Food and Drink to grow on

This section offers easy and fun ideas and activities to help children learn about fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods.

Chapter 1: Nutritious and Delicious! Children explore wonderful, colorful foods.

Chapter 2: Making the Healthy Choice Children discover what makes a healthy meal or snack. They begin to understand that they can eat certain healthy and nutrient-rich foods anytime, but high-fat, sugary foods should be eaten only sometimes.

Chapter 3: What My Body Tells Me Children learn how to pay attention to their bodies' signals. Are they hungry? Full? What should they do with each of these signals?

Healthy food keeps us happy and strong! There are so many foods to choose from, but which are best for growing children?

You can guide children to the right choices by helping them learn about healthy eating and allowing them to choose from a variety of nutritious foods. You'll also learn how to help children understand important body signals – like feeling hungry or full – and simple ways to express these sensations.

Food is colorful and it's delicious. Enjoy it together!

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Nutritious and Delicious!

This chapter focuses on celebrating all of the healthy foods that give children the fuel they need to play and grow.

✻ Did You Know?

A child might have to try a new food ten or more times before he accepts it. In other words, even if a child says "yuck" at first, he might still end up liking that food. You can help by encouraging children to taste new foods.

Healthy food is delicious and naturally comes in many colors – the more colors you have on the plate, the more nutritious your meal is.

- Chant **"I Say Fruits and Vegetables"** and think about healthy foods together. (page 41)
- Play with the **Mystery Food Box** to help children explore different healthy foods. (page 42)
- Notice the colors of different healthy foods in **I Eat the Colors of the Rainbow**. (page 43)
- Discover different food combinations as you **build healthy salads** together. (pages 44-45)
- Move and chant **"Pick and Pull"** together as children think about where fruits and vegetables grow. (page 46)
- Send home the **Family Newsletter**, which updates families about everything children have been learning and offers ideas for healthy eating at home. (page 47)

Most of all... enjoy healthy food with your children!

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Group Poem

I Say Fruits and Vegetables

We eat a rainbow
of colors every day.
They help make us
strong so we can play!

I say red.
We say apples and cherries!
I say blue.
We say big blueberries!
I say green.
We say zucchini would be yummy!
I say purple.
We say plums will please our tummy!
I say yellow.
We say squash would be nice!
I say orange.
Let's have a carrot by the slice!

We eat a rainbow of colors
every day.
They help make us strong
so we can play!

Say it, do it! < Copy this poem, post it, and use it over and over again. Say the poem together in an area where everyone has the space to move.

When you come to a fruit or vegetable, encourage children to strike a pose. If you say cherries, children might ball up on the floor. If you say carrot, they might stand up on their tiptoes. Name various movements rapidly so children are moving around!

Add your own colorful foods to the poem. Say the first part of each line ("I say red..." or "I say green...") and encourage children to call out their own healthy red or green fruits and vegetables.

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Activity

Mystery Food Box

Children can begin to understand what "healthy food" means by exploring the variety of foods that make up a healthy diet and talking about the foods they like.

Try This!

When finished, wash and cut up fruits and vegetables and have a taste test during snack time. This is a great opportunity to explore foods from around the world.

Children will:

- Use their senses to explore healthy foods
- Learn about the health benefits of different foods
- Taste fruits and vegetables

Materials:

- An assortment of real fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lowfat dairy products
- Empty cardboard box (cut a hole in it so children can reach inside)
- Scissors

Ask children:

What's your favorite vegetable? Your favorite fruit?
When do you drink milk? When do you eat yogurt and cheese?

Activity:

1. Show children the foods you have brought (e.g., an apple, banana, orange, cucumber, broccoli, yucca, bok choy, small piece of cheese, whole wheat pita, empty yogurt container, clean dry lowfat milk carton, etc.) and talk about their colors and shapes. Tell children that this box is a healthy food box.
2. Turn around so children can't see what you are hiding in the box and place a fruit or vegetable inside the box.
3. Encourage children to take turns reaching inside the box, feeling the food (or the container it's in) inside, and guessing what it is. Ask the child to describe what he feels to the other children. Is the food smooth? Bumpy? Is it big or small? What could it be? What makes you think that's what might be inside?
4. Open the box and show the food inside. Discuss the health benefits of each food.

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View and Do: *I Eat the Colors of the Rainbow!*

Children can think about what they are eating and understand that colorful fruits and vegetables are good for them because they have lots of vitamins and other nutrients.

Try This!

Say this cheer together and ask a child to point to the colors on the Healthy Food Rainbow as you cheer:

Red! Orange! Yellow!
Purple! Green! Blue!

All these foods are good for you.

They give you vitamins to help you grow. (reach up to the sky)

And the energy you need to go, go, go. (jump around to show your energy)

Children will:

- Explore the different colors of fruits and vegetables
- Sort items by colors

Viewing:

Watch **I Eat the Colors of the Rainbow** on the DVD (segment #4). Have children see how many different colors they can identify.

Materials:

- Construction paper (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple)
- Crayons in a variety of colors
- Magazines and/or food circulars
- Tape
- Scissors

Doing:

1. Post the colored paper along the wall – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple. Make sure it is low to the ground in an area that all children can easily access. Explain that together children will work to create a Healthy Food Rainbow.

2. Point to a color and ask, "What vegetables or fruits are this color?"

3. Ask children to find and cut out of a magazine or draw a fruit or vegetable (see full list on pages 98-99). Throughout the week, help children add their healthy food creations to the rainbow wall, posting each one on the color that matches. "Where does broccoli go?...On the green square, right!"

   Red & Pink: apples, cherries, strawberries, tomatoes, watermelon
   Yellow & White: bananas, squash, pineapple, corn
   Green: beans, peas, lettuce, grapes, pears, broccoli
   Orange: oranges, carrots, peaches, cantaloupe
   Blue & Purple: blueberries, plums, grapes, eggplant

4. Ask children to gather in front of their beautiful rainbow. What healthy foods do they see? All those colors mean so many vitamins and minerals that are good for our bodies.

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Activity

Build Me a Salad

Now that children have thought about healthy fruits and vegetables and learned about eating colors, they can create their own healthy salad.

Try This!

Have a salad bar day and have each child bring in a different salad ingredient, and then bring their recipes to life! Encourage children to taste all the different fruits and vegetables.

Children will:

- Practice counting and writing numbers
- Explore different ways to combine healthy fruits and vegetables

Materials:

- Copies of page 45 (one per child)
- Crayons or paint

Activity

1. Have children sit in small groups at tables with crayons and paint. Let them know they will be creating their very own healthy salads.
2. Encourage children to use a crayon to circle each fruit or vegetable they would like to include in their healthy salad. It's okay to mix fruits and vegetables – grapes and apples are delicious with lettuce in a salad! Ask, "What green vegetable are you going to put in your salad? How about a red fruit? What tasty red fruit can you add?"
3. When children have circled the fruits and vegetables they want to include in their salads, ask them to count how many foods they have circled.
4. Go around to each child and help them write the number on their paper: 6 healthy foods! 7 healthy foods! and so on.
5. Now ask children to paint or color the fruits and vegetables on this page and ask them to think about the colors they need for each food.

