FOOD, FUN & READING
A Program for Preschoolers – 1st graders and parents

In each lesson:
1) Read a children’s story book
2) Talk about MyPlate and nutrition
3) Play a physically active game and
4) Make and enjoy a healthy snack

MyPlate Food Group Lessons
- **Grains Group**: The Little Red Hen by Paul Galdone
- **Protein Group**: Green Eggs and Ham by Dr. Seuss
- **Dairy Group**: Boy and the Travelling Cheese by Junia Wanders and Divin Meir
- **Fruits Group**: The Little Mouse, the Ripe Red Strawberry, and THE BIG HUNGRY BEAR by Don and Audrey Wood
- **Vegetables Group**: Eating the Alphabet Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert
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Dairy Lesson

Boy and the Traveling Cheese
by Junia Wonders and Divin Meir

Nutrition: Children will learn about the MyPlate Dairy group. They will learn about different foods that are in the dairy group and why they are healthy for them.

Physical Activity: Dem Bones Skelton Dance

Snack: Cheese Wheel Sandwich or String Cheese Art

The lesson should be taught in this order:

1) Introduce MyPlate Dairy Group
2) Read a childrens story book
3) Talk about MyPlate Dairy Group and nutrition
4) Play a physically active game
5) Make and enjoy a healthy snack

Background information for the instructor:

Dairy Group: Get Your Calcium-rich foods

Background information for the instructor:

Milk, yogurt, cheese and fortified soy milk are all in the Dairy Group. Dairy foods are high in calcium, potassium, Vitamin D and protein. Selecting dairy foods that are low-fat or fat-free provides the same amount of vitamins and minerals with less calories and saturated fat.

Remember that cream cheese, cream and butter are not part of the dairy group. This is because they are high in saturated fat and have little or no calcium. Substitute plain yogurt or Greek yogurt when a recipe calls for sour cream. Try evaporated milk instead of cream. A good substitute for cream cheese is low-fat or fat-free ricotta cheese.

Chocolate milk and other flavored milks can be high in added sugars. Look at yogurts, frozen yogurt and pudding to check for sugar content as well. Look for dairy foods with no added sugars— or at least fewer.

If you are lactose intolerant you can still get calcium from yogurt, hard cheeses, lactose-free milk or soy milk and some people can tolerate small amounts (i.e., 1/2 cup milk) at meals. Try leafy greens - they are often high in calcium as well.
What counts as a cup in the Dairy Group?

1 cup milk, yogurt or calcium-fortified soy beverage
1 1/2 ounces of natural cheese (about the size of 3 standard game dice) or 1/3 cup shredded cheese
2 ounces of processed cheese

Other useful information:
1/2 cup ice cream = 1/3 cup equivalent of dairy
1/2 cup cottage cheese = 1/4 cup equivalent of dairy
1/2 cup frozen yogurt = 1/2 cup equivalent of dairy.

What about calcium fortified almond, cashew, and rice milks? With the exception of calcium-fortified soymilk, these plant-based milks do not count as a dairy food. While they may provide an excellent source of calcium (if fortified) they do not have the other nutrients contained in dairy, such as protein, to be considered a dairy.

Older children, teens and adults need approximately 3 cups of dairy a day. Children 4 to 8 years old need 2 1/2 cups; while children 2 to 3 need 2 cups.*

*MyPlate serving recommendations for the dairy group are based on age rather than estimated caloric needs.

Sources: www.choosemyplate.gov
https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/
https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Calcium-HealthProfessional/

Required Materials:

- BOY and the Travelling Cheese book
- MyPlate Poster or Plate
- Ingredients and supplies for cheese wheel sandwiches or string cheese toadstools
- Dem Bones Skelton Dance - download on iPad mini or phone
- Video with dance movements can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e54m6XOpRgU

Teaching the Lesson:

Begin explaining you will read a book together, talk about MyPlate, make a healthy snack, and play a fun physically active game.

Today we are going to learn about the Dairy group. The Dairy group is part of MyPlate. (Show MyPlate poster or plate). Can you see where the Dairy group is on MyPlate?

We are going to read the book *BOY and the travelling cheese* (show the book). While we are reading the book- think about how it might related to the MyPlate Dairy group.
**Tips for reading to a group of children:**

- Make sure to read the book yourself ahead of time so you are familiar with it.
- Sit in a chair or on the floor in the center. Ask children to sit around you in a semi-circle. Ask kids to “sit on their pockets”.
- Read the book holding it up.
- Hold book up high and slowly show it around the entire circle so all kids can see.
- Speak loudly with a clear voice – articulating voices for characters, etc. when it applies.
- BOY with the Travelling Cheese is a longer book. If you are short on time consider skipping a portion of it. For example you could skip from the portion of the book about being famous and the part about being in the desert with his uncle. Start back up when the boy is on the ship.

**After reading the book:**

Didn’t the boy and his cheese have a grand adventure? Which dairy food was in the book? (allow children to answer cheese). That’s right! Think about all of the places he took the cheese! Now remember this is just a story – would you really want to take cheese to all of those places? Would it be safe to eat it afterwards? In real life cheese should be kept in the refrigerator where it stays nice and cool.

