite to model behavior.
5. Ask what they thought about tasting these vegetables. Which one did they like best? Chart responses.
6. Eating vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower daily helps our bodies grow, keeps our hearts and muscles strong, helps our eyes see, and prevents us from getting sick. Ask, "What other vegetables do you like to eat?"

Check for Understanding Ideas

"Which part of the plant are broccoli and cauliflower?"

Closing the Lesson

"It was interesting learning that broccoli and cauliflower are actually flowers!"

Other Ideas

- Review parts of the plant by having children sing and move to the tune of "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes", using the lyrics below:
Flowers [touch head], leaves [touch arms], stems [touch legs] and roots [touch feet],
Stems and roots.
Flowers, leaves, stems, and roots.
Stems and roots.
Veggies [wiggle hands] like broccoli.
We love to eat!
Flowers, leaves, stems, and roots.
Stems and roots!
- Foods taste different in how they are prepared and served. Try broccoli and cauliflower with salad dressing or hummus for dipping. Steam broccoli and cauliflower. Compare the texture and taste with the raw veggies. Chart if children prefer them cooked or raw.

Overview

The vegetables we eat come from different parts of the plant: the roots, stems, leaves, and flowers. Eating a variety of vegetables provides nutrients that help our bodies grow and be strong. In this lesson, children will identify, touch, and taste the edible leaves, such as spinach and lettuce.

Learning Objectives

Children will explain that vegetables come from different parts of the plant. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model nutritious eating behaviors for children. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Small potted plant.
- Vegetables: How They Grow poster.
- Raw spinach leaves.
- One bunch of lettuce leaves, such as green and red leaf lettuce.
- Magnifying glasses.
- Small bowls, forks, and napkins for each child.
- Child-size tongs.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Flower	Leaves	Lettuce
Nutrients	Roots	Spinach
		Stem

Book list:

- "Plants Feed Me" by Lizzy Rockwell.
- "Leaves We Eat (Plant Parts We Eat)" by Katherine Rawson.

Teaching Tips:

- Showing a potted plant is a more tangible way of identifying the parts of the plant. If unavailable, use the Vegetables: How They Grow poster showing the parts of the plant.

Family Engagement

- Email/text families a photo of their child using the tongs and tasting the lettuce and spinach.
- Ask families to share their favorite way to serve lettuce, spinach, or other leaf vegetables. Post photos &/or recipes on a family board.

Introduce the Lesson

"Vegetables come from plants. Different parts of the plant grow different vegetables. Today, we are going to look at vegetables that come from the leaves of the plant."

Activity Steps

1. Show the small potted vegetable plant or Vegetables: How They Grow poster to the children and explain that all vegetables come from plants. Identify the four main parts of the plant. The roots are below the soil and take water and food from the soil to grow. The stem grows above ground and carries food and water to the entire plant. It holds up the leaves and flowers. The leaves grow on the stem and turn sunlight into energy. Flower buds look like flowers ready to open. They grow above ground and produce the plant's seed.
2. Show a tray of lettuce and spinach leaves. Ask children which part of the plant they think these vegetables come from. Many vegetables are the plant's leaves, such as lettuce, spinach, kale, and cabbage.
3. Eating these leaves provides our bodies with important nutrients to help our eyes, skin, and bones be strong. They also give our body energy to move, learn, and play and help us avoid getting sick.
4. Have each child use the tongs to place a few spinach and lettuce leaves in a bowl.
5. Observe the lettuce and spinach leaves using magnifying glasses. Compare the texture, color, and smell. Demonstrate how to tear the leaves into smaller pieces and encourage the children to taste the leaves.
6. Ask, "How did the leaves taste? Which one did you like better? Chart which one they prefer."

Check for Understanding Ideas

"What part of the plant are spinach and lettuce?"

Closing the Lesson

"Tasting the lettuce and spinach helped us try different vegetables. We can create a salad for lunch with the rest of these leaves."

Other Ideas

- Review parts of the plant by having children sing and move to the tune of "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes", using the lyrics below:
Flowers [touch head], leaves [touch arms], stems [touch legs] and roots [touch feet],
Stems and roots.
Flowers, leaves, stems, and roots.
Stems and roots.
Veggies [wiggle hands] like broccoli.
We love to eat!
Flowers, leaves, stems, and roots.
Stems and roots!
- Create a mini salad bar for lunch or snack. Offer a variety of lettuce, spinach, kale, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, shredded cheese, grilled chicken, and low-fat salad dressing. Let children create their own salad.

Overview

The vegetables we eat come from different plant parts: the roots, stems, leaves, and flowers. In this lesson, children will listen to the story “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens to identify vegetables that come from different parts of the plant. Children will use their senses to learn about the bottom, or root, vegetables.

Learning Objectives

Children will explain that vegetables come from different parts of the plant. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will engage children in activities to promote nutritious eating behaviors. (Ohio’s Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens.
- Potted plant.
- Vegetables: How They Grow poster.
- Carrots with green tops.
- Whole radishes.
- Magnifying glasses.

Words to Use

Bottoms	Carrots	Flowers
Leaves	Radishes	Roots
	Tops	Stem

Book list:

- “Plants Feed Me” by Lizzy Rockwell.
- “Roots We Eat (Plant Parts We Eat)” by Katherine Rawson.
- “Vegetables, Vegetables! (Rookie Read-About Science)” by Fay Robinson.

Teaching Tips:

- Showing a potted plant and real vegetables is a more tangible way of identifying the parts of the plant. If unavailable, use the Vegetables: How They Grow poster and picture cards of vegetables.
- Engage children in the book reading by asking questions and using props related to the story, such as a stuffed rabbit and bear, or pretend vegetables.

Family Engagement

- Encourage families to read “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens or watch the read-aloud video. https://youtu.be/LNeBXB_U05U?si=1cbELH70oEAgkU5-
- Invite families to share how they prepare and eat root vegetables.

Introduce the Lesson

“Today, we are going to read “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens. Look at the picture on the book’s cover. What do you think the story will be about?”

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Read “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens. Ask questions as the story is read, such as, If you were the bear, would you choose tops or bottoms? What do you think will happen next? Which vegetable would you prefer to eat, top or bottom?
2. After reading the story, show the children the carrots and radishes. Remind them that these are the ‘bottom’ or ‘root’ vegetables from the story because they grow below the ground. They are the root of the vegetable plant.
3. Different vegetables grow from different parts of the vegetable plant. Use a potted plant or the Vegetables: How They Grow poster to identify the four main parts of the plant and review the vegetables mentioned in the book. The roots (carrots, radishes, and beets) are below the soil and take water and food from the soil to grow. The stem (celery) grows above ground and carries food and water to the entire plant. It holds up the leaves and flowers. The leaves (lettuce) grow on the stem, turning sunlight into energy. Flower buds (broccoli) look like flowers ready to open. They grow above ground and produce the plant’s seed. Roots are bottom vegetables because they grow below the soil, and stems, leaves, and flowers are top vegetables because they grow above the soil.
4. Engage the children by passing the carrots and radishes to them. Encourage them to use their senses to explore the vegetables and use the magnifying glasses to get a closer look. What do you notice? How are the vegetables the same or different?
5. Ask, “Have you eaten carrots or radishes at home? If so, what did you like/not like about them?” Comment and elaborate on children’s responses.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Which vegetables are bottoms?
Which ones are tops?”

Closing the Lesson

“Here is a clever little rabbit
in our story. He knew how to
plant different top and bottom
vegetables to trick Bear!”

Other Ideas

- Create a farmer’s market in the dramatic play area with various pretend vegetables. Have children identify which vegetables come from the plant’s root, stem, leaves, and flowers. Have them sort vegetables as tops or bottoms.
- Make a graph of the vegetables served at the program during the week. Have children identify which ones are tops and which ones are bottoms.

Overview

The vegetables we eat come from different parts of the plant: the roots, stems, leaves, and flowers. Stem vegetables, such as celery, asparagus, and rhubarb provide nutrients that help our bodies function. In this lesson, children will be introduced to the edible parts of vegetable plants and make a snack using a stem vegetable.

Learning Objectives

Children will explain that vegetables come from different parts of the plant. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will model nutritious eating behaviors for children. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Small potted plant.
- Vegetables: How They Grow poster.
- Stalks of celery, asparagus, and rhubarb.
- Magnifying glasses.
- Tape measure.
- Small plates and napkins.
- Celery sticks.
- Softened cream cheese.
- Fish shaped crackers.
- Plastic spoons.
- Child-sized tongs.

Words to Use

Asparagus	Celery	Flowers
Leaves	Nutrients	Rhubarb
Roots	Stalk	Stem

Book list:

- "Plants Feed Me" by Lizzy Rockwell.
- "Stems We Eat (Plant Parts We Eat)" by Katherine Rawson.
- "Vegetables, Vegetables! (Rookie Read-About Science)" by Fay Robinson.

Teaching Tips:

- Using a potted plant and vegetables is a more concrete way of identifying the parts of the plant. If unavailable, use Vegetables: How They Grow poster and images of the vegetables.
- The fibrous outside layer of the celery sticks can be difficult for children to chew. Use a vegetable peeler to remove when cutting celery into sticks for snack.

Family Engagement

- Email/text families a photo of their child making their celery snack.
- Share the snack recipe with families to make at home. Encourage families to share a photo of them making and eating it.

Introduce the Lesson

"Vegetables come from different parts of the vegetable plants, including the stem. Today, we are going to make a snack using a stem vegetable."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Explain that all vegetables come from plants using a small potted plant or the Vegetables: How They Grow poster. Identify the four main parts of the plant. The roots are below the soil and take water and food from the soil to grow. The stem grows above ground and carries food and water to the entire plant. It holds up the leaves and flowers. The leaves grow on the stem and turn sunlight into energy. Flower buds look like flowers ready to open. They grow above ground and produce the plant's seed.
2. Show the celery, asparagus, and rhubarb stalks. These are stem vegetables. Pass the vegetables so children can look, feel, and smell the vegetables. Use the magnifying glasses for a closer look at the stems. What do they notice? Measure the stalks with a tape measure. Which one is longer?
3. Vegetables from different parts of the plant give our bodies different nutrients. Nutrients are substances in food that the body uses for energy to help us learn and play, keep us from getting sick, and help us grow. Eating different vegetables helps our bodies function as they should. Stem vegetables strengthen our blood and heart and keep food moving through our body.
4. Have children make a snack with a stem vegetable. Give each child a plate with a celery stick, a tablespoon of cream cheese, and five fish-shaped crackers. Demonstrate how to spread the cream cheese onto the celery stick using the spoon and stick the crackers into the cream cheese, so it looks like the fish are swimming across the celery stick.
5. Have children taste their snack. Model taking a bite with the children. Ask what they thought about tasting the celery.

Check for Understanding Ideas

"Which parts of the plant grow vegetables?"

Closing the Lesson

"Our snack was a delicious and fun way to eat a stem vegetable!"

Other Ideas

- Review parts of the plant by having children sing and move to the tune of "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes", using the lyrics below:
Flowers [touch head], leaves [touch arms], stems [touch legs] and roots [touch feet],
Stems and roots.
Flowers, leaves, stems, and roots.
Stems and roots.
Stem veggies [wiggle hands] like celery!
We love to eat!
Flowers, leaves, stems, and roots.
Stems and roots!

Overview

Fruits are one of the five food groups, part of the USDA's MyPlate, and important to a balanced meal. Exposing children to fruit varieties using natural fruits, play food, picture cards, and opportunities for tasting, supports the concept that exposure to new and different foods may lead to tasting these foods in the future. Eating a variety of fruits provides a variety of nutrients to help the body do its job.

Learning Objectives

Children will state the importance of eating fruit every day. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

Teacher will engage children to support the need for balanced nutrition for growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Whole fresh fruit of the teacher's choice, if possible. (Consider common fruits children may not have seen whole: peach, pear, pineapple, green apple).
- Dramatic play fruits.
- Fruit picture cards.
- Fruits How They Grow poster.

Words to Use

Bush	Different	Each day
Food group	Moist	Nutrient
		Vine

Book list:

- "Fruits (Healthy Eating with MyPlate)" by Nancy Dickmann.
- "I Can Eat a Rainbow" by Olena Rose.
- "I Love Fruits" by Sophia Yun.
- "I Spy With My Little Eye...Fruit & Vegetables A to Z" by Maria Yiangou.
- "Mrs. Peanuckle's Fruit Alphabet" by Mrs. Peanuckle.
- "Super Food Power" by Maya Green.

Teaching Tips: Some fruits are considered vegetables nutritionally even though they may be classified as fruit botanically. For example, tomatoes, avocados, cucumbers, and pumpkins are technically fruits but are considered vegetables by the USDA and are presented in the lesson as vegetables. We are following the USDA Child Nutrition Program fruit requirement classification for this lesson.

Family Engagement

- Share the USDA MyPlate Fruits webpage.
<https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/fruits>
- Share their child's comments on the fruit.
- Share book list with families.

Introduce the Lesson

Show MyPlate picture of the MyPlate plate. "Most foods belong to five food groups. It's important we eat different types of foods from each food group so our bodies can learn, play, grow, and be strong. Today we are going to talk about fruits."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Ask children to name fruits. To expose children to a variety, show fresh fruit, play fruit, and fruit picture cards. “What do you know about fruits? What is your favorite fruit and why?”
2. Show Fruits How They Grow poster. Some fruits grow on trees (pears, peaches, bananas), on vines (grapes, watermelon), on bushes (strawberries, blueberries), and pineapples grow on a spikey shrub. “Where do we get fruits from?”
3. Eating fruits give us energy to run, grow, learn, play, and help us from getting sick. Different colored fruits contain different nutrients. Nutrients give our body what it needs to do its job. Eating fruits that are different colors each day gives us a variety of nutrients to help all parts of our body.
4. Have children feel/smell the whole fruit, asking them what they notice. Have children guess what color the fruit is inside and how it might feel before cutting it open.
5. Do a taste sampling; cut food in small bites to prevent a choking hazard. Engage children in conversations on their experience. Identify sweet and sour fruits. Write down their comments to post in the room and share with families.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Why do we eat fruits that are different colors?”

Closing the Lesson

“It was interesting hearing what you thought about the fruits we explored today.”

Other Ideas

- Use magnifying glasses to examine outside and inside of fruits.
- Children use Play-Doh to make a fruit salad.
- Children draw fruit and its plants with crayons, child safe markers, or paints on individual paper or a large piece of paper that several children can draw on at the same time.
- Children chart variety, color, and taste of fruits they eat for meals/snacks at the program or at home. Teach Taste Buds and Your Nose lesson which focuses on the sweet/sour tastes of fruits.
- Teach MyPlate lesson.
- Share this lesson with the cook to try different varieties and colors of fruit for meals and snacks.



Overview

The dairy group is one of the five food groups. The calcium in dairy foods builds bones and keeps them strong. Dairy foods also build up muscles and tissues, help us fight illness, and help our eyes see. Dairy products mainly come from cow's milk. Other sources of dairy foods can be the milk of sheep, goats, and other animals.