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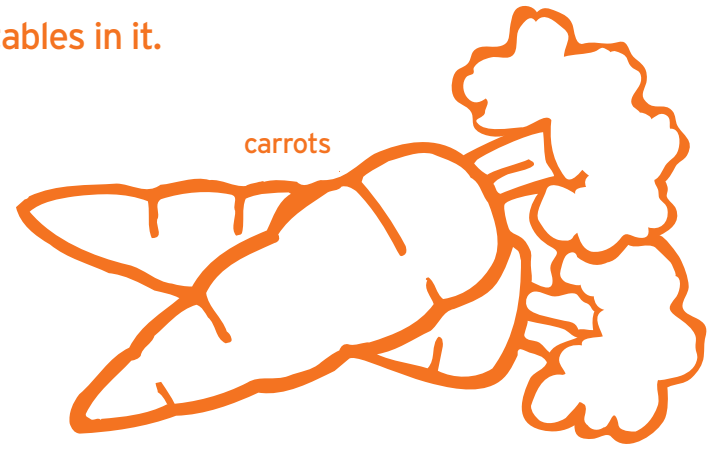
Handout: Salad Ingredients (see page 44)

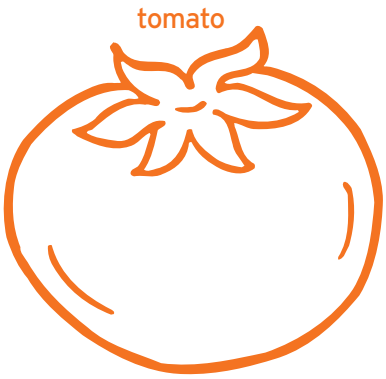
_____'s Healthy Salad

I put _____ different fruits and vegetables in it.

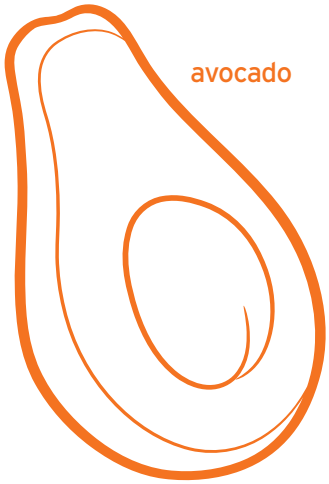
lettuce



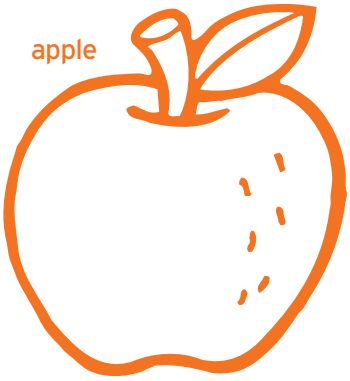
carrots



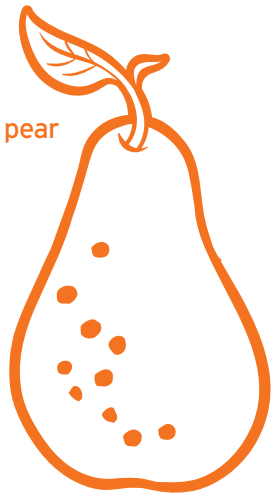
tomato



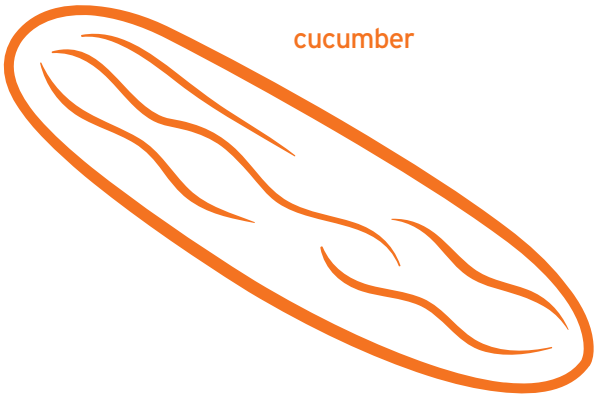
avocado



apple



pear



cucumber

orange

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Activity

Pick and Pull

Children can think about where healthy foods come from and move their bodies to show where the foods grow. Do we pull them from the ground or pick them from a tree or a bush?

Try This!

Explore what happens next – after farmers pull those carrots up. (The carrots travel on a truck to the store and your family buys them, cleans them, and cuts them up to eat.) Invite children to act out the different steps in sequence. What happens first? Next? Last?

Children will:

- Think about how different fruits and vegetables grow
- Move their bodies in fun ways
- Build spatial awareness

Ask children:

Where do fruits and vegetables come from?
We buy them in a store, but where do they grow?
What fruits can you think of that grow on trees?
What foods grow in the ground?

Activity:

1. Ask children to close their eyes for a moment and really imagine they are standing under an apple tree – how high do they have to reach for an apple? When they pull from the ground, can they picture the carrot in the dirt? How about a big raspberry bush; how far forward do they have to reach?
2. Encourage children to think about how high they can stretch their arms when they PICK, PICK, PICK and how low they can go when they PULL, PULL, PULL. Try pretending you are all in a big field – you can call out between lines, for instance, "Now let's run (in place) to the orange tree!"

Pick and Pull Song

I see an apple tree. Reach up and PICK! PICK! PICK!
I see a mango tree. Reach up and PICK! PICK! PICK!

I see a blueberry bush. Reach in front of you and PICK! PICK! PICK!
I see a raspberry bush. Reach in front of you and PICK! PICK! PICK!

I see a carrot. Reach down and PULL! PULL! PULL!
I see a potato. Reach down and PULL! PULL! PULL!

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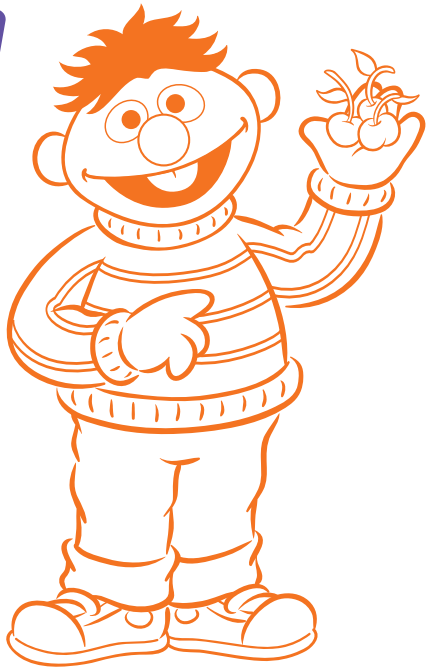

Hello, families!