Do you remember where the dairy group is in MyPlate? Hold up the MyPlate poster or plate again. This is MyPlate which helps us to know how to eat in a healthy way. It reminds us that we should eat food from each of the food groups each day. Foods are divided up into five different food groups: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Protein and Dairy.

In addition to cheese—let’s look at other foods that are in the Dairy Group. Some dairy foods are what are called “sometimes foods” which means we shouldn’t eat them every day. They are higher in calories and aren’t as healthy for us. See if you can figure out which foods we are looking at are “sometimes foods” (Show children food models)

Instructor Notes:
Ice cream and pudding are sometimes foods because they are high in sugar and calories.

Dairy group foods are high in the nutrient calcium. Can you guess what calcium helps us with? Here’s a hint: it makes this part of our body nice and strong! (Show bone). You’re right! Calcium helps us have strong bones. There is another part of our body that calcium helps make strong. Everyone look up at me and give me a nice big smile. Can you guess what other body part calcium helps with? What are you showing me when you smile? Your teeth! Calcium is important so we have strong bones and teeth!

Did you know that physical activity is also an important part of building healthy bones? Today we are going to dance to the “Dem Bones Skeleton” song to strengthen our bones!
**Physical Activity: Dem Bones Skeleton Dance**

- Dem Bones Skeleton Dance - download on iPad mini or phone
- Video with dance movements can be found at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e54m6XOpRgU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e54m6XOpRgU)

**These are the words to the song: (move the part of the body the song is talking about in rhythm)**

The foot bone’s connected to the leg bone.  
Shake your hands to the right.

The leg bone’s connected to the knee bone.  
Put your hands in the air.

The knee bone’s connected to the thigh bone.  
Put your hands out of sight.

Doin’ the skeleton dance.  
Shake your hands to the left.

The thigh bone’s connected to the hip bone.  
Shake your hands to the right.

The hip bone’s connected to the backbone.  
Put your hands in the air.

The backbone’s connected to the neck bone.  
Wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, wiggle, wiggle...wiggle your knees.

Doin’ the skeleton dance.

Shake your hands to the left.

**Healthy Snack:**

**Cheese Wheel Sandwich**

**Ingredients:**
Small Wax covered cheese wheels
Sliced turkey or other low sodium sliced meats
Lettuce or spinach
Cherry tomato
Cucumbers cut into slices
Toothpicks
Small plates
(Use your imagination as far as “ingredients” for the cheese wheel sandwiches. Make sure to include 1-2 veggies)

Peel off wax and cut cheese wheels in half ahead of time. Set out “sandwich” ingredients. After children wash their hands encourage them to pick foods to put on their sandwich.

**Alternative recipe idea:**

**String Cheese Art**

**Ingredients:**
Supplies for “art”
String cheese
Toothpicks
Cherry tomatoes
Pretzels
Cucumbers
Olives

After they wash their hands encourage children to make their own string cheese art or structure.

**Note about food allergies:** Check with parents before any snacks are served to see if there are any food allergies. If a snack has an ingredient known to be a common allergy such as peanut butter—make sure to have an alternative such as a low fat ranch dip.

**While enjoying the snack review the lesson**

Ask children:

1) **Do you remember what nutrient dairy foods have a lot of?** (If children don’t remember— give them a hint—for example— it starts with a c or tell them it starts with cal....)

2) **And what parts of our body does calcium help the most?** (show bone) That’s right! Our bones. Ask children to all look at you and smile big again! And teeth! Calcium is important so we have strong bones and teeth!

3) **Other than eating dairy foods high in calcium there is one more thing we can do to make sure our bones are nice and strong.** Do you remember what it is? (allow children to guess) If then need a hint say a few lines from Dem Bones. Physical activity is important to strengthen bones. What kind of physical activity did we do today? Dancing!

**Other Books Children Might Enjoy:**

*Cow* by Jules Older  
*Milk: From Cow to Carton* by Aliki  
*Farmer McPeepers and His Missing Milk Cows* by Katy Duffield  
*Moo, Moo, Brown Cow! Have you any milk?* by Phyllis Gershator  
*Yogurt and Cheeses and Ice Cream That Pleases: What Is the Milk Group?* By Brian Cleary  
*The Great Cheese Robbery* by Tim Warnes  
*Fortunately, the Milk...* by Neil Gaiman
Dairy Food Group Foods

Copy (on cardstock if possible) and cut out
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Vegetables Lesson

*Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z* by Lois Ehlert

**Nutrition:** Children will learn about the MyPlate Vegetables group and learn what “eating a rainbow” of fruits and vegetables means.

**Physical Activity:** “Reggie Veggie Says” Game

**Snack:** Veggie Creatures OR Veggie Taste Test

The lesson should be taught in this order:

1) Introduce MyPlate Vegetables Group
2) Read a children’s story book
3) Talk about MyPlate Vegetables Group and nutrition
4) Play a physically active game
5) Make and enjoy a healthy snack

**Background information for the instructor:**

**Vegetables Group: Color your plate with Great-Tasting Veggies**

USDA’s MyPlate encourages making half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated. 100% vegetable juice is also in the vegetables group.