Learning Objectives

Children will state how eating or drinking dairy foods builds and strengthens bones. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will engage children to support the need for good nutrition for growth and development (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- MyPlate picture.
- Dairy Foods poster.
- Where Milk & Cheese Comes From poster.
- Human Body poster.
- Variety of cheeses in different forms: string, shredded, sliced. Mozzarella, cheddar, and colby-jack are used in the lesson, but any cheeses can be used. Mild flavored cheese may be preferred by children.
- Plates and napkins.

Words to Use

Dairy	Calcium	Food group
Forms	Shredded	Sliced
String	Vitamins	

Book list:

- "It's Milking Time" by Phyllis Alsdurf.
- "The Milk Makers" by Gail Gibbons.
- "From Milk to Cheese (Who Made My Lunch?)" by Bridget Heos.

Teaching Tips:

- Foods made from milk that have little calcium and a high-fat content are not included in the Dairy Food Group, per MyPlate. This includes butter, sour cream, and cream cheese. These foods are not mentioned in the lesson.
- Soy milk is considered a dairy product even though it is made from soybeans.

Family Engagement

- Share a picture of their child trying the cheese plate. Share which cheeses they tried and how they liked it.
- Encourage families to do a family cheese tasting. Ask them to share which cheeses they tried and submit a photo to share.
- Share a dairy recipe to try at home, such as Strawberry Yogurt Pops. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/myplate-cnpp/strawberry-yogurt-pops>.

Introduce the Lesson

Show the MyPlate picture. "Most foods fit into five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. Today, we are going to learn about the dairy group."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Ask, “Where does milk come from?” Show the Where Milk & Cheese Comes From poster. After cows are milked on the dairy farm, tanker trucks take the milk to factories. The milk is heated to kill germs, and vitamins are added to help our bodies have energy to learn and play, keep us from getting sick, and help us grow. When the milk is ready, it’s put into cartons and shipped to the store for us to buy.
2. Milk is used to make cheese, another dairy food. Ingredients are added to the milk to make it thick and solid. Some cheeses are cooked, and some sit out to harden. It can take a long time to make cheese. When it’s ready to be eaten, it’s packaged and sent to the store.
3. Pass out plates of cheese. Invite children to take a bite after talking about each cheese. Cheese comes in different forms and flavors. The white string cheese is mozzarella. It’s often eaten as a snack or sometimes on pizza. Next is shredded cheese, which means it is cut into small pieces. The orange cheese is cheddar, and it’s frequently used on tacos or with crackers. Next is a slice of colby-jack. It is two different colors because it is made from two cheeses, colby and monterey jack. We use slices of cheese on hamburgers or to make grilled cheese sandwiches. The three forms of cheese we ate were string, shredded, and sliced.” Ask, “What did you like about the different cheeses? How did each taste?”
4. Show the Human Body poster. This skeleton shows our bones. Milk, cheese, and other dairy foods contain calcium, which our bones and teeth need to become hard and strong.
5. Dairy foods are often eaten with other foods, such as cereal with milk, cheese and crackers, cottage cheese and fruit, and yogurt and berries. Ask, “Have you tried any of these combinations? What would you eat with the cheese that we sampled today?”

Check for Understanding Ideas

“How do dairy foods help our body?”

Closing the Lesson

“That was interesting trying three different types of cheese in three different forms to get our calcium!”

Other Ideas

- Sing the song or play a video of the song, having children dance along to “The Skeleton Dance” by Super Simple Songs. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e54m6XOpRgU>.
- For snacks, serve pairings of dairy foods with foods from other food groups, such as yogurt and berries or cheese and crackers. Have children create pairings and vote on which ones they want to try and which they like the best.

Overview

Grains are one of the five food groups. Many foods we eat every day are made from grains. Grains help us feel fuller longer, keep our stomachs strong, and give us energy.

Learning Objectives

Children will state the importance of eating foods made from grains every day. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will engage children to support the need for good nutrition for growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Grains How They Grow picture.
- Grain Group picture.
- Dough in a bag (Add hot water to a bowl of flour until a dough consistency forms. Rub oil on the dough to keep it moist and pliable).
- Uncut loaf of bread (optional).
- YouTube video "Farms, Factories & Food, Bee Bright Trailer". Length: 1:35 minutes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeFHctExbaI>.
- Device to watch the video clip, such as a computer with projector and screen.

Words to Use

Dough	Flour	Food group
	Grain	Wheat

Book list:

- "Bread, Bread, Bread" by Ann Morris.
- "Bread is for Eating" by David and Phillis Gershator.
- "Bread Comes to Life: A Garden of Wheat and a Loaf to Eat" by George Levenson.
- "Pancakes, Pancakes!" by Eric Carle.
- "Too Many Tamales" by Gary Soto.
- "The Tortilla Factory" by Gary Paulsen.

Teaching Tips:

- The entire video, "Farms, Factories & Food, Bee Bright Trailer", will not be shown. Play from the beginning to the 1:35 mark. Stop the video at each step of the process and talk to the children about what they are seeing. You may want to show it more than once or try slowing down the playback speed. Play it without the audio while you narrate.
- Be aware of children or teachers who have Celiac disease or gluten sensitivity and may not be able to eat or touch wheat, barley, or rye foods.

Family Engagement

- Share "Farms, Factories & Food" video link and talking points from your lesson.
- Share a grain recipe with families, such as Bread in a Bag. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/bread-bag>.

Introduce the Lesson

"Most foods fit into five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. Nutritious meals include foods from these five food groups. Today, we are going to learn about grains."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Show the Grain Group picture. Foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, or barley are types of grain products. This includes bread, pasta, breakfast cereals, and tortillas. Some grains we eat whole, such as popcorn, oatmeal, and rice. Grains provide our bodies with nutrients, such as fiber and iron, to help us grow and be strong.
2. Show the Grains How the Grow picture. Wheat is used to make many foods in the grain group. This grain comes from grass grown by farmers. Play the video, “Farms, Factories & Food, Bee Bright Trailer”, from the beginning to 1:35 to show how wheat is made into bread. Use the video without audio and talk to the children about what they see in the bread-making process. Stop the video after each step for conversation and questions.
3. After the video, pass a baggie of dough so children can feel it through the plastic. The dough is gooey and sticky. Food factories cut the dough into different shapes, bake it, and package it to be shipped to the grocery store. Dough makes many other foods besides bread, such as noodles, bagels, English muffins, tortillas, taco shells, hamburger buns, pizza crust, dumplings, and crackers.
4. Food factories also package the flour to be sold at stores so we can make bread and other foods at home. Pass an uncut loaf of bread. Children may not have seen a whole loaf, only sliced bread. Have them touch and smell the bread. Ask them, “What would you bake with dough?”

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What grains would you like to eat? Why do you want to eat grains?”

Closing the Lesson

“We learned a lot! We learned farmers use wheat to get grain which is made into food that gives our bodies energy and power to play.”

Other Ideas

- Bake bread with children using this Bread in a Bag recipe. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/bread-bag>.
- Have a grain tasting. Prepare one or more types of grains for children to try on different days. Have children serve themselves a spoon of quinoa, couscous, brown rice, or oatmeal. Have them describe the taste and texture of the grains.
- Add grain food products, such as play food or empty food boxes and containers, to the dramatic play area. Suggestions include oatmeal, rice, whole wheat pasta, bread, and rolls.

Overview

Proteins are one of the five food groups. Proteins help our bones, muscles, skin, and tissue. Eating a variety of foods with protein gives us different tastes and textures. Proteins come from meat, eggs, beans, seafood, and dairy products.

Learning Objectives

Children will state the importance of eating foods with proteins every day. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will engage children to support the need for good nutrition for growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- MyPlate picture.
- Food with Protein picture.
- Human Body picture.
- Small bags with proteins of teacher's choice: black beans, pinto beans, peas, lentils, tofu, edamame, cube of tofu, or hardboiled egg. Picture cards may be used if food is unavailable.
- Chart paper & markers.
- Device to play song video, such as a computer with speakers and projector.

Words to Use

Food group	Muscle	Oxygen
Protein	Tissue	

Book list:

- "Green Eggs and Ham" by Dr. Seuss.
- "Why We Eat Protein (Bumba Books® — Nutrition Matters)" by Beth Bence Reinke.
- "Protein on MyPlate (What's on MyPlate?)" by Mari Schuh, Gail Saunders-Smith, et al.

Teaching Tips:

- This lesson emphasizes that proteins are from animal and plant-based sources. Some families are vegetarian, vegan, or have cultural or religious practices concerning meat. To respect families' choices, it's best not to make food connections to specific animals or stress meats as the only source of protein.

Family Engagement

- Share a YouTube video link so children can share "The Protein Song" with families. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsilYVfBcXw>.
- Share this recipe for hummus for families to try at home. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/hummus>.

Introduce the Lesson

Show MyPlate picture.

"Most foods fit into five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. Today, we are going to learn about proteins."

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Activity Steps

1. Pass around bags of proteins. Have children look, touch, and smell the proteins. What do they notice? Do they recognize any of these foods? Identify the proteins in the bags.
2. Show a picture of Foods with Proteins. Some proteins come from animals or fish, such as chicken, hamburgers, steak, shrimp, and eggs. Other proteins, such as beans, lentils, edamame, peas, and tofu, come from plants. Cheese and yogurt are made from milk.
3. Show a picture of How Proteins Grow. Black beans and pinto beans grow on a vine or bush, while lentils and edamame grow on a bush. Beans and lentils have to be cooked before we can eat them, and tofu comes from soybeans.
4. Ask, “What protein foods have you tried?” Chart the number of times the foods have been tried, count, and write the total number.
5. Ask, “What protein foods do you enjoy eating?” Chart the child’s name and their response.
6. Show the Human Body picture and point to the areas when mentioned. Explain: Eating foods with protein builds up our muscles and bones. Show me your muscles. Point to a bone. Protein is also in your hair and skin to keep it healthy.
7. Foods with protein carry oxygen (the air we breathe) to your blood and your blood goes to your heart to keep it strong. Point to your heart.
8. Proteins help you get better faster when you’re hurt, like when you fall down really hard. They also help your tissue grow and repair itself when you get hurt. Your tissue is under your skin and wraps around your bones.
9. Play “The Protein Song” and have children dance to the music or pretend to play the guitar with the singer. (Time: 2.03 minutes.). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsilYVfBcXw>.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Which proteins come from plants? Which proteins come from animals or fish?”

Closing the Lesson

“The ‘Protein Song’ was a fun way to remember why we should eat foods with protein every day!”

Other Ideas

- Make a simple dip recipe with children, such as hummus, black bean dip, or pinto bean dip. Children can assist with smashing the beans and mixing ingredients. Serve with raw veggies or whole wheat pita bread. Search www.myplate.gov/recipes for recipes.
- Do a taste sampling of different cooked beans. Chart children’s reactions.
- Hang pictures used in this lesson in the dramatic play area and science area.

Overview

Vegetables are one of the five food groups. They grow above or below ground and come from the roots, stems, leaves, and flowers of plants. Eating different colors of vegetables gives our bodies nutrients to help different parts of our body function, give us energy, and prevent us from getting sick.

Learning Objectives

Children will state the importance of eating vegetables every day. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.)

The teacher will engage children to support the need for good nutrition for growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Whole fresh vegetables of the teacher's choice, (Consider vegetables children eat and may not have seen whole or uncooked: potato, head of broccoli, head of cauliflower, carrot with the green leaf top, head of lettuce, celery with leaves.)
- Bottle of tomato or carrot juice, if possible.
- Chart paper and markers.
- Magnifying glasses.
- MyPlate picture.
- Vegetables How They Grow picture.
- Vegetable Group picture.
- How to Eat Vegetables picture.
- Salad picture.

Words to Use

Flower	Food group	Leaf
Nutrient	Root	Stem

Book list:

- "Growing Vegetable Soup" by Lois Ehlert.
- "I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato" by Lauren Child.
- "Oliver's Vegetables" by Vivian French.
- "Rah, Rah, Radishes. A Vegetable Chant" by April Pully Sayre.
- "Super Food Power" by Maya Green.
- "The Vegetables We Eat" by Gail Gibbons.

Teaching Tips:

- Some fruits are considered vegetables nutritionally even though they may be classified as fruit botanically. Tomatoes and cucumbers are technically fruits but are considered vegetables by the USDA. This lesson follows the USDA Child Nutrition Program vegetable requirement classification.

Family Engagement

- Share a recipe for families to try at home, such as Squash Salsa: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/squash-salsa>. Have families share a photo of them preparing or eating the salsa.
- Encourage families to visit local farmers' markets to view and purchase a variety of fresh vegetables.

Introduce the Lesson

Show the My Plate Picture.

"Most foods fit into five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. Today, we will explore vegetables."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Ask children if they know what kind of foods rabbits eat. (Carrots, celery, lettuce, spinach, bell peppers). "Rabbits like vegetables! Eating like bunnies is a good idea to help us grow healthy and strong!"
2. Show How Vegetables Grow picture. Vegetables grow under the ground and above the ground. They grow in gardens, pots, and on farms. Some vegetables are the stem of the plant: asparagus, celery, and bok choy. Some are the leaves: spinach, kale, and lettuce. Other vegetables are the flowers: broccoli, cauliflower, and artichokes. Some vegetables are roots like carrots, radishes, beets, and potatoes.
3. Pass around fresh vegetables. Have children use their senses to explore the vegetables. How do they smell and feel? Which ones have they eaten? Use magnifying glasses for a closer look.
4. Show Vegetable Group picture. Point out the variety and different colors of vegetables. Engage in conversation emphasizing the different vegetable colors. Different colors of vegetables provide our bodies with different nutrients. Ask, "Which vegetables do you enjoy eating?" Chart the child's name and their vegetables. Discuss the colors of vegetables the children like.
5. Show a picture of How to Eat Vegetables. Explain that vegetables can be eaten raw or cooked. Some vegetables, like carrots and tomatoes, can be made into juice to drink. Peas, green beans, and onions are often added to soups or casseroles. Potatoes can be cut up as French fries, mashed for mashed potatoes, or eaten whole as baked potatoes.
6. Show Salad picture. Salads are a great way to eat different colors of vegetables. You can put lots of vegetables in a salad like lettuce, spinach, kale, carrots, celery, mushrooms, cucumbers, radishes, beets, all colors of peppers, and tomatoes.
7. Ask: "How do you like to eat your vegetables?" Add answers to the chart.

Check for Understanding Ideas

"Why is it valuable to eat different colors of vegetables every day?"

Closing the Lesson

"Today at lunch, let's identify what vegetables we are eating and see what color they are."

Other Ideas

- Do a taste sampling of vegetables in different forms, such as canned, fresh, and frozen peas. How do they differ in color, taste, and texture? Which ones do the children prefer?
- Use a rainbow to chart the colors of vegetables children eat for meals/snacks at the program during the week. How many different vegetables were served? Which colors were served most and least often?
- Display a tray of fresh vegetables. Have children guess which part of the plant (root, stem, leaf, flower) they come from by looking at their size and shape.