In our program, we have been learning all about delicious, healthy foods.

In our program, children have been:

Singing about healthy foods and learning that "eating their colors" is fun, nutritious, and delicious.

As they explore healthy eating, children have also been learning about numbers, counting, identifying colors, and engaging in pretend play.

Did You Know?

Young children may need to try a new food more than 10 times before they learn to like it, so put a little on the plate, and ask your child to just taste it.

We've been exploring what foods look like in all their gorgeous, bright colors and we've tasted these healthy, colorful foods as well.

You can help at home! There are so many healthy foods to try and explore.

Activity ideas:

Rainbow Parfaits We've been learning that colorful foods are healthy foods, so enjoy this snack together.

What you need:

Plain or vanilla-flavored lowfat yogurt
Colorful cut-up fruit (strawberries, peaches, kiwi, blueberries, bananas, etc.)
Crushed graham crackers
Clear plastic cups

What to do:

In each cup, make layers of yogurt, fruit, and crushed graham crackers.

Colorful Menus Plan a meal with your child that includes at least three different colors, like red peppers, black beans, and brown rice. Buy the items together. While you're preparing the meal, have your child create a dinner menu or draw a plate with all the foods on it. Display the menu near the table, if possible. Have your child count up all the colors on the plate.

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Great Grocery Shopping Tips

Going to the supermarket can be a great learning opportunity. Your child can help make healthy choices as you shop together.

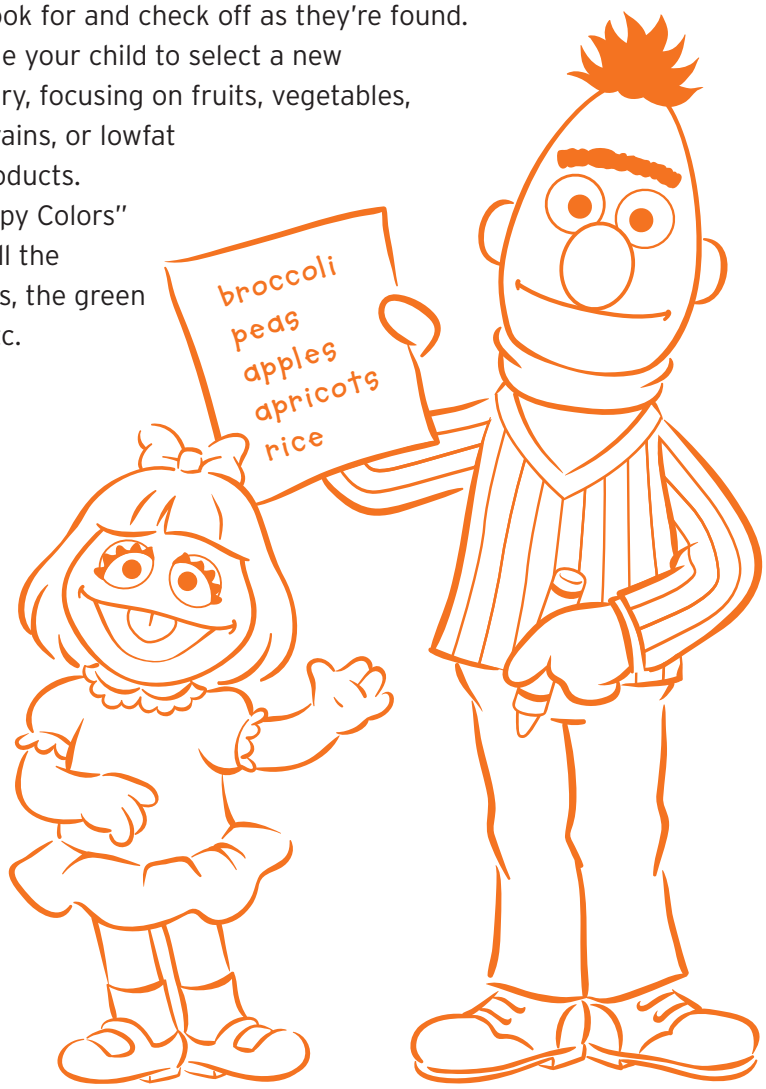
✻ Try This!

Pretend you are running a Healthy Family Restaurant at home. You can start at the grocery store by shopping for healthy foods. Ask your child what you should name your family restaurant.

When you're grocery shopping, focus on the outermost aisles of the store. Often, that's where you'll find the healthiest foods, such as fresh produce, dairy products, meats, and seafood. Head down the other aisles with a plan for what you want, instead of giving your child the chance to spot sugary cereals, unhealthy snacks, or other foods you don't want to buy.

Involve your child as you shop:

- Let your child push a kid-size cart, if the store offers them.
- Give your child a small list of items (from your master list) to look for and check off as they're found.
- Challenge your child to select a new food to try, focusing on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, or lowfat dairy products.
- Play "I Spy Colors" to find all the red foods, the green foods, etc.



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Chapter 2 Introduction

Making the Healthy Choice

This chapter focuses on helping children make healthy choices each day. When given the chance to choose from two healthy foods, children can feel proud of themselves for making a healthy decision.

Did You Know?

Children who get five servings of fruits and vegetables each day are more likely to get the nutrients they need.

Adults play a very important role in helping children understand the nutritional value of foods and drinks. You don't want to overload them with information, but children can explore the differences between healthy and less healthy foods and drinks. Help them understand that healthy foods and drinks are great anytime, while less healthy foods and drinks should be enjoyed only sometimes. You can also help children count how many fruits and vegetables they are eating each day. Aim for at least 1, 2, 3, 4, **5**!

- Begin by making a **meal for a monster** and pay attention to the rhyming clues! (page 50)
- Watch **Cookie Is a Sometime Food** on the DVD and then help children learn the difference between sometime foods and anytime foods. (page 51)
- Encourage children to think about their favorite healthy foods as you do the **Anytime Apples** activity together. (page 52)
- Create a **Sometime/Anytime Café** and help children plan the menu, name the restaurant, and decide what they will need to do. (page 53)
- Think about the many ways to combine delicious fruits and vegetables to **add up to five**. (page 54)
- Send home the **Family Newsletter** to help families foster healthy eating habits at home! (page 56)

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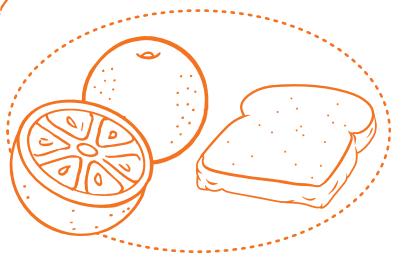
Activity

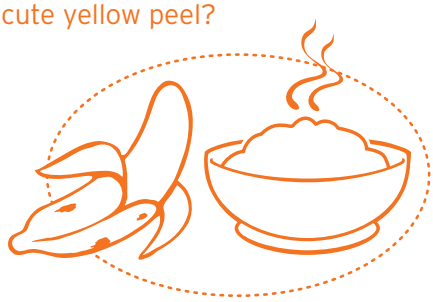
A Meal for a Monster & Me

Copy this page (one per child) and ask children to circle or color in the meal they'd like to eat.