According to the Dietary Guidelines, vegetables are organized in subgroups: 1) dark-green vegetables, 2) red and orange vegetables, 3) beans and peas, 4) starchy vegetables, and 5) other vegetables. It is important to get a variety of vegetables from all subgroups. They all have different amounts of vitamins and minerals. Because they are high in nutrients, try eating more dark-green, red and orange vegetables. In fact, variety is so important that the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans includes weekly targets for amounts to eat from each vegetable subgroup in addition to overall recommendations for daily vegetable intake.

People who eat vegetables as part of a healthy daily diet may have a reduced risk of a variety of chronic diseases.

Vegetables are an important part of healthy eating because they provide many nutrients, including potassium, fiber, folate (folic acid) and vitamins A, E and C.
On average children preschool – 1st grade should be eating 1 ½ - 2 cups of vegetables each day.* This recommendation is for total amount of vegetables consumed in a day (from all vegetable subgroups).

*MyPlate serving recommendations are based on age, estimated number of calories required, and daily physical activity level. Individual needs and recommendations vary. For specific guidelines go to https://www.choosemyplate.gov/tools-supertracker.

**What counts as 1 cup in the Vegetable Foods Group?**

For the most part, determining what counts toward daily requirements of vegetables is more straightforward than for other food groups (i.e., grains and proteins); however, there is an exception for raw, leafy green vegetables.

1 cup of vegetables = 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables (i.e., cooked carrots, raw baby carrots, cooked spinach); 1 cup of vegetable juice, 1 medium potato or sweet potato; 2 cups of leafy, green vegetables (i.e., raw spinach or Romaine lettuce).

If you don’t have measuring cup nearby, you can estimate the following portion sizes by picturing these items:

1 cup = about the size of a baseball
1/2 cup = about the size of a standard light bulb

Sources:
www.choosemyplate.gov;
https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/
http://www.webmd.com/diet/healthtool-portion-size-plate

**Required Materials:**

Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z by Lois Ehlert book
MyPlate Poster or plate
Ingredients for Veggie Creatures OR Veggie Taste Test
“Reggie Veggie Says” Statements (in this lesson)
Plastic eyeball (optional - in Food $ense kits)

**Teaching the Lesson:** Begin explaining you will read a book together, talk about MyPlate, play a fun physically active game and enjoy a healthy snack.

**Sample Instructor Narrative:**

Today we are going to learn about the vegetables group. The vegetables group is part of MyPlate. (Show My Plate poster or plate). Can you see where the vegetable group is on MyPlate? We are going to learn about some yummy and different vegetables as well as fruits in this fun book “Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z” by Lois Ehlert. (show the book) As we read the book see if
you can think about what the story has to do with the MyPlate vegetables group.

**Tips for reading to a group of children:**

- **Read the book ahead of time so you are familiar with it**
- **Sit in a chair or on the floor in the center. Ask children to sit around you in a semi-circle. Ask kids to “sit on their pockets”**.
- **Hold book up high and slowly show it around the entire circle so all kids can see**.
- **Speak loudly with a clear voice – articulating voices for characters, etc when it applies**.

**After reading the book:**

Sample teacher narrative:

Hold up the MyPlate poster or plate again. Remember how we looked at MyPlate before? It helps us to know how to eat in a healthy way. It reminds us to eat food from each of the food groups each day. Foods are divided up into five different food groups: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Protein and Dairy.

Which is the group are we talking about today? *(allow children to say vegetables)* That’s right! Were there different colors of fruits and vegetables in the book we read? Did you know that you should try to “eat the rainbow” when eating fruits and vegetables? What do you think that means? Vegetables come in all different colors- and they have a lot of different nutrients in them that are good for us. Let’s see if we can think of some that are different colors. How about green? *(let children call out some)* lettuce, cucumber, zucchini, spinach, peas, broccoli, green bell peppers, green beans. There are a lot of vegetables that are green, aren’t there? Let’s try a color that is a bit harder- orange. *(let children call out some)* Carrots, pumpkin, orange bell pepper, squash, sweet potatoes and yams.

Many vegetables, especially the orange and dark leafy green vegetables we just named, are high in Vitamin A. Can you guess which part of the body vitamin A is especially good for? *(If you have a plastic eye– show it to the group)*. Everyone point at your eyes. Now point to the skin on your arms. That’s right! Vitamin A helps you to see well and keeps your skin healthy.

Would you like to play a fun game now? Everyone stand up and face the front of the room. We are going to play “Reggie Veggie Says”!
Physical Activity: Reggie Veggie Says...

This game is played like Simon Says with a twist- each motion is related to food. Instructor starts by asking children and parents to stand up and face forward. Explain that you will be playing “Reggie Veggie Says”. Just like Simon Says- if the instructor doesn’t say “Reggie Veggie Says” before an activity- anyone who does the activity gets a point against them. Once someone has three points they are out.