Overview

MyPlate is a visual reminder to choose foods from each of the five food groups every day as part of a balanced diet. Eating a variety of foods gives the body different nutrients to do its job, provides energy to think and play, and helps us grow and be strong.

Learning Objectives

Children will identify the five food groups. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will engage children to support the need for balanced nutrition for growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Five Food Group posters: Fruit, Vegetable, Grain, Protein, Dairy.
- "Healthy Eating Habits" by Beth Bence Reinke. (Optional).
- MyPlate picture.
- Food picture cards.
- Device to play music video.

Words to Use

Balanced	Food groups	Nutrients
	MyPlate	

Book list:

- "Healthy Eating Habits" by Beth Bence Reinke.
- "MyPlate and You (Health and Your Body)" by Gillia M. Olson.
- "Healthy Eating with MyPlate Books - Set of 6" by Mari Schuh.

Teaching Tips:

- Before this MyPlate lesson, teach the five food group lessons: Bunches of Fruit, Vegetable Medley, Protein Power, Go for Grains, and Dairy for Your Day. Children's introduction to the food groups is necessary to understand how MyPlate is used.

Family Engagement

- Share the link "Discover MyPlate "Reach for the Sky." <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-reach-sky-music-video>.
- Provide the MyPlate graphic to encourage families to plan meals using all five food groups.
- Share tip sheets and webpages from USDA MyPlate U.S. Department of Agriculture with families. <https://www.myplate.gov/resources>.

Introduce the Lesson

Show the MyPlate picture. "We've learned about the five food groups, fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. Now we are going to learn how to put the food groups together to make a balanced meal."

Activity Steps

1. Review five food groups using the food group posters: Fruit Group, Vegetable Group, Protein Group, Grain Group, and Dairy Group. Ask children to identify a few foods and its food group. Remind children eating foods from each group every day gives us energy to play and learn, makes our bones, teeth, and muscles strong, and keeps our heart and stomach working well.
2. Read “Healthy Eating Habits” by Beth Bence Reine. Discuss what they heard. (Optional).
3. Show MyPlate picture. Explain MyPlate shows us how to choose foods from each food group to eat and drink. This reminds us to choose foods from the five food groups, so all parts of our bodies get the nutrients they need to do their jobs, like, growing, running, climbing, thinking, eating, learning, and playing.
4. Have each child choose a food picture card. Using the MyPlate picture, children identify their food and the food group, such as bread/grain group. Assist children as needed. Have children lay their cards on the MyPlate picture in the correct food group with your guidance. A balanced meal includes foods from all five food groups.
5. Repeat with different food cards as children show interest.
6. Move to where there is space to dance. Play the video and dance to “Discover MyPlate ‘Reach for the Sky.’”
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-reach-sky-music-video>

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What are the five food groups on MyPlate?”

Closing the Lesson

“Let’s clean up the MyPlate activity. We will use the MyPlate picture at lunch to identify the different food groups.”

Other Ideas

- Have children replicate MyPlate using paper plates, crayons, and markers by drawing foods that belong in each food group. Assist children with writing the name of the food groups on the plate.
- Access activity resources on MyPlate.gov and USDA Food and Nutrition Services websites.
<https://www.myplate.gov/resources> and <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-five-food-groups-poster>.

Overview

Our bodies were designed to give us signals when they are hungry and when they are full. By listening to how we feel, we can tell if we are hungry or full. When we feel full, our stomachs have enough food to fuel us until we are hungry again.

Learning Objectives

Children will consume food in response to their bodies' signals. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

Teacher will define ways to support listening to hunger and fullness cues to support children's growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition.)

Materials

- Human Body poster.
- Teddy Bear or stuffed animal.
- Sand table or individual sand containers.
- Disposable cups for sand table.
- Scoops or spoons to pour sand into cups.
- Assorted play food-optional.

Words to Use

Full Hungry Stomach

Book list:

- "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle.
- "Too Many Tamales" by Gary Soto.

Teaching Tips:

- Weight is not a part of this lesson. Weight is influenced by several factors, not just food intake.
- Be considerate of children who may be food insecure. They may not have regular access to enough food and may prioritize eating more when food is available. To learn more about food insecurity visit: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/definitions-of-food-security/>.

Family Engagement

- Share the following links with families: What are hunger and fullness cues?
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/all-childrens-hospital/services/pediatric-and-adolescent-medicine/healthy-weight-initiative/resources-for-all-ages/hunger-fullness-in-children>.

Introduce the Lesson

"Tell me about your pets and how do you know when they are hungry? Just like animals, our bodies let us know when we start to feel hungry."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Ask, “How can you tell when you are starting to feel hungry?” Our stomachs growl, and we become cranky, upset, or tired.
2. While we eat, our body tells us when we are getting full. Then, our body tells us when our stomach is full. When we are full, our body has enough fuel to play, learn, and grow until we are hungry again.
3. Imagine your stomach is like a car’s gas tank. Just like a car needs gas to run, our body needs food to play, learn, and grow. When we play and grow, our body uses food, and we eat to refill it. So, we need fuel (food) just like a car needs gas.
4. Show the Human Body poster. Point out the stomach. Ask children to make a fist; this is how big your stomach is.
5. Ask, “How does your stomach feel if it is empty? If it is full?” If we keep eating after we feel full, we may feel stuffed and may get a stomachache.
6. Give each child a disposable cup at the sand station. Pretend the empty cup is your empty stomach. Pretend you are eating broccoli. Pour a tiny bit of sand into your cup. Now eat peaches; pour more sand into your “stomach.” “Eat” a whole wheat English muffin; pour a little more sand. “Eat” bites of chicken; add more sand. “Drink” your milk; add more sand. The cup, like your stomach, fills up with food. (Optional-use play food from each food group the children are “eating”).
7. We can’t see our stomach when we are eating, so we can’t see if it’s full. So, we must think, does it feel like I’m still hungry or full?

Check for Understanding Ideas

“How do you know when you are hungry?” “How do you know when you are full?”

Closing the Lesson

“Our body depends on us to eat the amount of food right for our bodies. That means we need to always check for the hungry or full signals.”

Other Ideas

- Use water instead of sand to fill the cups.
- Teach Sweet Treats, A Sometime Food lesson.

Overview

Our bones depend on us to drink and eat certain foods. Eating and drinking calcium-rich foods every day helps our bones stay strong.

Learning Objectives

Children will state how to keep bones strong. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.a.).

Teacher will define ways to support good nutrition and to support the growth and development of children. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition.)

Materials

- “Bones” by Stephen Krensky or video of book reading. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAV4nOfVajk> (optional).
- Human Skeleton picture.
- Soft or slightly damp sponge.
- Twig or craft stick.
- Foods with Calcium picture.
- Selection of calcium-rich foods, if possible. (Choose from milk, cheese, non-flavored yogurt, broccoli, spinach, kale, collard greens, Bok choy, chickpeas, lentils, beans (canned baked beans, green and red beans), and oranges).

Words to Use

Calcium Everyday Skeleton

Book list:

- “Bones” by Stephen Krensky.

Teaching Tips:

- Sharing food items, instead of food pictures, is more relatable, impactful, and may help with concrete learning.
- Promote non-sugary, low-fat foods. (e.g. ice cream is a source of calcium but is high in sugar, fat, and calories) Yogurt flavors targeted for kids may be high in sugar. Flavored milk is high in sugar.
- Foods in the lesson are a good source of calcium, but not the only sources. There are calcium enriched foods, such as cereal and juice, but are not listed as they may contain more than the recommended levels of sugar per serving.

Family Engagement

- Share “The Skeleton Dance” video link so they can sing and dance to it as a family. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e54m6XOpRgU>.
- Ask families to share a text, picture, or email of a food they ate that is a good source of calcium.

Introduce the Lesson

“We’re going to learn how to grow strong bones by what we eat and drink.”

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Ask children to touch their heads, ribs, wrists, ankles, shins, and fingers, explaining these are just a few of the bones in their body.
2. Read “Bones” by Stephen Krensky or show a video of the book reading. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAV4nOfVajk>. (Optional)
3. Show the Human Skeleton picture to illustrate our bones. Point to the bones on the skeleton that you had them identify. Strong bones hold us up and help us move.
4. Pass the sponge, then the twig/craft stick. Ask children to describe how the sponge looks and feels compared to the stick. Talk about how the sponge is soft and squishy with many holes. Ask, “What would happen if our bones were squishy like a sponge instead of hard like a stick?”
5. Explain that to keep our bones strong, we need to drink or eat certain foods every day. These foods have calcium in them. Calcium is a mineral that our body needs to build and maintain strong bones.
6. Show foods or the Foods with Calcium picture that are a good source of calcium. (Choose a selection from the following foods: milk, cheese, yogurt, broccoli, spinach, kale, collard greens, bok choy, chickpeas, lentils, beans (canned baked beans, green and red beans), and oranges).
7. Have children raise their hands for the foods they’ve drank or eaten. Place food pictures on the floor or taped to the wall. Have children move to their favorite calcium-rich foods. Identify foods they have not tried yet. Chart their responses.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What can we eat and drink to keep bones strong? What happens to our bones if we don’t eat and drink foods with calcium?”

Closing the Lesson

“Our class is going to have strong bones drinking milk and eating these foods.”

Other Ideas

- Sing a song or play a video of the song and have children dance along to “The Skeleton Dance” by Super Simple Songs. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e54m6XOpRgU>.
- Children draw pictures of their skeletons on black paper with chalk.
- Taste samples of foods that are a good source of calcium, ensuring proper cooking if required. Take a picture and chart if the child liked/disliked.
- At meal and snack times, identify foods they are eating/drinking that are good sources of calcium and ask why these foods are important for their bodies.

Overview

Bones become stronger the more we use them. Performing specific types of physical activities, such as weight-bearing activities that use the force of our muscles to put weight on our bones, builds strong bones. Weight-bearing activities for children do not mean lifting weights; it means using their body as the weight.

Learning Objectives

Children will demonstrate an exercise that strengthens bones. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Motor Development 1.a.).

Teacher will provide the knowledge and opportunity for children to demonstrate how to strengthen their bones. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Child Growth & Development/Developmental Process).

Materials

- Human Skeleton picture set of skeletons in exercise positions.
- "Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp" by Carol Diggory Shields.

Words to Use

Exercise Skeleton Weight-bearing

Book list:

- "Bones" by Stephen Krensky.

Teaching Tips:

- Plan and prepare the environment to fit the group size and activity. Keep in mind children's ability to self-regulate and spatial awareness to stop/control their movements, and if there is adequate space to move.
- When identifying bones, the lesson may use the name of the body part and not the name of the bone for child familiarity. (i.e. thigh instead of femur bone).

Family Engagement

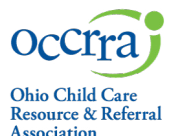
- Encourage families to read "Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp" by Carol Diggory.
- Suggest families have children march, stomp, hop, and walk like an animal to meal time, bath time, and bed time.
- Suggest families take a walk and mix walking with hopping, stomping, and running.

Introduce the Lesson

"We're going to learn how to keep bones strong by using our body to do special exercises."



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Activity Steps

1. Ask children to touch their shoulders, hips, backbone, thighs, shins, ankles, and feet.
2. Use one of the Human Skeleton pictures to illustrate all the bones in our body. Point to the bones on the skeleton that you had them identify.
3. Bones need to be strong to hold us up and help us move. How would we look if we didn't have bones? We'd be a puddle on the floor. Bones need exercise to grow and stay strong. Certain exercises are best for bones. These exercises are called weight-bearing exercises because your body pushes weight down on your bones.
4. Read the book "Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp" by Carol Diggory Shields. Dinosaurs are building strong bones by stomping.
5. Have children stomp in place; explain that they are putting weight on their feet, ankles, legs, hips, and backbone. Have them point to these bones. They are making their bones strong by stomping.
6. Add different weight-bearing exercises. As space allows, this can be done in the classroom, outside, or in an indoor large motor space.
 - a. March, jump, and run in place.
 - b. Jump forward and backward.
 - c. Hop on two feet and hop on one foot.
 - d. Do jumping jacks.
 - e. Dance.
7. Show the Human Skeleton picture set. Ask children what exercises the skeletons are doing.

Check for Understanding Ideas

"Show us your favorite exercise that makes your bones strong."

Closing the Lesson

"The weight-bearing exercises have made your bones so strong today. Let's hop or stomp to our next activity."

Other Ideas

- Play Simon Says or Freeze Game. Have children run, hop, gallop, do jumping jacks, jump forwards/backwards, and walk like an animal on all fours. Adapt rules of the game to the child's development. Children should not have to leave the game if they don't do what "Simon Says," or don't freeze in Freeze Game.
- Sing song or play video of song, "The Skeleton Dance" by Super Simple Songs, while children and teacher dance. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e54m6XOpRgU>.

Overview

Teeth chew our food into small pieces so our body gets the nutrients it needs to be healthy. Nutrients are substances in food that the body uses to grow, keep us from getting sick, and have energy to learn and play. Eating and drinking certain foods and beverages keeps our teeth strong. When we eat some foods, teeth become weak, can hurt, and interfere with getting nutrients from food.

Learning Objectives

Children will identify why it's important to keep teeth strong and healthy. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.a.).

Teacher will define how to support healthy growth and development through good nutrition. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition.)

Materials

- Mouth picture.
- Human Body picture.
- Healthy Habits for Healthy Smiles picture.
- Food picture cards &/or play food.
- Two baskets or bags. One marked with a smiley face and one with a frown face.

Words to Use

Cavities	Chew	Grind	Nutrients
	Strong	Weak	

Book list:

- "The Tooth Book" by Dr. Seuss.
- "Why Should I Brush My Teeth?" by Katie Daynes.
- "Help the Lion Brush His Teeth" by Sophie Schoenwald.

Teaching Tips:

- If a child states their family lets them eat unhealthy foods, reply, "Treats are okay to eat sometimes. Drink water to wash away the food. It's important to brush your teeth morning and night."

Family Engagement

- Print Healthy Habits for Healthy Smiles poster for each family. <https://www.ada.org/resources/community-initiatives/national-childrens-dental-health-month>.
- Share book list with families to check out at local library

Introduce the Lesson

"Teeth help us chew foods, talk clearly, give our face its shape, and they are part of our smile. We're going to learn why our teeth are important and what foods keep our teeth strong."

