

Food Pyramid

Summary

Students will complete a variety of activities to learn about the Food Pyramid and the importance of eating a variety of healthy foods.

Materials

For each student:

Play-Doh® or salt clay in red, yellow, orange, white, green, and brown

Paper plate, paper cup or other container

2" x 2" square of white paper or Post-it® note

- [Food Pyramid Chart](#) (pdf)

- [Food Cards](#) (pdf)

Crayons, pens, markers, or other writing utensils

Tape

Plastic wrap

Additional Resources

Books

- *Food Rules*

, by Bill Haduch; ISBN 0-14-131147-9

- *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food*

, by Stan and Jan Berenstain; ISBN 0-394-87217-7

- *D.W. the Picky Eater*

, by Marc Brown; ISBN 0-316-10957-6 (hardcover), ISBN 0-316-11048-5 (paperback)

- *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z*

, by Lois Ehlert; ISBN 0-15-224435-2

Organization

National Dairy Council, Rosemont, IL 60018-5616

Background for Teachers

Students should know why it is important to eat a variety of foods.

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate a positive learning attitude.
4. Develop physical skills and personal hygiene.
6. Communicate clearly in oral, artistic, written, and nonverbal form.

Instructional Procedures

Invitation to Learn

Did you know pirates lost their teeth, but it wasn't because they didn't brush their teeth? It is because they didn't eat foods that contained Vitamin C. Did you know that there are foods you should eat everyday, just like pirates, because eating the right amount of a lot of different foods gives you the vitamins and minerals that will help you grow.

Instructional Procedures

Part 1

Have each child draw a picture of his/her favorite thing to eat on the 2" x 2" squares of paper (e.g.,

something that grows in the ground, comes from a tree or bush, meat, dairy, or is made from wheat, oats or corn, etc.).

Collect and graph data according to the food group the picture belongs in.

Explain that our food is divided into groups.

Some foods can fit in more than one category.

Discuss the differences of each food and the similarities.

Each group of food is important for our bodies.

- *Milk Group*

 - strong bones and teeth

- *Meat Group*

 - strong muscles, builds blood vessels, skin and hair

- *Vegetable Group*

 - muscles work, heart beat, see in the dark, make red blood cells, and helps you grow

- *Fruit Group*

 - heal cuts and bruises

- *Grain Group*

 - energy

Label *Food Pyramid Chart* and draw pictures of what they would like to eat from each group to satisfy their recommended daily servings (Milk: 3; Meat: 2; Vegetable: 3; Fruit: 2; Grain: 6).

These represent the minimum number of servings recommended each day for children from 6-8 years of age. Some children may need more servings depending on their size, activity level and growth.*

* National Dairy Council, *Pyramid Café* 1998

Part 2

Divide students into small groups of four to five.

One child selects a *Food Card*, looks at the word and then without talking or motioning, molds that food using Play-Doh® or salt clay. Whoever guesses what is being made takes the next turn. Everyone should have an opportunity to be the sculptor.

Part 3

Give each child a small ball of each color of clay (about the size of a quarter).

Explain they are going to make miniature food servings from the foods they listed on their charts.

Instruct them to look at their *Food Pyramid Charts* and sculpt each food they have drawn and place it on their paper plate. Each food item should be smaller than 1 inch. (Do not to eat the clay!)

Show them how to make foods with a variety of colors (e.g., egg with white and yellow clay, a slice of watermelon, corn on the cob, etc.).

Demonstrate how combination foods can fit into more than one category (e.g., a hamburger would have 2 servings from the grain group, 1 serving from the meat group, 1 serving from the vegetable group, 1 serving from the cheese group—depending on the size).

They should check off each food item on their list after they create it.

When they are finished, they will have a model of what they would need to eat during one day to help their bodies grow healthy and strong.

Cover the plates with plastic wrap or place in a large plastic bag for each child to take home, or give them a container to put their food in. Paper cups will work to get them home without being crushed.

Part 4

It is good to eat a variety of foods. Different vegetables, for example, have different vitamins and minerals. A good variety helps our bodies to receive all the necessary nutrients it needs to grow

healthy and strong.

Not only do we need to eat smart, but exercise and rest is an important part of being healthy.

Discuss activities to do instead of sitting. Generate a list on the board.

Have students copy down some of their favorite activities that they can do at home or type up all the responses, copy and send home with each child.

Getting enough sleep is critical for our bodies, too.

Children who are 7-8 years old require about ten hours of sleep each night.

Extensions

Draw the student's favorite food from all five groups and tape them on the wall to see which group people like to eat from the most.

Write a letter to a pirate telling them how important it is that they eat right. (Pirates lost their teeth because they didn't get enough Vitamin C.)

Record how long you sleep each night for one week. Write down the time you turn off your light and the time you wake up in the morning. Graph and evaluate your results to see if you are getting enough rest.

Family Connections

Children can help plan a meal for their family that contains something from each food group.

Record what they eat in a day's time using the [Food Group Chart](#) (pdf) and see what group they need to cut back on or what group they need to eat from more often.

Share the information they have learned with their families and help them make wise choices about the foods they are eating.

Generate a list of family activities to engage in instead of watching television or playing video games.

Assessment Plan

Give each child a Food Pyramid Chart and cut outs of different foods. Have them glue each piece in the correct category to fulfill their necessary daily requirements.

Tell why our bodies need nutrients from each group and how they keep us healthy.

Authors

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