Reggie Veggie Says...
- Spin like salad! (move body back and forth like a salad getting the water spun out – similar to twist)
- Twist the top off a bottle of pop (move hand like twisting off top)
- Pick some carrots… 5 times! (bend down to floor and pull up, then stand back up). Count off together!
- Rip open some potato chips (put hands together like ripping open bag)
- Peel the cucumber…5 times (hold left hand as if holding a cucumber and “peel” away towards the front)
- Jump up and pick the corn…10 times. (jump up and reach upwards and pretend to pick the corn). Count off together!
- Reach for the remote (reach hand over like picking up a TV remote)
- Dig up those potatoes…5 times. (Squat down and reach down like you are using a shovel to dig). Count off together!

Healthy Snack:

**Veggie bugs**

You can get a little more creative than the plain old ants on a log. Cut slices cucumber and zucchini and stand up in cream cheese ranch dip or peanut butter inside a slice of celery. Cut baby carrots in half – lay them on a plate with a line of peas (from sugar snap peas) to make a butterfly. Use cherry tomatoes and a raisin to make butterflies. Cut up chives for the antennas of caterpillars. Ask kids to use the ingredients given to create their own bug. Have kids show their bug and give it a name before they eat it.

**Alternative Recipe idea: Veggie Taste Test:** Buy a selection of vegetables that kids may not have tried before such as jicama, small sweet peppers, sugar snap peas. Cut them up into bite size pieces. Show what a vegetable like jicama looks like before it is peeled and cut. You may want to bring a low fat ranch dip for kids to eat with the veggie taste test.

**Note about food allergies:** Check with parents before any snacks are served to see if there are any food allergies. If a snack has an ingredient known to be a common allergy such as peanut butter- make sure to have an alternative such as a low fat ranch dip.
While enjoying the snack review the lesson

Ask children:

1) What are some of your favorite vegetables? Were they in the book?
2) How do you like to eat them—raw or cooked?
3) Why do you think vegetables are so good for you? (Remind children vegetables have a lot of nutrients in them to help make us healthy. Ask them if they remember which vitamin is often found in vegetables. Remind them Vitamin A. Ask which parts of the body does Vitamin A help? (Show plastic eyeball if you have one. Point to your eyes and skin.)

Other Books Children Might Enjoy:

The Vegetables We Eat by Gail Gibbons
Blue Potatoes, Orange Tomatoes
The Gigantic Sweet Potato by Diane de Las Casas
The ABC’s of Fruits and Vegetables by Steve Charney
Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert
Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert
Tops and Bottoms by Janet Stevens
Little Pea by Amy Krouse Rosenthal
Monsters Don’t Eat Broccoli by Barbara Jean Hicks.
Vegetable Alphabet Book by Jerry Pallotta
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Grains Lesson
The Little Red Hen by Paul Galdone

Nutrition: Children will learn about the MyPlate Grains group and what foods are in the group. They will learn that half of their grains should be whole grains.

Physical Activity: The Chicken Dance

Snack: Whole Grains Snack Mix or Whole Wheat Tortillas

The lesson should be taught in this order:

1) Introduce MyPlate Grains Group
2) Read a children's story book
3) Talk about MyPlate Grains Group and nutrition
4) Play a physically active game
5) Make and enjoy a healthy snack

Background information for the instructor:

Grains Group: Make Half Your Grains Whole Grains

Choose whole grain foods such as whole wheat bread, oatmeal, whole wheat tortillas, brown rice and popcorn more often.

Grains are divided into two groups: Whole Grains and Refined Grains.

Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ, and endosperm. Examples of whole grains include whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole corn-meal, and brown rice.

Refined grains have been milled which means the bran and germ have been removed. This gives grains a finer texture. It also improves shelf life. Unfortunately it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. White flour, white bread, and white rice are all examples of refined grain products.

According to the Dietary Guidelines at least half of your grains should be whole grains. Whole grains are high in B vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. Substitute whole-grain choices for refined grains whenever possible.
Watch for food products labeled with words such as wheat flour, multi-grain, stone-ground, 100% wheat, bran, cracked wheat. Companies can be clever with words used on the front of packaging. Color is also not an indicator of whole grain content as additives can be used to make refined grains darker in color. If a whole grain such as whole wheat flour, whole cornmeal, oatmeal, or brown rice appears first in the list of ingredients, it often (although not always) indicates that the product is mostly a whole grain since ingredients are listed in order of weight. Another way to identify whole grains is by the 100% Whole Grain stamp from the Whole Grains Council, which indicates a product is a whole grain.

On average a child age 4-8 should be eating 4-6 ounce equivalents of grains group each day.* Half of that amount should come from whole-grains. Examples of amounts of food that count as one ounce equivalent of grains include 1/2 cup cooked grains (i.e., oatmeal, pasta, rice); 1 cup dry cereal; or 1 standard size slice of bread.