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Activity Steps

1. Strong teeth are best for chewing food. Our teeth have different jobs. Front teeth are for taking bites, and back teeth are for chewing, grinding, or squishing our food into tiny pieces. When eating a carrot, our front teeth bite off a piece, and our back teeth chew the carrot into small pieces. Show the Mouth picture.
2. When we chew food, it tells our stomach that food is coming, and our stomach gets ready to remove nutrients from the food. Nutrients are parts of the food that the body uses to grow, avoid getting sick, and have the energy to learn and play. Show the Human Body picture.
3. Once the carrot is in tiny pieces, we swallow it so our stomach can pull the nutrients out of it. The nutrients go to our bones, blood, muscles, eyes, teeth, hair, skin, fingers, and toenails. They give us energy, help us learn and play, avoid getting sick, and help us grow.
4. We must keep our teeth strong to chew food for our body to get the nutrients it needs. “How do we keep our teeth strong?” Drink water! It washes germs off your teeth. You can’t always see if sugar or tiny pieces of food are on your teeth. Brush your teeth to clean them when you get up in the morning and go to bed at night.
5. Certain foods, such as cheese, vegetables, and meat, and drinking milk strengthen teeth. When you want a snack, choose these foods to help keep your teeth strong. Drink milk or water with your snack.
6. Some foods cause teeth to get little holes called cavities. Cavities weaken teeth and can make chewing food hurt. Foods that can cause cavities are candy, chocolate, ice cream, fruit gummies, cookies, soft drinks, chips, juice, and donuts.
7. Give each child a food picture card or piece of play food. Have children name their food and decide if it strengthens or weakens their teeth. Children sort their cards or food by placing them in the correct bag or basket, marked with a smiling face (Strong teeth) or a frowning face (Weak teeth).

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Why do our teeth need to be strong?”

Closing the Lesson

“Our class will drink milk and water and eat foods that can strengthen our teeth.”

Other Ideas

- Ask children at meals/snacks how did your teeth help you eat today? What food are you glad your teeth helped you chew?
- Partner with a dentist in your community to talk to the children and provide toothbrushes and toothpaste. Ask if they have resources for families.
- Print and use activity sheets from the American Dental Association <https://www.ada.org/resources/community-initiatives/national-childrens-dental-health-month>.

Overview

There are different areas of the tongue with specific tastes. These taste buds make eating pleasurable, which helps provide us with the nutrients necessary for growth. Taste buds help determine if foods are safe or harmful to eat and prepare the stomach to digest food. Our nose also helps us taste food.

Learning Objectives

Children will state what taste buds do for our bodies. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.a.).

Teacher will support children in identifying parts of their body and their functions. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition.)

Materials

- Tongue picture.
- Hand-held mirrors.
- Taste Areas on Tongue picture.
- Group of sweet, salty, bitter, and sour taste pictures.
- Food samples from each taste bud area (fresh or canned). Examples: Diced peach (sweet), raspberry or diced grape (sour), diced ham (salty), broccoli floret (bitter).
- Plates or napkins.

Words to Use

Bitter **Pleasurable** **Salty** **Sour**
Sweet **Taste buds**

Book list:

- "Our Mouths Can Taste (Our Amazing Senses)" by Jodi Wheeler-Toppen.

Teaching Tips:

- This lesson focuses on the four tastes that are most appropriate and easily understood by preschoolers. The fifth taste, umami (savory), is not included.
- Ice cream, chips, and French fries are listed as examples. They are included as a taste reference for children, even though they are high in sugar and fats.

Family Engagement

- Send families a brief note about the food the children sampled and the lesson. If possible, share pictures of their child eating.
- Send Taste Areas on Tongue picture home with children with a short note about the lesson. Share with families how to do their own taste testing. Give them ideas of salty, sweet, sour, and bitter foods to try.

Introduce the Lesson

"How do we know what food tastes like? Our tongue, nose, and brain tell us."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. There are little bumps on our tongues that send messages to our brains about how something tastes. These bumps are called taste buds. Show Tongue picture and pass around mirrors so children can see the bumps on their tongues.
2. Taste buds are important because they give us a feeling when we eat, which helps our body to eat. They tell us if foods are good to eat or rotten and may hurt us if we eat them. The taste buds send a message to the stomach that food is coming so the stomach gets ready to pull the nutrients out of it. Nutrients are part of the food that the body uses to give us energy, help us learn and play, keep us from getting sick, and help us grow.
3. Chewing food releases chemicals that travel up to your nose. Your nose helps your taste buds know how something tastes. Sometimes, our noses are stuffed up when we are sick. Food doesn't taste like it should because the nose doesn't get the message from the taste buds to figure out how it tastes.
4. Our taste buds have different types of tastes. They tell us if foods are sweet, salty, bitter, and sour. Show Taste Areas on Tongue picture. We taste sweet foods on the tip of our tongue, like ice cream, pears, watermelon, cherries, apples, cereal, blueberries, yogurt, bananas, peaches, strawberries, and kiwi.

The front sides of our tongue taste salty foods like chips, French fries, ham, bacon, crackers, pizza, tacos, and canned foods like spaghetti-o's and ravioli. When we add salt to food, our taste buds taste the salt and the food. The back sides of our tongue taste sour foods that might make us pucker our lips. Sour foods can include oranges, lemons, grapefruit, limes, cherries, cranberries, yogurt, grapes, and raspberries. Some foods, like grapes and cherries, can be either sweet or sour, depending on what kind or how ripe they are.

The very back of our tongue tastes bitter foods like hot cocoa, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and cranberries.

5. Provide samples of sweet, salty, bitter, and sour foods for children to taste. (See Materials list for suggested examples). Talk about how each food tastes. Show where those taste buds are on the Taste Areas on Tongue picture.

Check for Understanding Ideas

"What do our taste buds do?
What types of tastes are there?"

Closing the Lesson

"That was interesting learning
about our taste buds and nose!
Today at lunch/snack let's see
what our taste buds taste!"

Other Ideas

- Show the video, "The Sense of Taste-How Does it Work Senses for Kids", to the children without the audio. The teacher can explain as the video is playing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SneTFJc7u7Y>.
- Throughout the week, have children identify areas of their tongue during meals/snacks.

Overview

After reading “Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z” by Lois Ehlert, children will create a classroom book of nutritious foods for every letter of the alphabet.

Learning Objectives

Children will identify nutritious foods for every letter in the alphabet. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher defines ways to support good nutrition and children’s growth and development. (Ohio’s Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- “Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z” by Lois Ehlert.
- Chart paper.
- Drawing paper.
- Crayons or markers.
- Materials to assemble pages into a book, such as a stapler, 3-hole punch, yarn, or binder.

Words to Use

Alphabet	Author	Book
Illustrator		Nutritious

Book list:

- “A Gardener’s Alphabet” by Mary Azarian.
- “Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z” by Lois Ehlert.
- “My Favorite Filipino Foods from A to Z” by Anne Castro.

Teaching Tips:

- Asking open-ended questions before and during book reading sparks curiosity and keeps children engaged.
- Depending on the age and group size, the classroom book does not need a page for all 26 alphabet letters. The book should have at least one page for every child in the group.
- Use picture cards or posters of food groups to spark ideas of which food to draw.

Family Engagement

- Encourage families to read “Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z” by Lois Ehlert. Share a video link of the read-aloud book. <https://youtu.be/AVLwjj6DSBE?si=PaTLEsDUXrWiDahs>
- Send families a recording of their child reading the classroom book.

Introduce the Lesson

“There are nutritious foods for every letter of the alphabet. Nutritious foods give our bodies what it needs to do its job.”

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Activity Steps

1. Show children the book “Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z” by Lois Ehlert and ask them what they think it is about. Read the book, identifying the letter on the page and the fruits and vegetables that begin with that letter. Ask questions as you read, such as “What letter comes next? What vegetables begin with C?”
2. Have children name the fruits and vegetables that they recognize. Explain words that may be unfamiliar to children. Quince is a fruit like an apple or pear. Ugli Fruit is a Jamaican tangelo, a cross between an orange and grapefruit flavor. Xigua (zi-gwah) is the Chinese word for watermelon.
3. This book identifies fruits and vegetables for each letter of the alphabet, but there are other nutritious foods for each letter we eat daily. Nutritious foods are part of the five food groups (fruits, vegetables, dairy, protein, and grain). Eating a variety of nutritious foods helps our body do its job.
4. Ask children to think of other nutritious foods besides fruits and vegetables, such as yogurt, cheese, chicken, and oatmeal. Write words on chart paper and identify the beginning letters. If children answer cookie, donut, etc., validate their answer and suggest a nutritious food for that letter.
5. Today, we will create our own “Eating the Alphabet” book. Pass out paper, crayons, and markers. Ask each child to draw a nutritious food on their paper. Assist children in identifying foods or refer to the book as needed.
6. When children finish drawing, ask them to identify the food on their paper. Write the letter and food name on the paper, such as “A apple.” Assist children who want to write the letter and word themselves. If time permits, have the children draw another food picture.
7. Fasten papers together into a classroom book. Assist children in printing their names on a title page as the book’s authors (writers) and illustrators (who created the picture). Read the book together.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What fruit begins with A? What letter does pumpkin begin with?” (Repeat with a few other letters, though not necessary to do all 26 letters).

Closing the Lesson

“Creating our own book helps us identify nutritious foods and learn our letters. The book will be in the library area for you to read.”

Other Ideas

- Provide paper and crayons for free play if children want to create more pages for the classroom book in the following days or weeks.
- Sing and dance to “Apples and Bananas” by Raffi. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5b-oUqmqCQ>. Create your own version of the song by having children replace apples and bananas with other foods. Record children’s responses to “I like to eat, eat, eat _____ and _____.”
- Create a book for just one letter of the alphabet, such as “Foods that Begin with C.” Have children draw pictures or cut images from magazines.

Overview

Nutritious snacks give us energy in between meals. A snack that includes foods from two or more food groups gives us longer-lasting energy. In this lesson, children will create snack combinations using foods from two different food groups. They will distinguish between everyday food choices and sometimes food options.

Learning Objectives

Children will identify nutritious snack options. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness 2.c.).

Teacher defines ways to support good nutrition and children's growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Pretend play foods and empty food containers representing the five food groups and sometimes foods, such as chips, cookies, or ice cream.
- Picture cards of foods or Food Group posters (optional).
- Container to hold play food, such as a basket or box.

Words to Use

Energy	Food groups	Snack
Everyday foods	Sometimes foods	

Book list:

- "Gregory the Terrible Eater" by Mitchell Sharmat.
- "Healthy Snacks on MyPlate (What's on MyPlate?)" by Mari Schuh.
- "Go, Go, Grapes! A Fruit Chant" by April Pulley Sayre.
- "Rah, Rah, Radishes! A Vegetable Chant" by April Pulley Sayre.

Teaching Tips:

- Giving young children pretend food items to manipulate makes the concepts more tangible. Picture cards or posters may be used if an assortment of pretend foods is unavailable.
- During snack time, have children identify which foods belong to each food group.

Family Engagement

- Share a simple snack recipe with families such as this one for hummus. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/hummus>. Encourage them to serve it with fresh veggies or whole wheat pita bread.
- Ask families to share photos of the family preparing or eating the snack at home. Post pictures on a family board.

Introduce the Lesson

"Today, we are going to learn how to choose snacks to give us energy between meals."

Activity Steps

1. Ask, “When do you eat snacks? What type of food do you like to eat for a snack?” Snacks are the food we eat between meals, so we don’t get too hungry. They give our bodies energy so we can think, learn, and play.
2. Snacks that give us the most energy combine foods from two or more food groups. Food groups are the foods on MyPlate that we eat every day and include fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy.
3. Empty a container of pretend food items and have the children sort them into the five food groups. Assist children with identifying and sorting items. Refer to the food group posters, as needed.
4. Point out that some of the foods do not belong in any of the five food groups. Ask, “Which foods don’t belong?” Have children identify the foods. Items such as chips, ice cream, fruit gummies, and cookies are sometimes foods, not everyday foods. They are foods that don’t always give us the energy we need, even though we call them snacks.
5. An energizing snack includes foods from at least two food groups. Pick out two different foods to demonstrate, such as cheese and crackers.
6. Ask children to select a food item from one of the five food groups. Have each child match their food with another child’s item to create a snack combination. Examples may include strawberries and yogurt, whole wheat bread and nut butter, or cheese and carrot sticks.
7. Repeat selecting foods and making different combinations.
8. Ask, “Which snack combinations would you like to try?” Chart the different combinations mentioned by the children.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What are examples of everyday foods and sometimes foods? Which ones give us more energy?”

Closing the Lesson

“Let’s get ready for snack time so we have energy for the rest of the day.”

Other Ideas

- Have children count the number of snack matches they made during the activity. List the snack combinations on chart paper. Poll the children on which ones they would like to eat. Provide a list to the program’s food service staff to include as part of the snack menu rotation.
- Have children draw their different snack combinations. Compile drawings to create a snack menu for the dramatic play area.

Overview

A well-balanced breakfast gives our brains and bodies energy for the day. This lesson uses a familiar children's book, "The Very Hungry Caterpillar", to help children understand the importance of eating a nourishing breakfast every day.

Learning Objectives

Children will identify nourishing breakfast food options. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness 2.c.). Teacher defines ways to support nutrition and children's growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle.
- Basket/container of an assortment of pretend play foods. Include foods from the book, such as fruits, ice cream, pie, and candy, as well as breakfast foods such as cereal, pancakes, milk, and yogurt. Picture cards may be used if an assortment of food is unavailable.

Words to Use

Breakfast Energy Every day

Book list:

- "Eating the Alphabet" by Lois Ehlert.
- "Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition" by Lizzy Rockwell.



Teaching Tips:

- Giving children pretend food items to hold is a concrete way of helping children understand the story. If an assortment of pretend foods is unavailable, picture cards may be used.
- Keep children engaged in the story by asking open-ended questions.

Family Engagement

- Encourage families to read "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle or share this link to hear the book read by the author. https://youtube.com/watch?v=eXHScpo_Vv8&si=vxHi_wFS5N1hl8Bi.
- Ask families to share photos of them eating or preparing a nutritious breakfast to post on a family board.

Introduce the Lesson

"Eating certain foods for breakfast gives us energy for the day."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Pass out an assortment of play foods or food picture cards to children.
2. Read “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” by Eric Carle. Have children stand up if they are holding the food item represented on each page. As you read, ask questions such as, “What do you think will happen next? What would you eat if you were the hungry caterpillar?”
3. After reading the book, review the foods the caterpillar ate. On Monday through Friday, he ate apples, pears, oranges, plums, and strawberries. These fruits give our bodies energy. Have children hold up fruits and identify them. Ask, “What fruits do you like to eat?”
4. Review the foods the caterpillar ate on Saturday, such as chocolate cake, ice cream, lollipop, and pie. Have children hold up these foods. Ask, “What happened to the caterpillar after he ate these foods? Why?”
5. Ask children to share what types of foods they may eat for breakfast. Breakfast is the first chance to eat foods that give our bodies the energy to learn and play after sleeping all night. Be mindful that all children may not eat breakfast for a variety of reasons.
6. Eating certain foods for breakfast, like fruits, gives our body energy to think, move, and play. Other foods that give us lasting energy to start our day are cereal, yogurt, oatmeal, eggs, and milk. Who is holding these foods?
7. We feel hungry when our stomachs are empty and tell us we need to eat. Being hungry makes us feel weak and tired. It is hard to think, learn, and play when we are hungry. This is how we may feel when we don’t eat breakfast. When we eat foods that don’t give us the energy we need, such as doughnuts, cake, pie, candy, and ice cream, we may feel tired, lack the energy to play, or get stomachaches like the caterpillar.
8. Place the play food in a basket. Have children take turns choosing a food item and deciding if it is a food that gives them the energy to start their day or not.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Why is it important to eat breakfast every day?”