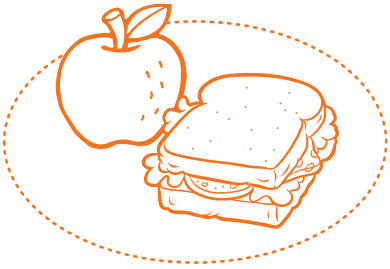
Grover, Elmo, and Zoe are really hungry, but they need your help to decide what to eat. Please listen to their rhymes so you can help choose the delicious and healthy meal that you like best. Point to the healthy meal each monster might like to eat as much as you do.

It's breakfast time! Let's choose a nice healthy meal.
Should we choose whole-grain toast and an orange?
Or oatmeal and banana with its cute yellow peel?

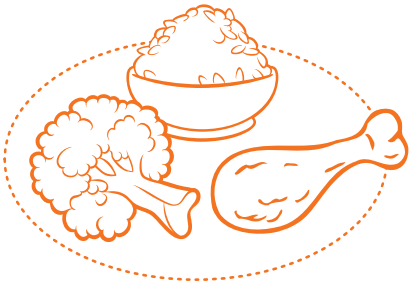




It's time for lunch! We need healthy food to eat.
Should we choose chicken with salad? Or turkey on whole wheat?



Let's choose a healthy dinner! Do you know what I mean?
Should we choose soup, bread, and tasty veggies? Or chicken, brown rice, and something green?



After you've listened to the rhymes and chosen meals for Grover, Elmo, and Zoe, ask children what they think Telly, Oscar, and Rosita should eat. Make sure their meals include fruits or vegetables – or both.

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View and Do: *Cookie Is a Sometime Food*

We need to stop and think before we eat foods with a lot of sugar, fat, and salt. But anytime foods have all of the nutrients we need to grow, play, and learn.

Try This!

Help children understand anytime foods by thinking about activities we do every single day. We brush our teeth and wash our hands every day; children can pretend to brush their teeth and wash their hands. Then explain that we can eat anytime foods, such as apples, lowfat milk, and carrots, every day.

Children will:

- Learn the difference between a sometime food and an anytime food
- Practice labeling foods as sometime and anytime

Viewing:

Watch **Cookie Is a Sometime Food** on the DVD (segment #5).

Ask children:

- Help me think of some other foods and drinks like cookies, soda, chips, and french fries that we only eat sometimes.
- What are some of the healthy foods we've talked about so far? What are some healthy drinks?
- What vegetables do you like to eat? What fruits? (Write answers on big paper with sometime foods in red and anytime foods in green.)

Doing:

Help children to think about sometime and anytime foods.

Materials:

- Old magazines/supermarket circulars
- 2 large pieces construction paper
- Tape or glue stick
- Scissors
- Paper and crayons

Activity:

1. Before beginning, cut out pictures of healthy anytime foods and sometime foods. Use the Sometime/Anytime Food List for your reference (page 100). Show children the sometime and anytime foods you've found.

2. Together, tape or glue the pictures onto construction paper (labeled "sometime" and "anytime") to make sometime and anytime food collages.

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Activity

Anytime Apples

An apple a day helps us live the healthy way. In this taste test activity, children can decide which apples they love the most.

Try This!

Say the following rhyme with children to remind them that not only are apples delicious, they are also anytime foods.

Apples, apples, we love you!
You taste so good and
you're healthy too.
You're green and yellow
and Red Delicious,
You're crunchy and colorful
and so nutritious!
We love apples!

Children will:

- Participate in graphing activity
- Notice similarities and differences in a favorite anytime snack

Materials:

- A variety of apples
- Large sheet of paper
- Plates
- Markers

Activity:

1. Ask children to bring in their favorite apple or bring in a few different kinds of apples yourself (try for a variety of red, green, and yellow). Tell children they are going to be "apple researchers" – they will find out how many kids like each different type of apple.
2. Cut up the different types of apples and place each type of apple on a plate.
3. Ask children to taste each apple and record their favorites on a large sheet of paper. Help children make a graph to display the voting results. Do they like red the best? Yellow? Green? Which color apple did most children choose as their favorite?
4. You can also check children's favorite types of apples. Within the red apple group, did children like Red Delicious the best? Fuji apples? Macintosh?
5. Healthy snack time – eat the apples!

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The Sometime/Anytime Café

Plan a grand opening of a healthy restaurant right in the play area! Children can think about what they need for their restaurant and work together to make the restaurant a healthy and delicious success.

✻ Try This!

Play the DVD segment "Breakfast Is the Best Meal of the Day" (#6) as families drop children off. Invite families to visit the children's pretend restaurant for breakfast. Children can take their orders and "serve" them healthy and delicious food.

Children will:

- Name and identify healthy foods and drinks
- Explore healthy eating through pretend play
- Develop print awareness through menus, labels, and signs

Materials:

- Large white paper (two pieces)
- Plastic healthy foods (fruits/veggies/milk/juice)
- Ask children's families to send in empty food containers (use healthy food containers and safe containers like boxes; avoid cans)

Activity:

1. During a group gathering, tell children that today they get to build a new restaurant. They can think of a name for their restaurant, make a sign, and create a menu together.

2. Use one of the large white pieces of paper to start a menu. Ask children to help you make a list of some healthy food choices (anytime foods) such as a grilled cheese sandwich on whole-grain bread, a salad, broccoli and carrots, lowfat yogurt, lowfat milk, water, etc. and have children choose. What sometime foods would children like to include? Make sure that there are more anytime foods on the menu than sometime foods.

3. Ask: What should we name our restaurant? Work together to make a colorful sign using the other piece of paper. Then, have a grand opening! Hang the sign in the pretend area. Children can take turns running the restaurant or being the customers. Talk with the children as they pretend to be customers. For example, "Oh, you chose some of the delectable macaroni and cheese. What vegetable could you order to go with that?" By helping children to think through their orders, you can reinforce healthy eating habits.

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Activity

Adding Up to Five

Children can find different ways to "make five" with healthy fruits and vegetables.

✻ Try This!

Copy the Try for Five Chart on page 55 to encourage children to keep track of how many fruits and vegetables they eat during the day. Any for breakfast? Lunch at school? Snack? Help children add up the total and fill in the numerals: "I ate ___ servings of fruits and vegetables today. I need to eat ___ more fruits and vegetables today to make five."