*MyPlate serving recommendations are based on age, estimated number of calories required, and daily physical activity level. Individual needs and recommendations vary. For specific guidelines go to https://www.choosemyplate.gov/tools-supertracker.

Sources: www.choosemyplate.gov; www.wholegrainscouncil.org

Required Materials:

- Little Red Hen book
- MyPlate Poster or Plate
- Recipe and Ingredients for Whole Grains Snack Mix or Whole Wheat Tortillas
- Plastic flower that separates leaves, flower and stem
- “The Chicken Dance” music – download on ipad mini or phone. Video with music and motions available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQQ59Zal4w.
- “The Chicken Dance” steps (at the end of this lesson)

Teaching the Lesson:

Begin explaining you will read a book together, talk about MyPlate, make a healthy snack, and play a fun physically active game.

Sample Instructor Narrative:  (Instructor text is in blue)

Today we are going to learn about the Grains group. The Grains group is part of My Plate. (Show MyPlate poster or plate). Can you see where the Grains group is on MyPlate?

We are going to read the book “The Little Red Hen” by Paul Galdone. (show the book). While we read the book see if you can figure out what it has to do with the MyPlate Grains group.

Tips for reading to a group of children:

- Make sure to read the book yourself ahead of time so you are familiar with it.
- Sit in a chair or on the floor in the center. Ask children to sit around you in a semi-circle. Ask kids to “sit on their pockets”.
- Read the book holding it up
Hold book up high and slowly show it around the entire circle so all kids can see.
Speak loudly with a clear voice – articulating voices for characters, etc when it applies.

**After reading the book:**

Ask children “Do you remember the steps the Little Ren Hen took to make the grain into bread?”

Go over steps:
1) Plant
2) Reap
3) Take to the mill to make into flour
4) Mix flour with other ingredients to make dough
5) Bake the dough

The Little Red Hen was using a whole grain!

Hold up the MyPlate poster or plate again. This is MyPlate which helps us to know how to eat in a healthy way. It reminds us that we should eat food from each of the food groups each day. Foods are divided up into five different food groups: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Protein and Dairy.

Today we read a book related to the Grains group. We should try to make half of the grains we eat each day a ‘whole grain’. What do you think that means? “Whole grain” simply means that you are eating the entire grain kernel. Some of the more common whole grains come from wheat, corn, rice or oats. The less the grain is “broken up” the healthier it is for us. This is a picture of a whole grain vs a refined grain. (show the large image on the last page of the lesson)

![Whole Grain vs Refined Grain](https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/whole-grains/)

*Image source: Harvard School of Public Health* https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/whole-grains/

Show children a flower. Think of a whole grain like this flower. It has three parts - the stem, the petals and the leaves. A whole grain has the bran, endosperm and germ. What happens when you start separating the parts? (pull the petals from the stem and the leaves off the stem. Allow children to give you answers such as “it isn’t pretty.” “It isn’t whole”). Just like this flower - once you break apart a whole grain it isn’t complete any more.

**Physical Activity: Chicken Dance**

You will need: “The Chicken Dance” music – download on ipad mini or phone. Video with music and
motions available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQQ59Z-al4w. Watch the video if you are not familiar with the dance movements.

Ask children: What kind of animal was the “Little Red Hen”? She was a chicken- and because she was a chicken we are going to do the chicken dance!

Have children stand up and face you. Start music. Demonstrate the steps so they can follow you.

Here are the basic movements:
Begin with arms by sides.
*Put your forearms up with your hands facing in front of you. Make a beak shape with fingers. Use a “quack-like” movement with fingers and thumbs.

Steps 1-4
Do the above movement 4 times to the beat of the music.
*Flap arms like a chicken: elbows out, forearms facing inward.

Steps 5-8
Do the above movement 4 times to the beat of the music

Steps 9-12
Clap hands four times.

Steps 13-16
Wiggle your tail feathers (shake your rear end) down to the floor for 2 counts and back up

Repeat from beginning.

**Healthy Snack:**

*Whole Grains Snack Mix* (as children enjoy their snack mix talk about what whole grains are in the mix.)

**Ingredients:**
100% whole grain cereal *(ex: Cheerios, Wheat Chex, Corn Chex, Wheaties)*
Popcorn
Whole grain goldfish crackers
Yogurt Covered Raisins

**Other Supplies:**
Small Cups
Large Zip Plastic Bag or Bowl
Plastic food prep gloves

Put on food prep gloves. Mix all ingredients in a large zip bag. Pour into small cups for each child.

**You could incorporate other ingredients as well. Keep in mind you want to include “whole grains”.*
Alternative recipe idea: Whole Wheat Tortillas (as children enjoy their tortilla you could show them the two types of flour and discuss which is healthier.)