Closing the Lesson

“I am going to eat strawberries and yogurt for breakfast to give me energy for my day.”

Other Ideas

- Serve a different fruit each day for a week to match the fruit the caterpillar ate each day: apples on Monday, pears on Tuesday, plums on Wednesday, strawberries on Thursday, and oranges on Friday.
- Create a breakfast diner in the dramatic play area. Collect an assortment of pretend foods or empty food containers, such as cereal, oatmeal, fruits, vegetables, eggs, milk, and yogurt. Design a picture menu of nutritious breakfast options.

Overview

Foods that are part of the five food groups, vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein, help our body do its job and can be eaten anytime. Sweet treats, foods made with added sugar, are best eaten sometimes.

Learning Objectives

Children will identify the difference between sometimes foods and anytime foods. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

The teacher will engage children to support the need for good nutrition for growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Bag of sugar.
- Food Group pictures: Fruit, Vegetable, Grain, Dairy, Protein (optional).
- Play food from dramatic play area: cookie, cake, pie, donut, etc. (sweet treats), vegetable, fruit, grain, dairy, and protein foods.
- Clear bag/container; a size that will fill halfway up when sweet treat play foods are added.
- "Sesame Street: A Cookie is a Sometime Food" video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaHkwE7TaNg>.
- Device to play music video, such as computer with speakers.

Words to Use

Anytime	Cavities	Dissolve
Sometime	Stomach	Sugar

Book list:

- "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle.
- "Healthy Snacks on MyPlate (What's on MyPlate?)" by Mari Schuh.

Teaching Tip:

- Before the lesson, sort play food into sweets and select a small collection of fruit, vegetable, dairy, grain, and protein. If possible, include foods from each food group.
- If a child states their family lets them eat sweet treats, reply, "Treats are okay to eat sometimes. Drink water to wash away the food. It's important to brush your teeth morning and night."

Family Engagement

- Share the concepts of sometimes and anytime foods with examples of each.
- Suggest families watch video with their children. Play "Sesame Street: A Cookie is a Sometime Food" video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaHkwE7TaNg>.

Introduce the Lesson

"We're going to learn what foods are okay to eat sometimes and what foods are good to eat anytime to help our body do its job. What does it mean if you do something sometimes? What does it mean if you do something anytime?"

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Ask, “Who has seen sugar? What does it look like?” Show and pass a bag of sugar. Have children describe what it looks and feels like. Sometimes, we put sugar on foods to make them sweeter, like sprinkling it on cereal. Sugar is also added to food when it’s being made, like popsicles, candy, donuts, cupcakes, and cookies.
2. When food is cooked, sugar gets hot and dissolves. Dissolved means it melts, and you can’t see the sugar, but you can taste it. Sugar makes the food taste sweet.
3. Eating too much sugar makes our heart work harder to pump blood. Sugar sticks to our teeth. It’s invisible, so we can’t see it. Sugar can cause holes in our teeth called cavities, which make our teeth weak and hurt when chewing food. Drinking water after eating sweet treats helps to wash sugar off our teeth. Brushing teeth at night and in the morning helps remove the sugar so our teeth don’t get cavities.
4. Using play food from the dramatic play area, have each child choose one sweet treat food. “Eating sweet, sugary treats leaves less room in our stomach for food that helps us grow and our body to work.” Have children take turns putting the sweet treat food into a clear bag/container, which is like our stomach. Discuss how much room the treats take up.
5. Foods from the five food groups, fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy, are foods to eat every day. Have children select a play food from one or more food groups. Use Food Group pictures as a visual cue. Have children add these foods to the bag/container to show that the sweet treats take up too much room to fit the foods our bodies need to do their job.
6. Explain that sweet treats are sometimes foods. It’s okay to eat them sometimes, just not all the time. Foods from the five food groups are anytime foods.
7. Play “Sesame Street: A Cookie is a Sometime Food” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaHkwE7TaNg>.
8. Ask, “What’s your favorite sometimes food? Anytime food?”

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What’s a sometimes food? Why do we eat it sometimes? What’s an anytime food? Why is it okay to eat anytime?”

Closing the Lesson

“Choose a sometimes food and an anytime food and please put it back in the play kitchen.”

Other Ideas

- Have children create their own words to the “A Cookie is a Sometime Food” song by identifying additional sometime and anytime foods.
- Post the Food Group pictures in the eating area to remind children of anytime foods.

Overview

Some drinks are made with added sugar, which makes them taste sweet. Sweetened beverages fill up our stomachs, which does not leave room for water, vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein. Our body needs water and healthy foods to do its job well.

Learning Objectives

Children will state why sweetened drinks are a sometime drink. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

Teacher will engage children to support the need for good nutrition for growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Bag of sugar plus additional sugar for bottles.
- Empty water bottles (8 oz. preferred).
- Beverage labels or pictures of sweetened drinks, such as juice, Capri-Sun®, Gatorade®, soda, etc.
- Teaspoon and funnel.
- Glue.
- Natural or play fruits: orange, grape, and apple.
- Play foods for each of the five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy.
- Clear bag/container; a size that will fill halfway up when sugar bottles are added.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Anytime **Cavities** **Nutrients**
Sometime **Sweetened**

Book list:

- "Drinking Water (Pebble Plus; Healthy Eating with MyPyramid)" by Mari C. Schuh.

Teaching Tips:

- Before the lesson, prepare bottles by adding sugar to each empty bottle using a funnel and teaspoon based on product labels per serving. Glue lid shut. Suggested drinks that are common with children:
 - Capri-Sun® = 3 tsp; Chocolate milk = 4 tsp; Gatorade® = 5 tsp; Juice box = 6 tsp; Apple juice = 7 tsp ; White grape juice = 8 tsp; Purple grape juice = 11 tsp; Orange juice = 6 tsp; Kool-Aid Jammers® = 1 tsp; Soda = 9 tsp; Water = 0 tsp

Family Engagement

- Share lesson's highlights. Take a picture of the sugar bottles.
- Distribute Make Better Beverage Choices, USDA Food and Nutrition Service. https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-04/TipSheet_11_MakeBetterBeverageChoices.pdf.

Introduce the Lesson

"We're going to learn what drinks are okay to drink sometimes and what drinks are good to drink anytime to help our body do its job. What does it mean if you do something sometimes? Anytime?"

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Show and pass a bag of sugar. Have children describe what it looks and feels like. Sometimes, sugar is added to drinks to make them sweeter, like soft drinks, chocolate or strawberry milk, and Gatorade®. We also put sugar in drinks to make them sweeter, like Kool-Aid®, lemonade, and tea. Orange, apple, and grape juice are made from fruits that already grow with sugar.
2. Drinking sweetened drinks causes sugar to stick to our teeth which can make holes in our teeth called cavities. These holes make our teeth weak and hurt when chewing food. We cannot see the sugar on our teeth. Drinking water and brushing our teeth at night and in the morning helps remove the sugar so our teeth don't get cavities.
3. Show children the sugar bottles and empty bottles representing drinking water. Pass them around. Compare and contrast, talk about less/least and more/most, and which one is empty. Show them each bottle and identify what the drink is. Talk about the different amounts of sugar in each bottle. Create a graph on chart paper showing each bottle's sugar amount.
4. Show the orange, apple, and grapes. The fruit and the fruit juice have sugar already in them. Eating fruit gives us nutrients that help our body do its job. We don't get the same nutrients that are good for our body when we drink juice. Fruits are better for our body when we eat them instead of drinking them.
5. Using play food from the dramatic play area, have each child choose one or more foods from the five food groups. Explain, "When we drink sweetened sugar drinks, it leaves less room in our stomach for food that helps us grow and our body to work. Fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy are foods to eat daily." Have children take turns putting a bottle of sugar into a clear bag/container, which is like our stomach. Discuss how much room the sweetened drinks took up. Children add play foods to show that the sweet drinks take too much room to fit all the fruits, vegetables, etc., which our body needs to do its job.
6. Drinking water instead of sweetened drinks helps our body work. We lose water when we breathe and go to the bathroom. When our body is low on water, we get thirsty. That's the signal that we need to drink more water. Water is an anytime drink, while sweetened drinks are sometimes drinks we can have as treats.
7. Give each child a bottle. Ask them to hold up their bottle and say if it is an anytime or sometime drink. How do they know?

Check for Understanding Ideas

"What's a sometimes drink?
Why do we drink it sometimes?
What's an anytime drink? Why
is it okay to drink it anytime?"

Closing the Lesson

"Please put the play food and
bottles in the home-living area
and choose a center to play."

Other Ideas

- Place empty bottles in the sand table. Have children practice measuring sand with teaspoons and using the funnel to fill the bottle.
- Provide water for children to drink throughout the day, including after meals and snacks.

Overview

Water is essential to body function because every part of the body needs water. Drinking water daily replenishes the water our bodies lose through breathing, sweating, tears, and going to the bathroom. Drinking water throughout the day keeps the body and brain working at their best.

Learning Objectives

Children will state why we need to drink water. (ELDS: Physical Development and Wellness/Wellness 2.c.).

Teacher will engage children to support the need for good nutrition for growth and development. (Ohio's Early Childhood Core Knowledge & Competencies: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition).

Materials

- Sponge, moistened.
- Human Body picture.
- Fruit Group picture.
- Small disposable cups.
- Oranges cut in half, seeds removed.
Limes & lemons optional.
- Plastic spoons.
- Child-sized pitcher.

Words to Use

Blood **Flavor** **Joints** **Juice** **Lungs**
Moist **Muscles** **Oxygen** **Soak**
Stomach **Teeth** **Tissue**

Book list:

- “Drinking Water (Pebble Plus; Healthy Eating With Mypyramid)” by Mari C. Schuh.

Teaching Tip:

- Use tap water for this activity because it contains fluoride. If using bottled water, check to see if it contains fluoride. Fluoride is beneficial for our teeth.

Family Engagement

- Share a photo of children squeezing fruit into their cups of water. Share children's comments.
- Share this recipe for Flavored Water with families. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/flavored-water>.
- Share the tip sheet, Make Better Beverage Choices, from USDA Food and Nutrition Service https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-04/TipSheet_11_MakeBetterBeverageChoices.pdf.

Introduce the Lesson

“Today we are going to learn how drinking water helps think and play well.”

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Activity Steps

1. Ask, “Who drinks water?” (Animals, people). “What else needs water?” (Plants, trees, all living things). Every part of our body needs water. All living things, including people, animals, and plants, need water to grow and function.
2. Show the Human Body picture. Have children point to the part of the body when mentioned. Water keeps our skin, eyes, nose, and mouth moist like this sponge (pass the sponge for children to feel). It makes our muscles move and helps our tissue heal if we get hurt. Blood is mostly water and carries oxygen through our body. Lungs use water to help us breathe. Water protects our knee, elbow, hip, wrist, and ankle joints to keep them moving. Water helps grind food in our stomachs and eliminate waste when we go to the bathroom. We use water to clean food and sugar from our teeth after we eat. Water helps our body use energy to run, play, and learn.
3. We lose water through breathing, sweating, tears, and bathroom use. When our bodies are low on water, we get thirsty, which is a signal to drink. Ask, “How do you know when you are thirsty?” Drinking water replenishes the body’s water before it becomes dry and can no longer do its job. It’s like putting gas in a car’s tank to keep it running.
4. All drinks contain water, but water and white milk give our bodies what they need to function best. Drinks with added sugar, such as soda pop, Gatorade®, chocolate milk, juice, and Kool-Aid®, can cause cavities in our teeth. These drinks should be sometimes drinks. Water is an all the time drink.
5. Many fruits and vegetables also put water back in our bodies. Peaches, plums, watermelons, grapes, and strawberries are fruits that contain a lot of water. Vegetables with water are tomatoes, zucchini, celery, cucumbers, and lettuce. Ask, “Which of these fruits and vegetables do you eat?”
6. Today, we will use fruit to add flavor to water. Pass out two disposable cups to each child. Using the pitcher, have children fill each cup approximately 1/3 full of water. Demonstrate how to squeeze half an orange into one cup and stir. Have children drink the plain water and then the water flavored with orange. How does each taste? What makes them different? Repeat with the lime and lemon. Which fruit-flavored water do they prefer? Chart who prefers the orange, lemon, and lime.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Why is it important to drink water?”

Closing the Lesson

“It was fun to taste fruit flavored water! Let’s remember to drink water after we play outside.”

Other Ideas

- Make fruit or vegetable infused water by adding sliced fruit (such as watermelon, strawberries) or vegetables (such as cucumber) to a pitcher of water. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. The next day, sample the water. Have children describe the taste and compare to the fruit flavored water from this lesson.
- Provide reusable water bottles for children to keep at the program. Have them decorate with markers or stickers.



School-Age Bite-Sized Lessons

- Foods to Explore Unit
 - Adapt Preschool Foods to Explore Unit 15-52
- Foods by the Group Unit
- Our Bodies, Our Food Unit 63-72
 - Adapt Preschool Our Bodies, Our Food Unit 65-74
- Eat, Drink & Be Healthy Unit

Overview

In this lesson, children will listen to the story “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens to identify vegetables that come from different parts of the plant and learn which ones grow above and below the soil. They will sample several vegetables from the book.

Learning Objectives

Children will identify vegetables that come from different parts of the plant. (Ohio’s Learning Standards/Science/ Life Science).

The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio’s Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens.
- Vegetables: How They Grow poster.
- Potted plant.
- A tray of assorted vegetables, washed and cut in bite-size portions for snack. (Use as many vegetables mentioned in the story as possible, such as carrots, radishes, broccoli, celery, lettuce, and corn).
- Plates and napkins.
- Child-size serving tongs.

Words to Use

Flowers	Leaves	Nutrients
Roots	Soil	Stem

Book list:

- “Vegetables, Vegetables! (Rookie Read-About Science)” by Fay Robinson.
- “I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato” by Lauren Child.
- “Plants Feed Me” by Lizzy Rockwell.

Teaching Tips:

- Using a potted plant and vegetables is a more tangible way of identifying the parts of the plant. If unavailable, the Vegetables: How They Grow poster may be used.
- For mixed ages groups, have older school-age children read the book to younger children.

Family Engagement

- Encourage families to read “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens with their children or watch the read-aloud video. https://youtu.be/LNeBxB_U05U?si=1cbELH70oEAgkU5-.
- Encourage families to visit a local farmer’s market for fresh vegetables and have children identify if the veggies are tops or bottoms and bottoms and roots, stems, leaves, or flowers.

Introduce the Lesson

“Today, we are going to read “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens. Look at the cover of the book. What do you think the story will be about?”