Children will:

- Practice adding and subtracting

Materials:

- Large paper plates (one per child)
- Reuse the handouts on pages 34, 45, and 62 (one copy of each per child)
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

Activity:

1. Help children cut apart the fruits and vegetables on their pages and spread them out where there is space. (Set aside cards that show foods other than fruits and vegetables. Put them in the play kitchen area for children to use during dramatic play.)

2. Have each child select five fruits and vegetables they'd like to have in a day by counting them and placing them on their plate. Encourage children to count out loud as they add each item (e.g., broccoli, banana, apple, carrots, and grapes – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5!).

3. They can then bring the plates to a large group meeting to share what they have selected. Now, start adding or subtracting. What happens if children "eat" or subtract two fruits or vegetables? How many do they have left over? Remind children that when it comes to eating fruits and vegetables every day, they don't have to stop at five!

4. Children can glue their favorite combination of five fruits and vegetables to their plates and write the numeral 5 on the back. They can take their plates home with their "Try for Five!" charts.

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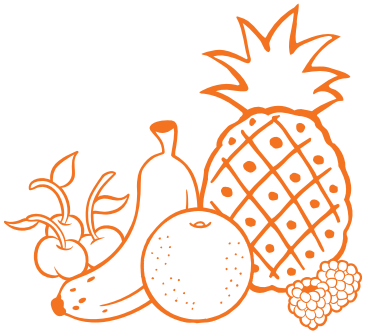
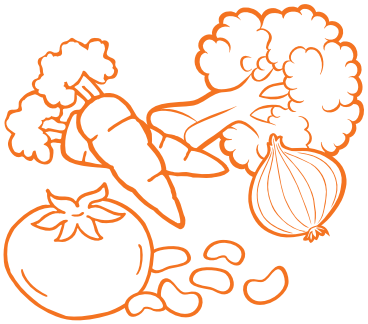


Try for Five!



Keep track of all the fruits and vegetables you eat today.
You can color in the boxes, make an X, draw a picture,
or write the name of the fruit or vegetable.

FRUITS	VEGETABLES

How many spaces did you mark?

I ate ____ fruits and vegetables today.

I need ____ more to make five!

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Family Newsletter

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Family Newsletter

Hello, families!

In our program, we've been making sure that we are eating lots of nutritious foods that are low in sugar, fat, and salt.

In the program, children have been:

Learning about sometime and anytime foods and drinks and the importance of eating five fruits and vegetables every day.

Rhyming, sorting, counting, and adding and subtracting.

✻ Did You Know?

Children who get all five servings of fruits and vegetables each day are more likely to get the nutrients they need.

We call these healthy foods "anytime foods" because we can eat them every day. We've also been learning that foods like cookies, chips, sodas, and other snacks that are high in sugar, fat, and salt are called "sometime foods" because we should only eat them once in awhile.

You can help at home! Children need healthy options in order to make healthy choices. At home, give children lots of healthy foods and drinks to choose from so that no matter what they pick, you'll know they are getting the nutrients they need to grow and learn every day ("Would you like an apple or a banana? Would you like some salad or some yogurt?") You can empower children as they make their own choices.

ANYTIME foods and SOMETIME foods Take a tour around the kitchen together and look at the foods you are eating every day to make sure you have lots of the anytime foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lowfat milk/cheese/yogurt, and lean meats. If you discover any chips, cookies, candy, sodas, or sports drinks, pause to remember that these foods are high in sugar, fat, and/or salt and are only sometime foods.

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Amazing Apple Recipes

Your child has learned that some foods are "anytime foods" – nutritious enough to be eaten anytime. Here are some great anytime snacks to try at home.

Anytime Apple Dip

What you need

Apples cut into thin slices
Vanilla-flavored yogurt
Whole-grain cereal "O"s

What to do

Set up an apple dipping station by setting out your plate of sliced apples along with bowls of yogurt and cereal. Let your child dip the apple slices.

Microwaved Baked Apples

Looking for an easy and delicious way to add fruit to your child's lunch? Pack these baked apples in single serving containers.

Ingredients

2 small apples, sliced (peel if desired)
1/2 tsp. brown sugar
1 Tbsp. apple juice
dash of cinnamon

Directions

1. Combine ingredients in a microwave-safe bowl.
2. Cover with plastic wrap.
3. Microwave 2-3 minutes, or until apples are soft. Stir. Serve when cool.

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Now and Later Zucchini Muffins

Your child has been learning that it's healthy to eat when you're hungry and to stop when you're full.

Make this recipe together with your children – it makes enough so that you can enjoy a muffin now and save the rest for later.

What you need

1 1/2 c. shredded zucchini (about 2 small)
2 c. whole-grain pancake or biscuit mix
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. allspice
2 eggs
3/4 c. brown sugar
1/4 c. unsweetened applesauce
2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
plastic grater
measuring cups and spoons
muffin tin and paper liners

What to do

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Wash zucchini, remove ends (leave skin on for extra fiber), and shred.
2. Place grated zucchini on paper towels and squeeze to remove water. Measure 1 1/2 cups of squeezed-dry zucchini.
3. In a large bowl, mix whole-grain pancake mix (or biscuit mix) with spices.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk together eggs, brown sugar, applesauce, and lemon juice.
5. Fold the egg-sugar mixture and shredded zucchini into the pancake-spice mixture (do not overmix).
6. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners. Fill each muffin cup 2/3 full with batter.
7. Bake 10-15 minutes or until golden. Remove muffins from tin and cool on a wire rack.

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Chapter 3 Introduction

What My Body Tells Me

Children have been learning all about the healthy, colorful, anytime foods that we should eat each day.

✻ Did You Know?

When children are urged to "clean their plates," it can lead to overeating. Instead, serve preschoolers small portions of food. A child who's still hungry can have a second small portion. This minimizes waste and encourages children to stop eating when they're full.

Children have already grouped foods into categories of anytime and sometime foods, thought about different ways to eat five fruits and vegetables each day, and learned where these foods come from. Now children can think about when to eat and how much to eat by listening closely to what their bodies tell them.

- Sing **"If You're Hungry and You Know It"** and encourage children to talk about how they are feeling. (page 60)
- Sort foods into different food groups in **A Bit of This, a Bit of That**. (pages 61-62)
- Read children the story of **"Cookie Monster and the Four Bears"** and help them learn about how to eat an amount that is just right for them. (page 63)
- Use the **Hungry-Full Meter** to help children express how they are feeling during snack and lunch time. (pages 64-65)
- Watch **"TJ Fruit Samba"** and march in your very own healthy parade. (page 66)
- Send home the **Family Newsletter** and encourage families to think about how to eat appropriate portions. (pages 67-68)

Have fun singing, sorting, and learning together.

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Group Song

If You're Hungry and You Know It

If you're hungry and you know it,
say, "I'm hungry!" *(2 times)*
If you're hungry and you know it
And you really want to show it.
If you're hungry and you know it
Eat a pear!