Ingredients:
1 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup all-purpose flour
½ tsp. salt
2 tbsp. canola oil
¼ cup water
Cheese slices

Other Supplies:
Small Plates
Electric Skillet
Spatula or fork
Plastic food prep gloves

1. Put on food prep gloves. Combine flours and salt in a medium bowl. Add oil and water and mix with a fork until dough holds together.
2. Knead the dough on a floured surface for about 5 minutes. If dough becomes too sticky to handle, add more all-purpose flour to the work surface.
3. Give each child a small ball of dough. Ask them to flatten it with a wooden dowel or small rolling pin. (Ask children to wash their hands first).
4. Place tortilla in a preheated, ungreased electric skillet and heat until brown spots appear on the bottom. Flip the tortilla and cook for an additional minute. Top with a slice of cheese and roll up. **If limited on time- you could make the dough up ahead and place it a bowl with a towel covering it.

Note about food allergies: Check with parents before any snacks are served to see if there are any food allergies. If a snack has an ingredient known to be a common allergy such as peanut butter- make sure to have an alternative such as a low fat ranch dip.

While enjoying the snack review the lesson

Ask children:
1) Do you remember how a whole grain is different from a refined grain? (Allow children to give answers) then show diagram again.)
2) Why are whole grains better for you (Allow children to give answers and then talk about it again.)
3) What are some whole grains you like to eat? Help children come up with some whole grains they will try.

Other Books Children Might Enjoy:

If You Give a Mouse a Muffin by Laura Numeroff
If you Give a Pig a Pancake by Laura Numeroff
Strega Nona by Tomie dePaola
The Popcorn Book by Tomie de Poala
The Tortilla Factory by Greg Paulsen
The Little Red Hen by Margot Zemach
Sun Bread by Elisa Kleven
Grains Lesson

Whole Grain:
- bran: fiber-filled outer layer with B vitamins and minerals
- endosperm: starchy carbohydrate middle layer with some proteins and vitamins
- germ: nutrient-packed core with B vitamins, vitamin E, phytochemicals, and healthy fats

Refined Grain:

Image source: Harvard School of Public Health  https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/whole-grains/
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Protein Foods Lesson

Green Eggs and Ham

**Nutrition:** Children will learn about the MyPlate Protein Foods group and what foods are in the group. Children will learn about protein and what it does for the body.

**Physical Activity:** Green Eggs and Ham Relay

**Snack:** Ham and Cheese Roll-up or Womlette (Omlette made in waffle maker)

The lesson should be taught in this order:

1) Introduce MyPlate Protein Foods Group
2) Read a childrens story book
3) Talk about MyPlate Protein Foods Group and nutrition
4) Play a physically active game
5) Make and enjoy a healthy snack

**Background information for the instructor:**

**Protein Foods Group: Vary your protein routine**

Foods that belong in the protein food group include foods from both animal (eggs, poultry, meat, fish) and plant (beans, peas, soy products, nuts and seeds) sources.

Most Americans get plenty of protein in their diets, but the Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourages choosing a wider variety of healthy protein options. When choosing meat look for leaner cuts such as round or sirloin beef. Ground beef should be at least 93% lean. Trimming and/or draining fat and removing skin from poultry is a good way to reduce extra calories. Eggs can be an inexpensive way to get protein in the diet.

Consider trying out beans and peas such as black beans and chickpeas. In general, beans are lower in saturated fat, provide dietary fiber (which is only found in plant-based foods) and contain important vitamins and minerals.

Seafood is also a nutritious protein source. Fatty-fish such as salmon, sardines, and trout contain heart healthy fats in addition to protein and other nutrients. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults eat two 4-ounce portions of seafood per week (8 ounces total). The EPA and FDA suggest 2-ounce portion sizes of seafood for children ages 4-7.
Most people that are ages 9 and older should eat 5 to 7 ounces of protein each day (from both meat and plant-based sources). Most children ages 4-8 should eat 3-5 ounces of protein per day. Most children 2-3 years old need 2-3 ounces of protein.*

*MyPlate serving recommendations are based on age, estimated number of calories required, and daily physical activity level. Individual needs and recommendations vary. For specific guidelines go to https://www.choosemyplate.gov/tools-supertracker.

**What counts as 1 ounce in the Protein Foods Group?**

It can be confusing to figure out what an ounce looks like in different foods—especially in the protein foods group.

**One ounce of Protein Food:** 1 egg; 1/4 cup cooked beans or peas; 1/2 ounce nuts or seeds; 1 ounce lean meat, poultry or seafood; 1 Tbsp peanut butter

For a helpful table with more ounce equivalents go to: https://www.choosemyplate.gov/protein-foods

It may also be helpful to have a visual reference for various foods.

Nuts: 1/2 ounce = about 12 almonds, 7 walnut halves

Peanut Butter: 2 Tbsp is about the size of a golf ball (1 Tbsp = 1/2 golf ball)

Meat/Poultry: 3 ounces of chicken is about the size of a deck of cards

Fish: 3 ounces is about the size of a checkbook

Sources:
ChooseMyPlate website: www.choosemyplate.gov;
FDA Advice About Eating Fish: www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm393070.htm#supporting;

**Required Materials:**

- Green Eggs and Ham book
- MyPlate Poster or Plate
- Protein Group food models printed on cardstock if possible (cut out ahead of time and mix plant and animal cards.)
- Recipe and Ingredients for Meatball Lollipops or Womlettes
- Plastic green eggs
- Copies of ham clipart for game
- Large spoons
- Bowls or pans
- Optional: Two brown bag sacks (one labelled animal based protein and one labelled plant based protein)
Teaching the Lesson:

Begin explaining you will read a book together, talk about MyPlate, play a fun physically active game and enjoy a healthy snack.