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Activity Steps

1. Read “Tops and Bottoms” by Janet Stevens. Ask children questions as the story is read, such as, “If you were the bear, would you choose tops or bottoms? What do you think will happen next? Which vegetables were bottoms? (Carrots, radishes, and beets). Which vegetables were tops? (Lettuce, broccoli, and celery). How do you think Hare chose which vegetables to plant?”
2. Vegetables provide nutrients to help the body do its job. Different vegetables have different nutrients that support our brains, bones, muscles, stomach, and eyes. We need to eat a variety of vegetables, so our body gets all the nutrients it needs to stay strong.
3. Different vegetables grow from different parts of the vegetable plant. Show the Vegetables: How They Grow poster or a potted plant to identify the four main parts of the plant. The roots are below the soil and take water and food from the soil to grow. The stem grows above ground and carries food and water to the entire plant. It holds up the leaves and flowers. The leaves grow on the stem and turn sunlight into energy. Flower buds look like a flower ready to open. They grow above ground and produce the seed of the plant. Root vegetables are the bottoms, and stems, leaves, and flower buds are the tops in the story.
4. Ask the children to identify which vegetables in the book are roots (carrots, radishes, beets), stems (celery), flowers (broccoli), or leaves (lettuce).
5. Show children the tray of vegetables for their snack. Have them identify the vegetables that were in the story. Which ones are tops? Which ones are bottoms?
6. Have children choose a selection of vegetables for their snack. As they eat, have them describe the tastes of the different vegetables, which ones they have tried before, and which ones are unfamiliar. Ask them to share other vegetables they eat at home.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Which vegetables are tops, and which are bottoms? Which ones are the plant’s root, stem, leaf, or flower?”

Closing the Lesson

“Eating a variety of top and bottom vegetables every day gives our bodies the nutrients they need to do their job.”

Other Ideas

- Have children act out the story by taking turns being Bear and Hare. What happened first, next, last? What would they change about the story?
- Implement a long-term gardening project. Have children research which top and bottom vegetables they will grow, where they will plant the garden, what materials or resources they need, and how they will manage who is responsible for tending it. Ask local gardening stores, families, and program staff to donate gardening materials.
- Share a recipe with families to try at home, such as Oven Roasted Vegetables: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/oven-roasted-vegetables>. Ask them to share a photo of the family preparing or eating the recipe.

Overview

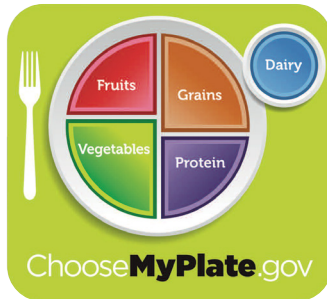
Fruit is one of the five food groups. Fruits grow on trees, vines, and plants. Various colors of fruit have different nutrients to help different parts of our bodies, give us energy, and avoid getting sick.

Learning Objectives

Children will describe one benefit of eating fruit every day. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science).
The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- Bowl of whole fresh fruit of the teacher's choice. (For example: peach, pear, pineapple, green apple, cherry.)
- MyPlate picture.
- Flowering Fruit picture.
- Fruits How They Grow picture.
- Fruit Group poster.
- Chart paper or whiteboard and markers.
- Fruit Salad for snack.
- Bowls, spoons, napkins.



Words to Use

Bush Different Everyday Metabolism
Food group Nutrient Vine

Book list:

- "Fruits (Healthy Eating with MyPlate)" by Nancy Dickmann.
- "Fruits We Eat" by Gail Gibbons.
- "I Can Eat a Rainbow" by Olena Rose.

Teaching Tips:

- Some fruits are considered vegetables nutritionally even though they may be classified as fruit botanically. Tomatoes and cucumbers are technically fruits but are considered vegetables by the USDA. This lesson follows the USDA Child Nutrition Program vegetable requirement classification for fruits and vegetables.

Family Engagement

- Share a photo of children eating fruit salad for snack. Encourage families to make a fruit salad with their child.
- Encourage families to visit a fruit farm or orchard near their home where they can pick fresh fruit together.
- Ask families to share a favorite way to eat fruit at home. Post a photo or recipe on a family board.

Introduce the Lesson

Show the My Plate picture.
"Eating a balanced meal includes foods from the five food groups. Today, we are going to learn how the fruit group is good for our bodies."

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Activity Steps

1. Display the bowl of fresh fruit. Complete a Know, Wonder, Learn (KWL) chart with children by asking, “What do you know about fruits?” Chart their responses in the K column. Ask, “What do you wonder about fruits?” Chart responses in the W column.
2. Introduce the fruit group. Fruits come in different sizes, colors, and shapes. They grow from the flower part of the plant and contain seeds or pits that can be planted to grow new plants. Show the Flowering Fruit pictures of the apple tree and strawberry plant.
3. Have each child take a piece of fresh fruit from the bowl. Have them look, feel, and smell the fruit. Ask, “What do you notice?”
4. Show Fruits How They Grow pictures. Fruits grow on different kinds of plants. Some grow on trees, like peaches, oranges, and bananas. Some fruits, like kiwi, grapes, and cantaloupe, grow on a vine. Other fruit grows on bushes, like strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries, or spikey shrubs, like pineapples. Ask, “What is your favorite fruit?” and “Have you ever picked some fruit from a tree or bush?”
5. Fruits contain nutrients that help our bodies grow and be strong. Bananas and cantaloupe are high in potassium, which helps regulate blood pressure. Whole fruits, such as raspberries, blueberries, and pears, are good sources of fiber, which keeps our hearts healthy, helps with digestion, and helps our stomachs feel full. Citrus fruits, such as oranges, have vitamin C, which allows the body to fight infection, increase blood circulation, and maintain healthy skin and muscles. Strawberries are one source of foliate, which supports brain development, red blood cell production, and metabolism. Metabolism converts the food we eat into the energy we use to move and play.
6. Eating different types of fruits ensures we receive nutrients for all parts of our bodies, as not all fruits have the same nutrients. One way to eat various fruits is to choose fruits of different colors. Ask, “What fruits can you name that are red, green, yellow, orange, or purple?” Use the displayed fruit or posters to generate ideas. List on chart paper.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What did you learn about fruits today?”
(Record responses in the L column of the KWL Chart).

Closing the Lesson

“For snack today, we are going to eat a fruit salad. Let’s see how many different colors of fruit are in the fruit salad.”

Other Ideas

- Chart which fruits are served in the program each week. Have children chart the colors of each fruit and list one health benefit. Track how many different fruits are served in a week and a month.
- Plan a field trip to a fruit farm or orchard where children can pick their own fruit. Before the trip, discuss what they know and wonder about the experience. After the trip, have children journal or write a short story about the experience. Have children discuss what they learned to complete a KWL.

Overview

The dairy group is one of the five food groups. Dairy foods contain calcium, which builds and strengthens our bones. Dairy products mainly come from cow's milk. Other sources of dairy foods are the milk of sheep, goats, and other animals. Eating or drinking dairy foods every day can be part of a balanced diet.

Learning Objectives

Children will state one benefit of eating or drinking dairy foods every day. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science).

The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- MyPlate picture.
- Dairy Foods poster.
- Human Body poster.
- Device with internet access to view video.
<https://www.drink-milk.com/video/a-dairy-farm-tour/>.
- Projector and screen if needed.
- Paper, markers, and crayons.
- Chart paper.

Words to Use

Calcium Dairy Food Group

Book list:

- "It's Milking Time" by Phyllis Alsdurf.
- "The Milk Makers" by Gail Gibbons.
- "From Milk to Cheese (Who Made My Lunch?)" by Bridget Heos.

Teaching Tips:

- Foods made from milk that have little calcium and a high-fat content are not included in the dairy food group, per MyPlate. This includes butter, sour cream, and cream cheese. These foods are not mentioned in the lesson.
- Soy milk is considered a dairy product even though it is made from soybeans.
- Be mindful that some families may choose not to eat dairy foods for a variety of reasons.

Family Engagement

- Share the Virtual Dairy Farm Tour link featuring Cold Run Jersey Farm in Northeast Ohio. <https://www.drink-milk.com/video/a-dairy-farm-tour/>.
- Share a dairy recipe to try, such as this one for Eagle Nest using cottage cheese. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/eagle-nest>.

Show MyPlate Picture

"Most foods fit into five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. Today, we are going to learn about the dairy group."

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Activity Steps

1. Display the Dairy Group poster. Foods in the dairy group include milk, cheese, yogurt, and cottage cheese. Ask, “Can you think of other dairy foods you eat? What do you like about the dairy foods you eat?”
2. Most dairy foods are made from cow’s milk. Some are made from sheep and goat’s milk. Today, we are taking a virtual field trip to a dairy farm to learn how cows produce the milk that makes dairy foods.
3. Show the video Virtual Dairy Farm Tour featuring Cold Run Jersey Farm in Northeast Ohio: <https://www.drink-milk.com/video/a-dairy-farm-tour/> (Length 5:34).
4. After watching the video, ask the children what they learned about a dairy farm. Have them write or draw what they remember about the cow milking process.
5. Show the Human Body poster. Dairy foods contain calcium, which builds and maintains strong bones and teeth. Our bodies need calcium to help our muscles move and for nerves to carry messages between the brain and every part of the body. Without calcium, our bones and teeth can become weak. If our teeth are weak, it can be hard to chew food.
6. Drinking milk and eating cheese or yogurt daily are convenient ways for our bodies to get calcium. Dairy foods also contain Vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium.
7. Dairy foods are often paired with foods from different food groups, such as cereal with milk, cheese and crackers, cottage cheese and fruit, or yogurt with berries. Ask, “Which of these combinations have you tried? What other foods would you pair with dairy foods?” Chart responses.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“How do dairy foods help our body every day?”

Closing the Lesson

“That was an interesting video learning how a dairy farm works! Because of dairy farms like this one, we have milk to drink.”

Other Ideas

- Sing the song or play a video of the song, having children dance along to “The Skeleton Dance” by Super Simple Songs. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e54m6XOpRgU>.
- For snacks, serve pairings of dairy foods with foods from other food groups. Have children create pairings and vote on which ones they want to try.
- Conduct a cheese taste-testing session with children. Select several types of cheese, such as cheddar, mozzarella, or Colby jack, and have the children taste and rank which ones they like the best and least.

Overview

Grains are one of the five food groups. Many foods we eat every day are made from whole grains or refined grains. Including whole grains as part of a balanced meal helps us feel fuller longer, keeps our stomach strong, and gives us energy.

Learning Objectives

Children will state the benefits of eating whole grains every day. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science).

The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- Grain Group picture.
- Grains How They Grow picture.
- Whole grain food for taste samples of teacher's choice, such as whole wheat, rye, and/or multigrain bread, whole wheat English muffin, whole wheat tortilla, whole wheat crackers, cooked brown or wild rice, and cooked quinoa.
- Plates and napkins.
- Serving spoons or tongs.
- Serving tray or bowls.

Words to Use

Fiber Milled	Food group Refined grain	Kernel Whole grain
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Book list:

- "Bread, Bread, Bread" by Ann Morris.
- "The Little Red Hen" (Traditional folk tale).
- "From Wheat to Bread" by Stacy Taus-Bolstad or watch the video of the story being read. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWnJqRq8fnM>.

Teaching Tips:

- Provide a selection of grains for children to view during the lesson. Options may include rice, oats, quinoa, barley, or farro. Picture cards or posters may be used.

Family Engagement

- Encourage families to eat more whole grains by adding one new whole grain food to a meal each week, such as whole wheat bread, brown rice, or whole wheat pasta.
- Share the USDA MyPlate Tip Sheet Make Half Your Grains Whole Grains. https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-04/TipSheet_4_MakeHalfYourGrains.pdf.

Introduce the Lesson

Show the My Plate picture.
"Most foods fit into five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. Nutritious meals include foods from these five food groups. Today, we are going to learn about the grain group."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Show the Grains Group picture. Foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, and barley are part of the grain group, such as bread, pasta, cereal, waffles, and tortillas. Popcorn, rice, and oatmeal are also part of the grain group. Ask children, “What types of grains do you like to eat?”
2. Show the Grains How They Grow picture. Grains are the seeds or kernels of grass plants grown for food. During harvesting, the seeds are separated from the plant. Some kernels are sent to factories to be milled or ground into flour. This flour is the main ingredient in most grain-group foods, such as breads and pasta. Rice, oatmeal, and quinoa are examples of grain kernels that we eat whole.
3. Grains are classified as whole grain or refined grain. Whole grains are foods made with an entire grain kernel. Examples of whole grains include whole-wheat flour, oatmeal, and brown rice. Just because foods are brown doesn’t mean they are whole grains. You need to read the ingredient list on the food label. The first ingredient should be 100% whole grain, whole wheat flour, or 100% whole wheat flour.
4. Whole grains provide our bodies with many nutrients, including iron, fiber, and B Vitamins. They support brain function, give us energy, help our eyesight, and maintain our skin, heart, blood, stomach, and muscles. The fiber in whole grains helps us feel full when we eat, helps the body digest food, and helps us go to the bathroom regularly.
5. Refined grains are milled to remove part of the kernel. This produces a finer texture of flour and increases the shelf-life of food products. However, it also removes many nutrients. Examples of refined grains are white flour, white bread, and white rice. Some refined grains have iron and vitamins added back in during food processing. Food labels for these products are labeled enriched or fortified.
6. Provide taste samplings of whole grain products (Whole wheat, rye, &/or multigrain bread, whole wheat English muffin &/or tortilla, whole wheat crackers, brown or wild rice, quinoa). Have children describe the taste, texture, and smell of each. Chart their reactions to each sampling.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“What is the difference between whole grains and refined grains?”

Closing the Lesson

“I enjoyed tasting different whole grain foods. We are going to have some of these same foods for our snacks this week.”

Other Ideas

- Ask families and colleagues to provide food boxes and packaging. Compare food labels on various products, such as cereal or cracker boxes and bread wrappers. Have children look for whole-grain ingredients, such as 100% whole grain, 100% whole grain flour, and whole wheat flour. Which ingredient is listed first? Are any products labeled enriched or fortified?
- Have children explore steel cut and rolled oats. How do they look and feel the same or different? Prepare both types of oats for breakfast or snack. Have children compare the taste and texture of each. Which do they prefer? <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/rolled-vs-steel-cut-oats>.

Overview

Protein is one of the five food groups. Meat, eggs, beans, seafood, and dairy products contain different types of proteins that strengthen our bones, muscles, skin, and tissue and help us recover faster when injured. Eating a variety of foods with protein is part of a balanced diet.

Learning Objectives

Children will state the benefits of eating proteins every day. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science).

The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- MyPlate picture.
- Protein Group picture.
- Human Body picture.
- Small bags with proteins of teacher's choice: black beans, pinto beans, black-eyed peas, chickpeas, lentils, edamame, tofu, or hardboiled eggs. Picture cards can be used if food items not available.
- Chart paper and markers.
- Drawing paper.
- Crayons and markers.