If you're thirsty and you know it,
say, "I'm thirsty!" *(2 times)*
If you're thirsty and you know it
And you really want to show it.
If you're thirsty and you know it
Drink some water!

If you feel full and you know it,
say, "No more, please!" *(2 times)*
If you feel full and you know it,
Then say "No" so you can show it.
If you feel full and you know it
Just say, "No more food."

Say it, do it! < After the first stanza, STOP! Children now pretend to eat different HEALTHY anytime foods. Ask children to call out what they are eating as they pretend to put these foods into their mouths. Now... STOP eating! And sing again...

After the second stanza, STOP! Children now pretend to drink different HEALTHY anytime drinks. Ask children to call out what they are drinking as they pretend. Now... STOP drinking! And sing again...

After singing with children, ask them to listen to their bodies. How are they feeling now? Hungry? Thirsty? Full?

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A Bit of This, a Bit of That

Children can learn about the different food groups as they explore the concept of a balanced meal.

Try This!

During snack time or lunch, encourage children to think about the foods they are eating. What food groups do they belong to? They are having carrots and cheese, so they have two groups! They have vegetable AND dairy. What if they added a piece of whole-grain bread?

Children will:

- Learn about food groups: vegetables, fruits, dairy, meats, grains
- Discover how to create a balanced meal

Materials:

- One copy of the food sheets on pages 34 and 62
- Scissors
- Paper plates
- Five paper bags
- Large sheet of paper

Activity:

1. Cut out the foods from the sheet and place them on the blank paper for all to see.
2. Introduce the five bags and explain that you have one for each food group. Write a food group label across each bag: **Fruits, Vegetables, Meat and Beans, Milk and Dairy,** and **Grains.** Together, look at each card and put it in the appropriate bag.
3. Explain that at meal time it is important to have food from each group. Take out a paper plate and draw a food card from each bag. Place the food cards on the plate to show off your balanced meal. Discuss this meal together – what types of food do you notice?
4. Before snack time or before children head home for the day, give a paper plate to a child. Have him come up and draw a food from each food group bag. What did he get? You can choose a different child each day.

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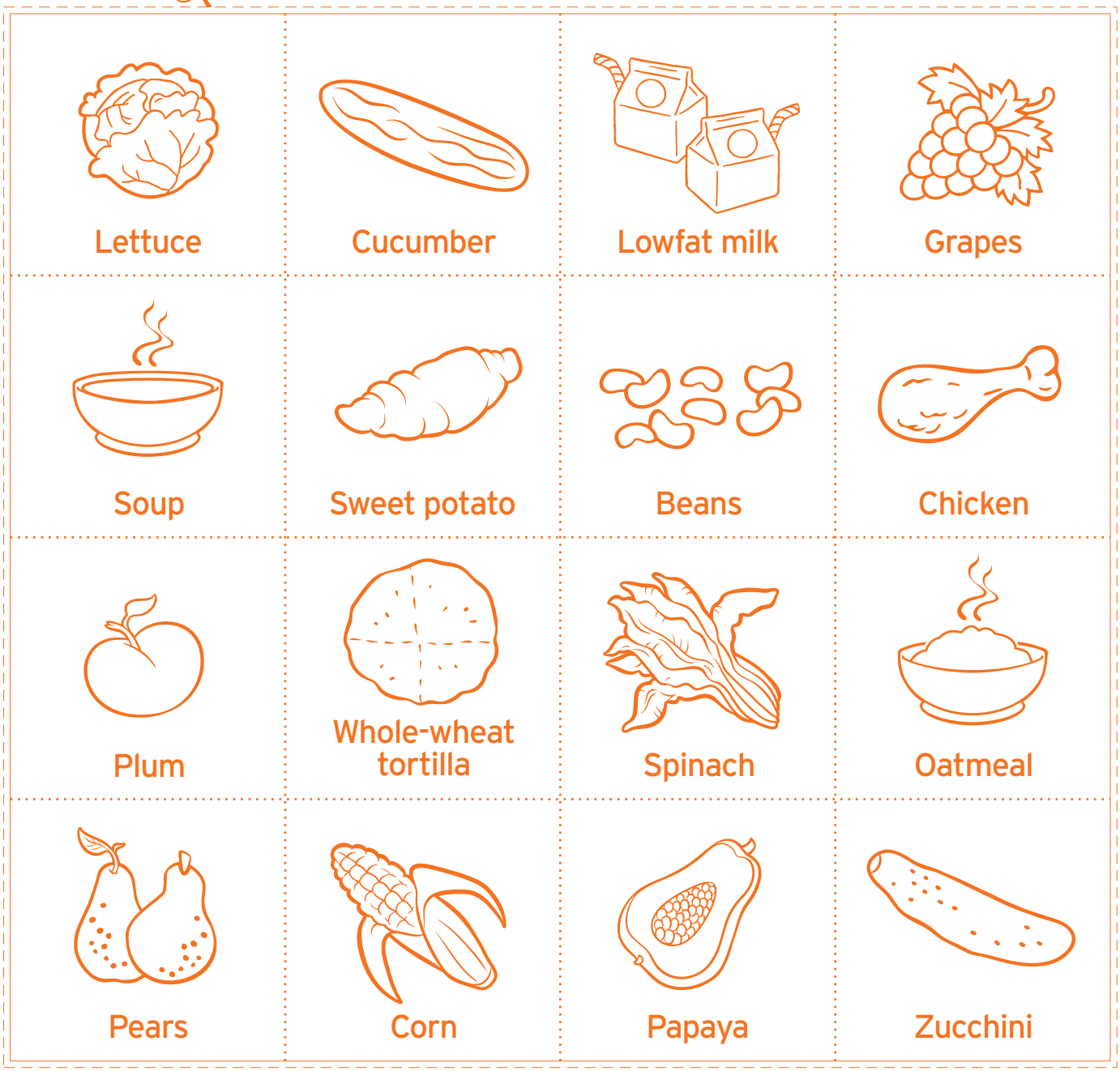
Handout: Food Cards (see page 61)



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Cookie Monster and the Four Bears

Baby Bear and his family help Cookie Monster (and children) think about appropriate portions of food.

Children will:

- Think about portion size
- Explore the concepts of empty and full

Activity:

Read the following story.

✻ Try This!

At the water table or sandbox, encourage children to explore the concept of empty and full with a variety of containers (plastic cups, ice cube trays, etc.).

Cookie Monster and the Four Bears

Once upon a time, there was a family of four bears – Baby Bear, Mama Bear, Papa Bear, and little Curly Bear. Every day they loved to eat a delicious, healthy breakfast of oatmeal with bananas. One day a friendly blue monster knocked on their door. It was Cookie Monster! He ran into the room and started to eat all the bears' oatmeal. All of a sudden he said, "Ugh, me feeling so sick. Why me tummy feeling so sick?" Baby Bear said, "You ate too much. You need to eat an amount that is just right for you. Watch, I will show you."