Sample Instructor Narrative:  (Instructor text is in blue)

Today we are going to learn about the Protein Foods group. The Protein foods group is part of MyPlate. (Show MyPlate poster or plate). Can you see where the Protein Foods group is on MyPlate?

We are going to read the book “Green Eggs and Ham ” by Dr Seuss. (show the book). While we read the book think about how it fits in with what we are talking about today: the MyPlate Protein Foods group.

Tips for reading to a group of children:

- Make sure to read the book yourself ahead of time so you are familiar with it.
- Sit in a chair or on the floor in the center. Ask children to sit around you in a semi-circle. Ask kids to “sit on their pockets”.
- Read the book holding it up
- Hold book up high and slowly show it around the entire circle so all kids can see.
- Speak loudly with a clear voice – articulating voices for characters, etc when it applies.
- Green Eggs and Ham is a longer book. If you are short on time consider skipping a portion of it. For example you could skip pages 26-39. Then on page 46 skip the lines “Not in the rain, Not on the train, Not in the dark, Not in a tree, Not in the car.”

After reading the book:

Ask the children So what happened at the end of the book? (Allow children time to answer - he tried something new, etc.) It is important to try new foods - if we never try them how would we know if we like them?

Hold up the MyPlate poster or plate again. Remember before reading the book we looked at MyPlate? Do you remember where the Protein group is? MyPlate helps us to know how to eat in a healthy way. It reminds us that we should eat food from each of the food groups each day. Foods are divided up into five different food groups: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Protein and Dairy.

The protein group includes foods that are animal based foods that are plant based. Isn’t that kind of weird—that an animal food and a plant food can be in the same group? Let’s look at some pictures of foods and see if we think they belong in the protein group. Show 4 pictures - 2 plant and 2 animal (you will show the other pictures a the end of the lesson). As you go over them mention if they are plant based or animal based. Ask kids if they have tried the food - and if they like it.
The Protein group is really high in one certain nutrient. Have you heard of that word before: Nutrient? It is substance in foods that we need in order to grow and survive. Who knows which nutrient is found most in the PROTEIN group? (Allow children to guess - they should know protein). Ask children to all hold up their arms and make a fist to show their arm muscles. What does protein do? (Allow them to answer—makes you strong, etc.)

Great answers! Proteins are like stacks of building blocks. Your body breaks apart the blocks of a protein and puts them back together in different ways to build important structures in your body such as your muscles, bones, and even your skin. Your body gets these important “building blocks” from the protein foods you eat.


Now that we know you have big muscles—should we play a game and watch you use them?

**Physical Activity: Green Eggs and Ham Relay**

You will need: Plastic green eggs, copies of ham clipart, bowls or pans

Break kids into equal groups. Line them up at one end of the room. Place bowls or pan at the beginning of each line as well as on the floor on the other side of the room. (How far you make the relay will depend on the age of children—make it shorter for younger kids). Give each team 1 green plastic egg, 1 image of ham and one spoon.

Explain the game: Since we read the book Green Eggs and Ham I thought it would be fun to play a “Green Eggs and Ham” Relay game! The first person in line will place the green plastic egg on the spoon. CAREFULLY walk to the bowl/pan and drop the egg and spoon in. Run back and tag the next person in line. The second person will put the ham image on top of their head and CAREFULLY walk to the bowl/pan and drop it in. Then run back and tag the next person. The third person will run to the bowl/pan, pick up the egg and spoon and CAREFULLY walk back to the line. The fourth person will run down to the bowl/pan, pick up the ham image, put it on their head and walk back CAREFULLY to the line.

**Instructor Note:**
What happens if you drop the egg or ham? Depending on the age of the group you may want to do different things. You might want to make them start all over at the end of the line or for younger children just have them take two steps back and start again.

If you don’t have enough children to do a relay you could have each child walk the egg and ham over the bowl/pan and time them. See who is quickest. It is also fun to place the eggs on a table and have the kids push the egg - using ONLY their noses. There are many “egg” themed games. Think about other games you could play.
Healthy Snack:

Green “Womlettes” (omelette made in a waffle maker)

Ingredients:
2 eggs  
2 Tbsp spinach (blended well into puree with eggs)  
Small and pepper to taste  
1-2 Tbsp assorted veggies or pre-cooked meats (ex: onions, green chiles, olives, ham (of course!), mushrooms, peppers)  
After cooking toppings: cheese, salsa

Other Supplies:
Blender  
Waffle Maker  
Bowl

Preheat waffle maker. Wash hands and put on food prep gloves. Place eggs and spinach in blender. Blend well until spinach is pureed. For each womlette add 1-2 Tbsp assorted ingredients. Do NOT overfill. Lightly spray waffle maker. Pour scrambled egg mixture into waffle maker. Close lid. A soft omelette takes about 3 minutes to cook. A firm omelette take about 5 minutes. Make sure omelette is not undercooked due to food safety issues. Remove womlette from waffle maker. Top with cheese and/or salsa.*  
*Do not add cheese before you place it in the waffle maker or it will become sticky and difficult to remove.