Words to Use

Amino acids	Food group	Muscle
Oxygen	Protein	Tissue

Book list:

- "Green Eggs and Ham" by Dr. Seuss.
- "Peanut Butter & Cupcake" by Terry Border.

Teaching Tips:

- This lesson emphasizes that proteins are from animal and plant-based sources. Some families are vegetarian, vegan, or have cultural or religious practices concerning meat. To respect families' choices, it's best not to make food connections to specific animals or stress meats as the only source of protein.

Family Engagement

- Share a YouTube video link so children can share "The Protein Song" with families. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsilYVfBcXw>.
- Share this recipe for hummus for families to try at home. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/hummus>.

Introduce the Lesson

Show MyPlate picture.

"Most foods fit into five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. Today, we are going to learn more about proteins."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. Pass around small bags of protein foods for children to observe. Ask children to guess the contents as they look at the size, color, and texture of each. Identify foods in bags as proteins.
2. Show Foods with Proteins picture. Proteins are any food that is made from seafood; meat, poultry, and eggs; beans, peas, and lentils; and nuts, seeds, and soy products. Ask, “What type of proteins do you eat?” Chart children’s responses. Assist with identifying proteins as needed: chicken, fish, hamburgers, steak, peanut butter, black beans, edamame, tofu, and eggs.
3. Proteins come from animals or plants. Plant-based sources include beans, peas, and lentils, which are the dried edible seeds of legumes. They are also part of the vegetable food group as they provide similar nutrition to both vegetables and proteins. Black beans and pinto beans grow on a vine or bush. Lentils and edamame grow on a bush. Beans and lentils must be cooked before we can eat them. Tofu is made from soybeans.
4. Eating protein-rich foods gives our bodies essential building blocks called amino acids. Protein-rich food also provides nutrients for our bodies to function, including B vitamins, vitamin E, iron, zinc, and magnesium.
5. Every cell in our bodies contains protein. Show the Human Body picture and point to the areas when mentioned. Proteins build muscles and bones. Proteins strengthen our hair, skin, and nails. Proteins give oxygen (the air we breathe) to our blood, which travels to the heart and throughout our body. Protein helps us heal faster when we’re hurt and helps new tissue grow. Our tissue is under our skin and wraps around our bones.
6. Play “The Protein Song” and have children dance to the music or pretend to play the guitar with the singer. (Time: 2.03 minutes.). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsilYVfBcXw>.
7. After listening to the song, have children write or draw their own response to “If you eat protein....” Have children share their work and post in the classroom.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“How does eating proteins every day help your body?”

Closing the Lesson

“The Protein Song” was a fun way to remember why we should eat foods with protein every day!”

Other Ideas

- Make a dip recipe with children, such as hummus, black bean dip, or pinto bean dip. Children can assist with smashing the beans and mixing ingredients. Serve with raw veggies or whole wheat pita bread. Search www.myplate.gov/recipes for recipes.
- Do a taste sampling of different cooked beans. Chart children’s reactions.
- Have children track the different types of proteins served in the program for a week. Compare the number of animal-based and plant-based proteins served.

Overview

Vegetables are one of the five food groups. They grow above or below ground and come from the roots, stems, leaves, and flowers of plants. Eating different colors of vegetables gives our bodies nutrients to help different parts of our body function, give us energy, and prevent us from getting sick.

Learning Objectives

Children will state the importance of eating vegetables every day. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science).

The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- Tray of whole fresh vegetables of the teacher's choice. (Examples: potato, head of broccoli or cauliflower, carrot with the green leaf top, head of lettuce, celery with leaves).
- MyPlate picture.
- Vegetables How They Grow picture.
- Vegetable Group poster.
- Salad picture.
- Bowl of lettuce/salad greens.
- Variety of different colored vegetables chopped or diced.
- Bowls, forks, napkins.
- Serving utensils.

Words to Use

Fiber	Flower	Folate	Leaf
Nutrient	Root	Soil	Stem

Book list:

- "I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato" by Lauren Child.
- "Oliver's Vegetables" by Vivian French.
- "Super Food Power" by Maya Green.
- "The Vegetables We Eat" by Gail Gibbons.
- "Tops and Bottoms" by Janet Stevens.

Teaching Tips:

- Some fruits are considered vegetables nutritionally even though they may be classified as fruit botanically. Tomatoes and cucumbers are technically fruits but are considered vegetables by the USDA. This lesson follows the USDA Child Nutrition Program vegetable requirement classification.

Family Engagement

- Share a recipe for families to try at home, such as Squash Salsa: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/squash-salsa>. Have families share a photo of them preparing or eating the salsa.
- Encourage families to visit local farmers' markets to view and purchase a variety of fresh vegetables.

Introduce the Lesson

Show the My Plate picture.
"Most foods fit into five food groups. It's important to eat different types of foods from each group daily. Today, we are going to explore the vegetable group."

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Activity Steps

1. Display a tray of fresh, whole vegetables. Have each child pick one. Facilitate a discussion by asking, “What do you notice about your vegetable? How does it feel? How does it smell? Where did it come from?”
2. Vegetables grow above and below the soil from plants in gardens, pots, or on farms. Different parts of the plant produce different types of vegetables. Have children guess which part of the plant produced the displayed vegetables.
3. Show the How Vegetables Grow picture. Some vegetables are the plant’s stems: asparagus, celery, and bok choy. Some are the leaves: spinach, kale, and lettuce. Other vegetables are the flowers: broccoli, cauliflower, and artichokes. Some vegetables are roots, like carrots, radishes, and beets.
4. Vegetables provide important nutrients to help our bodies grow and stay healthy, including potassium, dietary fiber, folate, and vitamins A, C, and K. These nutrients support heart, blood, and bone health, strengthen the immune system to fight infections, keep our eyes, skin, and stomach healthy, and help with brain development. They also support metabolism, which converts food to energy so we can be physically active when we play and do sports.
5. No single vegetable provides all the nutrients we need to be healthy. Different colored vegetables offer different nutrients. Green vegetables like lettuce, kale, and broccoli are rich in folate and vitamin K. Red, orange, and yellow vegetables are good sources of potassium and vitamins A and C. Vegetables with blue or purple pigments improve brain function and support the heart. Have children identify vegetables that are different colors. Use the Vegetable Group picture to show vegetables in different colors. Ask, “What’s your favorite vegetable?” and “Have you ever eaten a blue or purple vegetable?”
6. Show the Salad picture. Salads are a great way to eat different colors of vegetables. You can put lots of vegetables in a salad, like lettuce, spinach, kale, carrots, cucumbers, radishes, bell peppers (green, orange, red, yellow), tomatoes, and purple or white cauliflower. Ask, “Which veggies do you like in salad?”

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Why is it important to eat different colors of vegetables every day?”

Closing the Lesson

“For snack today, you are going to make your own salad using different colors of vegetables. Let’s wash our hands and move to the snack table.”

Other Ideas

- Do a taste sampling of vegetables in different forms, such as fresh tomatoes and tomato juice or canned, fresh, and frozen peas. How do they differ in taste and texture? Which ones do the children prefer?
- Use a rainbow to chart the colors of vegetables children eat for meals/snacks at the program during the week. How many varieties of vegetables were served? Which colors were served most often and least often? How does each vegetable help our body?

Overview

MyPlate is a visual reminder to choose foods from each of the five food groups every day as part of a balanced diet. Eating a variety of foods gives all the parts of the body the nutrients to do its job.

Learning Objectives

Children will use the five food groups to create a balanced meal. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science).

The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- Five Food Group posters: Fruit, Vegetable, Grain, Protein, Dairy.
- Pretend food representing the five food groups.
- "Healthy Eating Habits" by Beth Bence Reine. (optional).
- MyPlate picture.
- Create Your Own MyPlate copies for each child https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2020-12/Menu_508.pdf.
- Crayons or markers.
- Device to play music video.

Words to Use

Balanced	Food groups MyPlate	Nutrients
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Book list:

- "Healthy Eating Habits" by Beth Bence Reinke.
- "MyPlate and You (Health and Your Body)" by Gillia M. Olson.
- "Healthy Eating with MyPlate Books - Set of 6" by Mari Schuh.

Teaching Tips:

- Before this MyPlate lesson, teach the five food group lessons: Bunches of Fruit, Vegetable Medley, Protein Power, Go for Grains, and Dairy for Your Day. Children's introduction to the food groups is necessary to understand how MyPlate is used.

Family Engagement

- Send families an image of their child's MyPlate drawing.
- Share the link "Discover MyPlate 'Reach for the Sky' Music Video". <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-reach-sky-music-video>.
- Share tip sheets and webpages from USDA MyPlate U.S. Department of Agriculture with families. <https://www.myplate.gov/resources>.

Introduce the Lesson

"We've learned about the five food groups, fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy. Now we are going to learn how to choose foods from each food group to make a balanced meal."

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Activity Steps

1. Ask, “Who remembers the names of the five food groups?” Review the food groups using pretend food items. Ask children to select a food and identify the food group, such as grain group. Refer to food group posters, as needed.
2. Different foods provide our bodies with different nutrients. Eating foods from each group every day gives us energy to play and learn, strengthens our bones, teeth, and muscles, and keeps our heart and stomach working well.
3. Read “Healthy Eating Habits” by Beth Bence Reine. (Optional) to introduce MyPlate.
4. Show the MyPlate picture. Explain that MyPlate is a visual reminder to choose foods from each food group to create a balanced meal. Ask, “What do you notice about the picture?”
5. Have children practice creating a balanced meal by selecting food items and placing them on the MyPlate picture. Repeat as many times as the children are interested. Refer to the food group posters as needed.
6. Distribute Create Your Own MyPlate handout for each child to complete by listing a food menu and drawing the foods on the MyPlate template. Have children share their balanced meal drawings with the class. Post drawings in the classroom.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“How does MyPlate help us create balanced meals?”

Closing the Lesson

“Let’s learn a song that will help us remember to choose foods from all five groups.” Play the video and dance to “Discover MyPlate “Reach for the Sky.”” <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-reach-sky-music-video>.

Other Ideas

- Implement a food drive service project with school-agers. Collect non-perishable food from each food group to donate to local organizations. Create boxes for each food group to sort donations. See the USDA MyPlate Food Drive Wish List for ideas of food to collect. https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/tn/TNevents_appendixrepro7.pdf.
- Access activities and resources on MyPlate Website. <https://www.myplate.gov/resources/print-materials?page=4>. (MyPlate Coloring Sheet (Blank), Crack the Secret Code, MyPlate Maze, Have Fun with Fruits and Vegetables Word Search).
- Access activities and resources on the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Website. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/myplate>. (Eat Smart to Play Hard poster, Healthy Eating with MyPlate, Meet MyPlate parent handouts).

Overview

Teeth chew our food into small pieces, so our body gets the nutrients it needs to be healthy. Nutrients are substances in food that the body uses to grow, keep us from getting sick, and have energy to learn and play. Eating and drinking certain foods and beverages keeps our teeth strong. When we eat some foods, teeth become weak, can hurt, and interfere with getting nutrients from food.

Learning Objectives

Children will identify how to keep their teeth strong. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science).

The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- Mouth picture.
- Human Body picture.
- Healthy Habits for Healthy Smiles picture.
- Food picture cards and/or play food.
- Two baskets or bags. One marked with a smiley face and one with a frown face.
- Apple slices and carrot sticks, prepared for snack.
- Cheese cubes.
- Serving tray.
- Child-size tongs/serving utensils.
- Pitcher of water and disposable cups.
- Plates and napkins.

Words to Use

Cavities	Chew	Digest	Grind
Nutrients		Strong	Weak

Book list:

- "The Tooth Book" by Dr. Seuss.
- "Why Should I Brush My Teeth?" by Katie Daynes.
- "Help the Lion Brush His Teeth" by Sophie Schoenwald.

Teaching Tips:

- If a child states their family lets them eat unhealthy foods, reply, "Treats are okay to eat sometimes. Drink water to wash away the food. It's important to brush your teeth morning and night."

Family Engagement

- Print Healthy Habits for Healthy Smiles poster for each family. <https://www.ada.org/resources/community-initiatives/national-childrens-dental-health-month>.
- Distribute the Tooth Healthy/Unhealthy Food List https://cavityfreekids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/tooth_healthy_unhealthy_list.pdf.

Introduce the Lesson

"We're going to learn why our teeth are important and what foods keep our teeth strong."

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Activity Steps

1. Ask, “Why do we have teeth?” Teeth help us chew foods and talk clearly. They give our face its shape and are a part of our smile. Ask children to give you big smiles and show their teeth.
2. Show the Mouth picture. Our teeth have different jobs. Front teeth are for taking bites. Our back teeth have a special job. They work to chew, grind, or squish food into tiny pieces. Imagine you’re eating a carrot; your front teeth bite off a piece, and your back teeth chew the carrot into tiny pieces.
3. Show the Human Body picture. Chewing food lets our stomach know that food is coming so it can prepare for digestion. Digestion is the process of taking nutrients out of the food we eat. Once we swallow the carrot, our stomach can pull the nutrients out of it. The nutrients are sent to our bones, blood, muscles, eyes, teeth, hair, skin, and even our fingernails and toenails. The nutrients give us energy, help us learn and play, keep us from getting sick, and help us grow.
4. We need to keep our teeth clean and strong to chew food. We can’t always see if there is sugar or tiny pieces of food on our teeth. Drinking water during the day and brushing our teeth every morning and night washes the germs off our teeth.
5. Some foods keep our teeth strong, such as dairy products and fresh fruits and vegetables that have calcium and vitamins C and D. Eating crisp fruits and vegetables, such as apples, carrots, and celery, requires a lot of chewing, which produces saliva and helps keep the teeth clean.
6. Certain foods cause teeth to get little holes in them called cavities. Cavities weaken teeth and make chewing food painful. Foods that may cause cavities are candy, chocolate, ice cream, fruit gummies, cookies, soft drinks, chips, juice, and donuts.
7. Give each child a food picture card and/or piece of play food. Have children name their food and state if it can make our teeth strong or make them weak. Children will place their card/food in the correct bag or basket, marked with a smiling face (strong teeth) or frowning face (weak teeth).

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Why do our teeth need to be strong?”

Closing the Lesson

“For snack today, we are going to eat foods that keep our teeth strong. We have cheese cubes, apples, carrots, and water! Let’s wash our hands for snack.”

Other Ideas

- Ask children at meals/snacks, “How did your teeth help you eat today? What food are you glad your teeth helped you chew?”
- Contact a dentist in your community. Request if they can talk to the children and provide toothbrushes and toothpaste. Ask if they have resources for families.
- Print and use activity sheets from the American Dental Association <https://www.ada.org/resources/community-initiatives/national-childrens-dental-health-month>.

Overview

In this lesson, children will research nutritious foods for every letter of the alphabet. They will create a classroom book of one or more nutritious foods for each letter.

Learning Objectives

Children will identify nutritious foods for every letter in the alphabet. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science).