Baby Bear went to the kitchen and brought back more oatmeal and four bowls. Baby Bear put a small amount of oatmeal in each of the four bowls and he added some sliced bananas. Yummy! All of the bears started to eat their delicious oatmeal. Papa Bear stopped eating and said, "I'm full. I'm not going to eat any more oatmeal."

Cookie Monster said, "Oh, me see. Papa Bear not eat more because he not too hungry anymore." Baby Bear was still eating. He said, "I played outside all morning and I am really hungry. I'm going to eat some more oatmeal!" and he put another scoop of oatmeal in his bowl. Baby Bear asked Cookie Monster, "Do you need any more oatmeal?" Cookie Monster put his hand on his stomach and said, "No thank you, Baby Bear. Me full! Me think me already had more than right amount for one Cookie Monster!"

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Activity

Hungry-Full Meter

Sometimes it can be helpful for children (and adults!) to have a visual reminder that says "stop and listen to your body. How are you feeling?" Remember: You can let children decide how much to eat. Eat slowly together and enjoy the food.

✻ Try This!

Use the meter during lunch time as well. When children go home for the day, encourage them to take their meters home. They can show their families how they remind themselves to check if they are hungry or full when they are eating. (Children can explain to families how they use the Hungry-Full Meter in your program.)

Children will:

- Think about when they feel hungry and full
- Pause during snack time to decide what is an appropriate amount of food for them

Materials:

- Hungry-Full Meter (copy page 65, one per child; cut and assemble with brass brads or use plastic spoons as arrows)

As you start snack time, ask children:

How hungry are you? Think about how you are feeling right now. You may be feeling hungry because it's been a long time since you ate breakfast. Or, you may still be full from a big breakfast.

Activity:

1. As you are eating snack, pause and get the whole group's attention. Show them how you are using your Hungry-Full Meter.
2. Say, for instance, "I've had two crackers and three apple slices. How do I feel now? I think I'm still a little bit hungry." Move the arrow, and then have a bite. "Now I feel just right." Move the arrow again. Point out that it's not a good idea to be on the marks below the words "hungry" and "full." Tell children that the thick middle tick mark means "just right."
3. Now give each child a meter. As they eat and drink, encourage them to pause and think. Are they still eating because they are still hungry? Or are they already full? They can then use the meter to express themselves.

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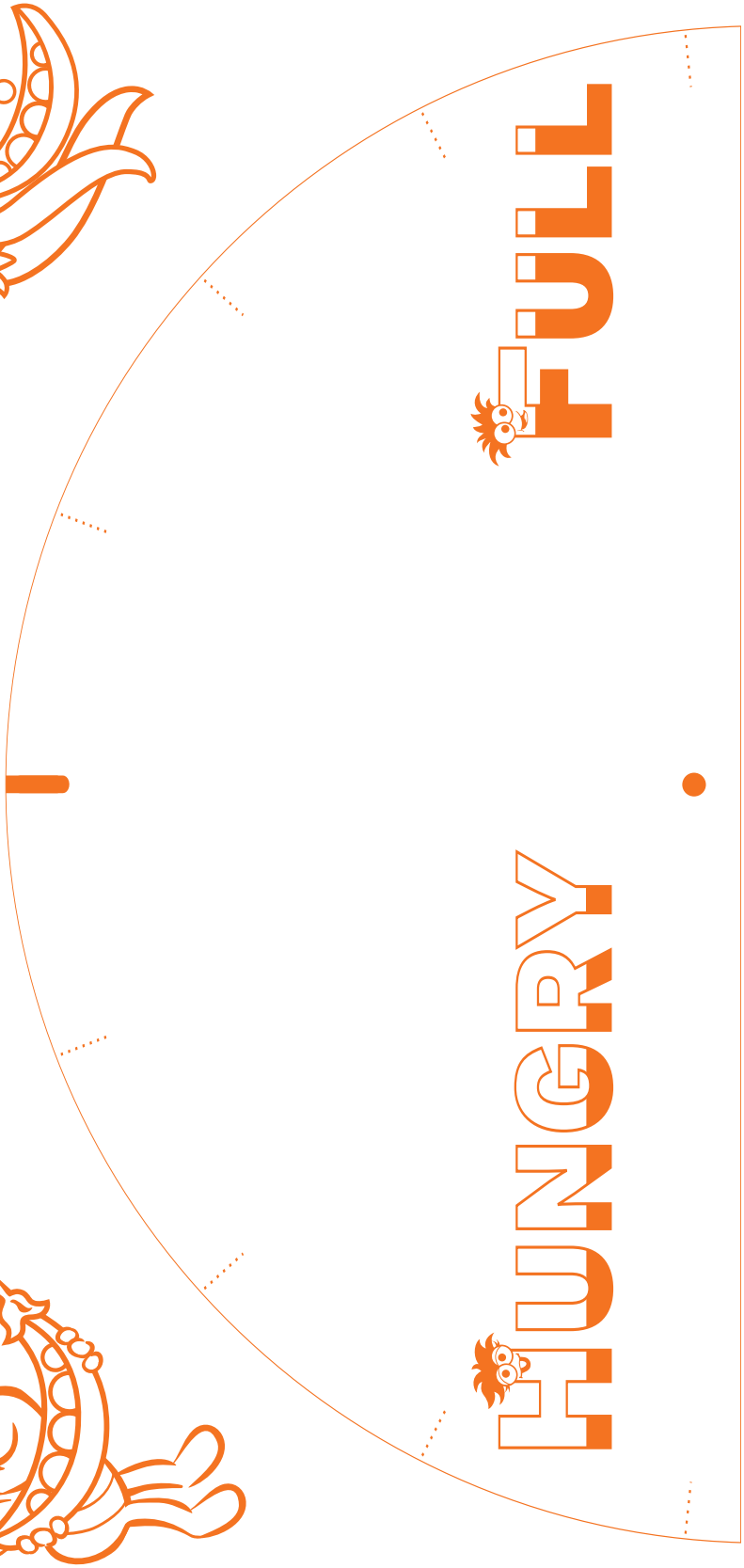
Handout: Hungry-Full Meter (see page 64)

Hungry-Full Meter



Cut out arrow and attach to Hungry-Full Meter with a brass brad. Or use a plastic spoon as an arrow.

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View and Do: *TJ Fruit Samba*

Celebrate colorful, delicious fruits – and the energy they give us.

✻ Try This!

Watch this again before a regularly scheduled snack time. Have a healthy snack by offering children a selection of real fruits to choose from. Kids can reach for sliced apples, bananas, blueberries, etc.

Children will:

- Recall the names of different fruits
- Think about choosing fruit when they are feeling hungry

Viewing:

Watch **TJ Fruit Samba** on the DVD (segment #7) together and ask children about what they saw. What was TJ singing about? There are so many healthy fruits to choose from when kids need an anytime snack.

Doing:

1. Play music and start a conga line.
2. To get into the line, each child calls out the name of a fruit. They can conga around the room, down the hall, and even outside.
3. Try different ways of inviting children into the line, such as "Anyone wearing purple like a fig, join us!" or "Who loves guava? Come along!" Children might also like to take turns leading the conga line.

Children might be curious about TJ's wheelchair. If children ask questions, it's a wonderful opportunity to explain that TJ uses his wheels to get around, just as other kids use their feet. TJ has to be very strong to move the chair with his arms, and he is active in many ways every day. He plays basketball, he dances, and sometimes he needs a rest too.

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Family Newsletter

Hello, families!

We are focusing on how to tell when we are hungry or full.

In our program, children have been:

Exploring food groups, building balanced meals, and learning to eat just the right amount of healthy foods – not too little and not too much.

We've been doing activities to help children think about portion size, and children have built balanced meals together.

You can help at home! Every child has different food needs. It's okay for a child to take only a little bit of food and then say he is full. However, it is not okay for him to then want to eat cake, or other sometime foods instead! By paying attention to your child's cues and listening to him, you can make sure he's eating the right amount. One way to think about this balance is that you provide the healthy choices, but your child can decide how much to eat.

Did You Know?

When children are urged to "clean their plates," it can lead to overeating. Instead, serve preschoolers small portions of food. A child who's still hungry can have a second small portion. This minimizes waste and encourages children to stop eating when they're full.

Need a breakfast on the go? Try these instead of doughnuts or toaster pastries:

Fruit and cream cheese sandwich: Layer lowfat cream cheese and sliced fruit on whole-grain bread, 1/2 bagel, or English muffin.

Breakfast taco: Sprinkle shredded lowfat cheese on a whole-wheat tortilla. Microwave for 20 seconds and serve with a spoonful of salsa, if desired.

Activity Ideas

- **Eating Healthy Foods Together** Whether you are serving your child or he is serving himself, start by putting small amounts of each food on the plate and letting him choose if and what to eat. When he finishes eating, ask, "Are you still hungry?" Giving him the chance to respond helps your child learn to make healthy choices. Encourage everyone at the table to mention how they are feeling: "Hmmm, I'm just a little bit hungry. I'll have a couple more bites and then I'll be finished."

- **Explore Full and Empty** The next time your child is taking a bath or playing with sand, encourage her to explore filling and emptying small and big containers (e.g., pails, plastic measuring cups). Point out that our stomachs also can be empty or full.

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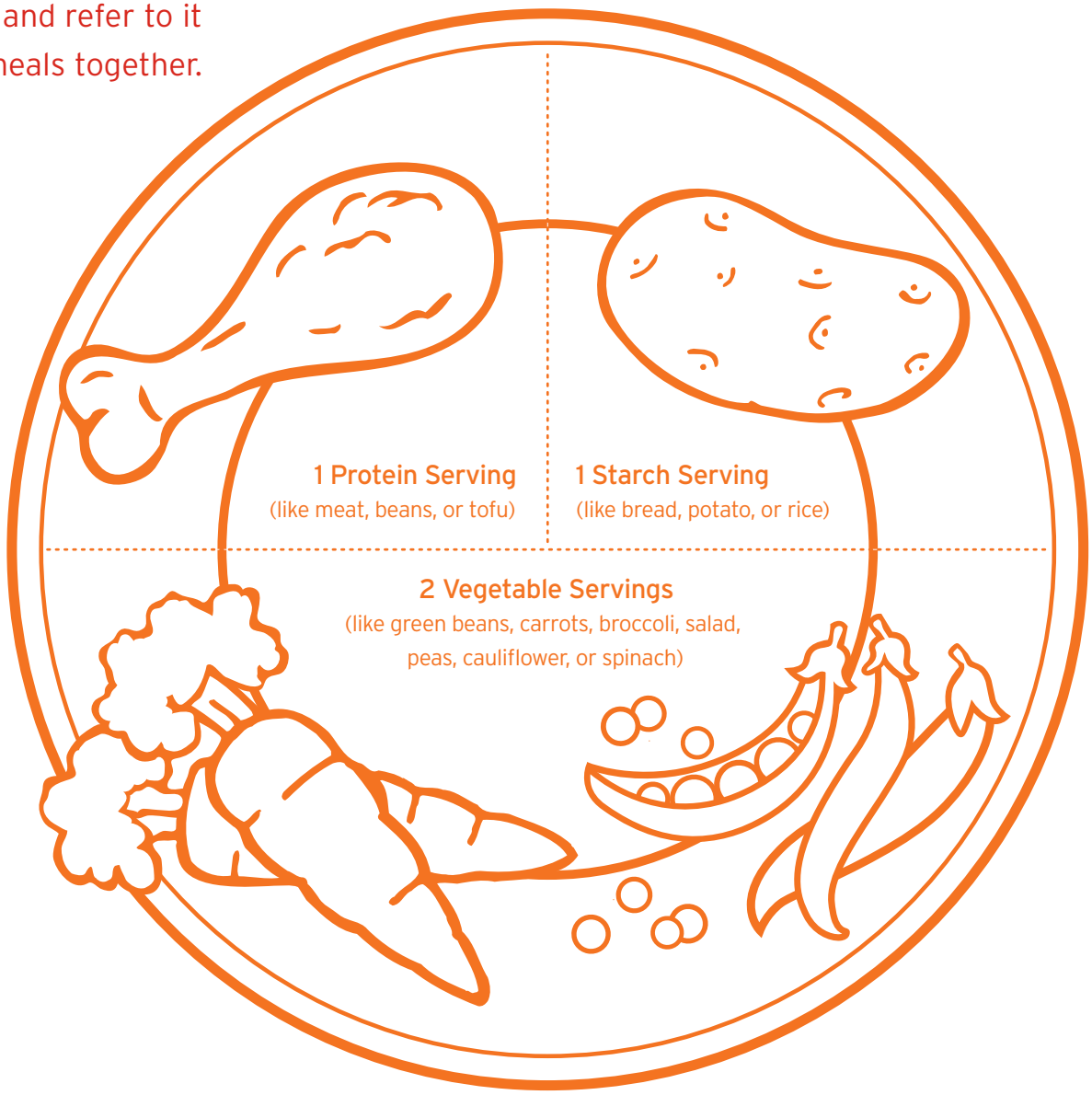
Family Handout

Building a Balanced Meal

You can help at home. Use this picture of a plate to help remind your child how to build a delicious, nutritious, and colorful meal. Display it on the refrigerator and refer to it as you plan meals together.

Think of your plate divided into four equal sections. Use one of the top quarters for protein. Use the other top quarter for starch, preferably a whole grain. Then fill the bottom half with vegetables! None of the foods should overlap or be piled high. Dividing your plate like this can help you keep portion sizes under control, and it will also help you balance your meals.



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