The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- Chart paper.
- Crayons or markers.
- Drawing or construction paper.
- Posters or picture cards of nutritious foods in each food group.
- Computer/tablet with internet access.
- Magazines with food pictures.
- Scissors.
- Glue.
- Materials to assemble pages into a book, such as a stapler, 3-hole punch, yarn, ribbon, or binder.

Words to Use

Alphabet	Author	Book
Illustrator		Nutritious

Book list:

- "Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z" by Lois Ehlert.
- "My Favorite Filipino Foods from A to Z" by Anne Castro.
- "Healthy Foods from A to Z: Comida sana de la A a la Z" by Stephanie Maze and Renée Comet.

Teaching Tips:

- This lesson may take several days or be a weeks-long project to complete. Don't rush children as they research food names and create their books.
- Divide children into small groups of mixed ages when possible. Older school-agers can assist younger ones with writing and research.

Family Engagement

- Let families know their child is an author and illustrator. Encourage them to ask their child about the book they wrote.
- Make photocopies of books or digitally scan books to share with families.
- Send families an audio or video recording of their child reading their group's book.

Introduce the Lesson

"Nutritious foods help our bodies function as they should and give us energy to move, play, and grow. Today, we are going to find nutritious foods for every letter in the alphabet."

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Activity Steps

1. Facilitate a discussion with children on the different foods they eat. Eating a variety of foods ensures our bodies have all the nutrients they need to function, grow, and stay strong. Choosing foods from the five food groups is one way to eat a variety of foods. Ask children to list a variety of foods from different food groups and document on chart paper. Have children read the list and identify the different food groups represented. Point out that the foods listed begin with different letters.
2. Explain that they will work in small groups to create a list of foods by identifying at least one food for each of the 26 letters in the alphabet. Each food listed must be part of one of the five food groups (Dairy, Grains, Fruits, Vegetables, and Protein).
3. Divide children into small groups and give each group chart paper. Have children write the alphabet on one side and brainstorm foods from the five food groups that begin with each letter. Have them write the name of the food next to the corresponding letter. Encourage children to think of less common foods such as olive for the letter “O.” Encourage children to find food names that include the letter in the name, not just start with the letter, such as trail mix, Kix®, or Chex® cereal for the letter “X”.
4. List more than one food per letter. For more challenging letters, provide books, food posters, or picture cards to generate ideas. Assist children with researching foods on the internet.
5. Have each group design a book by creating a page for each alphabet letter. Each page includes the letter, food names, and images of the food. Children may draw or use pictures from magazines for food images.
6. Have them create a book cover page with the book’s title and list the group members who are the authors (writers) and illustrators (create the pictures). Provide materials to assemble the books and fasten the pages together. Display books for everyone to read. Schedule a time for each group to read their book to the class.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“How did you decide which foods to put in your book? How do we determine if a food is part of one of the five food groups?”

Closing the Lesson

“Being the author and illustrator of your alphabet book will help you remember to eat a variety of foods. The books will be in the library area for you to read again.”

Other Ideas

- Create a word wall of foods for each letter using the foods from the children’s books. Add new words as different food words are discovered. Graph the most frequently used letters and categorize food names into the food groups.
- If your program serves multi-ages, have school-agers read their book to a preschool buddy.

Overview

Nutritious snacks give us energy in between meals. A snack that includes foods from two or more food groups gives us longer-lasting energy. In this lesson, children will create snack combinations using foods from two different food groups.

Learning Objectives

Children will create a snack using foods from two different food groups. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science).

The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- Snack items representing the five food groups: fruit, vegetables, protein, grains, and dairy. Suggestions: blueberries, carrot sticks, whole wheat pita, shredded low-fat cheese, hummus, milk.
- Plates.
- Napkins.
- Spoons.
- Serving utensils.
- Bowls and trays.

Words to Use

Balanced	Food groups	Nutrients
	MyPlate	

Book list:

- "Gregory the Terrible Eater" by Mitchell Sharmat.
- "Gabby Chooses a Healthy Snack" by Jessica Brown.
- "Healthy Snacks on MyPlate (What's on MyPlate?)" by Mari Schuh.

Teaching Tips:

- Children are more likely to try new or unfamiliar food when the adult models the behavior.

Family Engagement

- Text/email families a photo of their child's snack. Encourage them to ask their child how they made the snack.
- Share a simple snack recipe with families such as this one for hummus. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/hummus>. Serve with fresh veggies or whole wheat pita bread.
- Ask families to share photos of the family preparing or eating the snacks at home. Post pictures on a family board.

Introduce the Lesson

"Today, we are going to learn how to create an energizing snack."

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Activity Steps

1. **Ask and discuss:** “What is a snack? What foods do you like to eat for snacks?”
2. Snacks are the food we eat between meals. They give us energy and help us avoid getting super hungry. Snacks also provide our bodies with what they need to grow strong and do their job, like vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Fiber makes our stomachs feel full and helps us go to the bathroom regularly.
3. Snacks that keep us the most energized combine foods from two or more food groups. Display trays/bowls of prepared snack foods. Review the five food groups by asking children to identify the food group for each food item provided. For example, fruit (blueberries), vegetable (carrot sticks), grain (whole grain pita), dairy (low-fat shredded cheese), protein (hummus), milk(dairy).
4. Direct children to create snacks by choosing food from two or more food groups from the available options. For example,
 - a. Pita and hummus.
 - b. Pita, cheese, and blueberries.
 - c. Carrots and cheese.
 - d. Milk and pita.
 - e. Pita, cheese, hummus, carrots, and blueberries.
5. Model for children by selecting a snack to eat with them.
6. As you eat, facilitate a discussion with children about other food combinations that could be used for snacks. Ask them to identify the food groups they chose for their snacks and share their experience tasting the snack foods.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Why should we eat energizing snacks in between meals? How do you choose snack foods for long-lasting energy?”

Closing the Lesson

“Snacks that give us the most energy have foods from two or more food groups. Today’s snack has given me the energy to power through the rest of our day.”

Other Ideas

- Have children work in small groups to create a list of snack combinations using two or more food groups. Compile the list into a snack menu to use for future planning. Share the list with the program’s food service staff to add to the snack menu rotation.
- Arrange for children to help plan and prepare the refreshments for a family engagement event using their snack options menu.

Overview

Eating a nutritious breakfast energizes our brains and bodies for the day. In this lesson, children will learn the importance of eating a nourishing breakfast every day and how to make smart food choices to start their day.

Learning Objectives

Children will identify nutritious breakfast food options. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science). The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

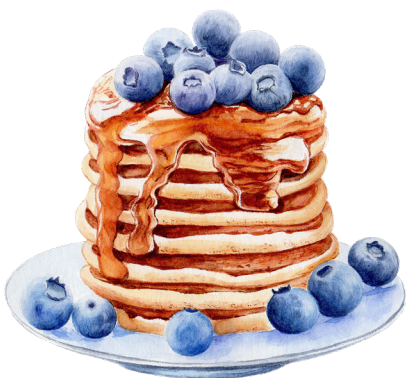
- Pretend food, empty food containers, or picture cards of breakfast foods.
- Poster board or large drawing paper.
- Magazines with food pictures.
- Scissors and glue.
- Markers and crayons.

Words to Use

Breakfast	Energy	Fast
Food groups	Irritable	Nutrients
	Sluggish	

Book list:

- "Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition" by Lizzy Rockwell.
- "Pancakes for Breakfast" by Tomie dePaola.



Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.

Teaching Tips:

- Having pretend food or clean empty food containers available during the discussion will make the information more concrete for children. If unavailable, use picture cards or posters of food groups.
- Consider having children create their posters on a separate day after reviewing the discussion.

Family Engagement

- Text or email families an image of their child's breakfast poster.
- Encourage families to plan a nourishing breakfast using foods from three food groups.

Introduce the Lesson

"Eating breakfast gives us energy for all we do in the day."



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Activity Steps

1. Ask, “What does the word ‘breakfast’ mean?” Break means to separate or divide. Fast is a period of time without food. Breakfast means to break the fast. The fast is the time between supper or dinner and breakfast when we are sleeping and not eating.
2. Ask children to estimate how long our bodies usually fast from supper or dinner to breakfast. (8-12 hours). How many hours from breakfast to lunch? (Usually 4-6 hours).
3. Ask, “Why do you think breaking the fast is so important?” Our bodies were not designed to go from supper/ dinner time to lunch the next day without eating. Not eating causes the brain and body to conserve energy to protect us from starvation, which leaves us feeling more tired, irritable, less able to concentrate, and overall sluggish. Starting our day with breakfast fuels our bodies and brains for the day. Please note, fasting due to religious or cultural reasons is practiced by people of all faiths, and it can be different depending on the community a person is part of. A breakfast meal called ‘Suhoor’ is an essential part of fasting during Ramadan, when families wake up before sunrise to eat.”
4. What we eat for breakfast can ensure we get nutrients to power us through the day. We get those nutrients by choosing foods to eat for breakfast from the five food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein). Use pretend play food or picture cards to show examples of breakfast choices from different food groups, such as cereal and milk, yogurt and blueberries, oatmeal and banana, or eggs and toast.
5. Divide children into pairs to create a poster of a nourishing breakfast that includes foods from three different food groups. They may use pictures of food from magazines or draw food on the poster. Provide play food, picture cards, or posters to generate ideas. If possible, they may research food options on the internet with supervision.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Why is it important to eat a nourishing breakfast every day?”

Closing the Lesson

“Your breakfast posters will remind us to make smart food choices from the five food groups to start the day!”

Other Ideas

- Plan a small or large (depending on their level of interest) group project for children to create a menu of breakfast options. Each breakfast includes at least three food groups (fruit, vegetables, protein, grains, dairy). Have children create a grocery list, a budget, and recipe cards for the breakfast menu. Encourage them to choose new foods they would like to try.
- Arrange for children to plan and help prepare a breakfast once a month for the class. Try this recipe for Fruit-a-licious Breakfast Cups. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/dmp-lookcook-breakfastcup.pdf>. Vary the recipe by offering different cereals and fruits. Chart which combinations the children like best.

Overview

Water is essential to body function because every part of the body needs water. Drinking water daily replenishes the water our bodies lose through breathing, sweating, tears, and going to the bathroom. Drinking water throughout the day keeps the body and brain working at their best.

Learning Objectives

Children will state why we need to drink water. (Ohio's Learning Standards/Science/Life Science).

The teacher will plan experiences to encourage healthy nutrition for children. (Ohio's Core Knowledge & Competencies for Afterschool Professionals: Health, Safety, Nutrition/Nutrition 2.2).

Materials

- Human Body picture.
- Fruit Group picture.
- Disposable cups.
- Oranges, lemons, or limes.
- Plastic spoons for stirring.
- Child-sized pitcher of water.
- Chart paper and markers.

Words to Use

Blood **Joints** **Lungs** **Moist**
Muscles **Oxygen** **Replenish**
 Tissue

Book list:

- "Drinking Water (Pebble Plus; Healthy Eating With Mypyramid)" by Mari C. Schuh.

Teaching Tip:

- Use tap water for this activity because it contains fluoride. If using bottled water, check to see if it contains fluoride. Fluoride is beneficial for our teeth.

Family Engagement

- Share a photo of children squeezing fruit into their cups of water. Share children's comments.
- Share this recipe for Flavored Water with families. <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/flavored-water>.
- Share the tip sheet, Make Better Beverage Choices, from USDA Food and Nutrition Service https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-04/TipSheet_11_MakeBetterBeverageChoices.pdf.

Introduce the Lesson

"Today we are going to learn how drinking water helps our brains and whole body."

Please be mindful of allergies, cultural preferences, and choking hazards.



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Activity Steps

1. All living things, including people, animals, and plants, need water to grow and function. Show the Human Body picture. Over half of our body is water. Water keeps our skin, eyes, nose, and mouth moist. It makes our muscles move and helps our tissue heal if we get hurt. Blood is mostly water and carries oxygen through our body. Lungs use water to help us breathe. Water protects our knee, elbow, hip, wrist, and ankle joints to keep them moving. Water helps grind food in our stomachs and eliminate waste when we go to the bathroom. We use water to clean food and sugar from our teeth after we eat. Water helps our body use energy to run, play, and learn.
2. We lose water through breathing, sweating, tears, and bathroom use. When our bodies are low on water, we get thirsty, which is a signal to drink. Ask, “How do you know when you are thirsty?” Drinking water replenishes the body’s water supply before it becomes dry and can no longer do its job. It’s like putting gas in a car’s tank to keep it running.
3. All drinks contain water, but water and white milk give our bodies what they need to function best. Drinks with added sugar, such as soda pop, Gatorade®, chocolate milk, juice, and Kool-Aid®, can cause cavities in our teeth. These drinks should be sometime drinks. Water is an all the time drink.
4. Many fruits and vegetables also replenish the water in our bodies. Peaches, plums, watermelons, grapes, and strawberries are fruits that contain a lot of water. Vegetables with water are tomatoes, zucchini, celery, cucumbers, and lettuce. Ask, “Which of these fruits and vegetables do you eat?”
5. Today, we will use fruit to add flavor to water. Pass out two disposable cups to each child. Using the pitcher, have children fill each cup approximately 1/3 full of water. Demonstrate how to squeeze half an orange into one cup and stir. Have children drink the plain water and then the water flavored with orange. How does each taste? What makes them different? Repeat with the lime and lemon. Which fruit-flavored water do they prefer? Chart who prefers the orange, lemon, and lime.

Check for Understanding Ideas

“Why is it important to drink water?”

Closing the Lesson

“Let’s remember to drink water at snack time and when we finish playing outside today.”

Other Ideas

- Prepare fruit or vegetable infused water. Place fresh fruit or vegetable slices, such as watermelon or cucumber, in individual cups of water. Cover cups with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. The next day, remove the fruit/vegetable from the water. Have children sample the water and describe the taste.
- Provide reusable water bottles for children to keep at the program. Have them decorate with markers or stickers.

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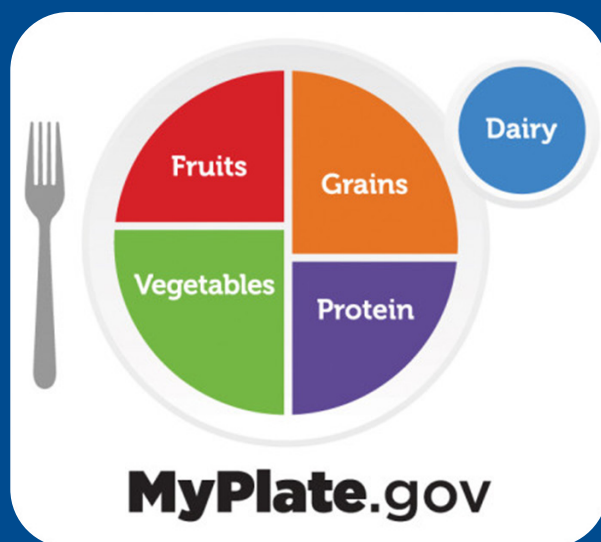
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Notes



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