Alternative recipe idea:

Meatball Lollipops

Ingredients:
Frozen Meatballs (they come in ground beef but also look for ground turkey or chicken)  
Pretzels or Crisp Breadsticks for lollipop sticks  
Healthy Sauce options* or Sauce recipe and ingredients  
*Many ketchups and bbq sauces are very high in added sugar. Look at ingredients before purchasing - usually a “natural” ketchup will have less sugar.

1. Cook meatballs according to package.  
2. Serve with sauce and “sticks”  
3. Encourage kids to make lollipops (after they have washed hands)

Sauce Recipe:
1 14.5 oz can diced tomatoes with roasted garlic and onion  
1 14.5 oz can can diced tomatoes Italian style  
Blend together and heat up.
Note about food allergies: Check with parents before any snacks are served to see if there are any food allergies. If a snack has an ingredient known to be a common allergy such as peanut butter- make sure to have an alternative such as a low fat ranch dip.

**While enjoying the snack review the lesson**
(you will need copies of the animal and plant proteins and the paper bags - if using)

Ask children:
1) Foods in the MyPlate Protein group come from two different types of sources - animals and plants. Let’s look at some foods and see if we can decide which group they go in—animal-based or plant-based. (Show children pictures of seeds, peanut butter, turkey, etc included in this lesson. Have kids guess which goes where. Place photos in the correct bag.)
2) Foods in the protein group are high in the nutrient protein. Can you remember what protein does for the body? I’ll give you a hint! (hold arms up showing muscles). Protein helps us build strong muscles!

**Other Books Children Might Enjoy:**

*Dragons Love Tacos* by Adam Rubin
*Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* by Judi Barrett
*Scrambled Eggs Super!* By Dr. Seuss.
*The Lunch Box Surprise* by Grace Maccarone.
*Yoko* by Rosemary Wells
Photocopy on cardstock and Cut out Ham images for the Green Eggs and Ham Relay Race
FOOD, FUN & READING

Fruits Lesson
The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry, and the BIG HUNGRY BEAR
by Don Wood and Audrey Wood

Nutrition: Children will learn about the MyPlate Fruits group. They will learn about different fruits and why they are healthy for them.

Physical Activity: Fruit Basket Dice Game

Snack: Strawberry Mice or Fruit Kabobs

The lesson should be taught in this order:

1) Introduce MyPlate Fruits Group
2) Read a childrens story book
3) Talk about MyPlate Fruits Group and nutrition
4) Play a physically active game
5) Make and enjoy a healthy snack

Background information for the instructor:

Fruits Group: Focus on Whole Fruits

USDA’s MyPlate encourages making half your plate fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are low in calories and high in nutrition (if not prepared with extra sugar, fat, etc.) By filling half your plate with them it helps you get the recommended servings.

Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed

Whole fruit is recommended over juice. Fiber is found in the pulp of the fruit. When juice is made (either commercially or at home with a juicer), the pulp is usually removed. That means the fiber goes with it. Juice is high in calories compared to whole fruit.

When purchasing fruit juice make sure to read closely to see if it is 100% fruit juice. When purchasing canned fruits, look for fruits lower in sugar such as those that say “canned in 100% juice.”

When consumed as part of an overall healthy diet, eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables may: (1) reduce risk for heart disease, (2) protect against certain types of cancer, and (3) help lower intake of calories.
All fruits contain some amount of vitamin C – and many fruits, especially citrus fruits such as oranges and grapefruit, are high in Vitamin C. Vitamin C is needed for the growth and repair of tissues in all parts of your body. Vitamin C is an antioxidant. Antioxidants are nutrients that block some of the damage caused by free radicals. Vitamin C is water soluble which means the body cannot store it. It should be consumed daily. Many Americans don’t get enough potassium – which can help regulate blood pressure. Dried apricots, orange juice and bananas are all excellent sources of potassium.

On average children preschool – 1st grade should be eating 1 - 1 1/2 cups of fruits each day.* According to the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, it is recommended that at least half of the daily fruit requirement be met as whole fruit rather than juice. For children, these guidelines are in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations for fruit juice consumption:
- Children ages 1-3—should consume no more than 4 oz. of fruit juice per day
- Children ages 4-6—should consume no more than 4-6 oz. of fruit juice per day

*MyPlate serving recommendations are based on age, estimated number of calories required, and daily physical activity level. Individual needs and recommendations vary. For specific guidelines go to https://www.choosemyplate.gov/tools-supertracker.

What counts as 1 cup in the Fruits Food Group?

1 cup of fruit is equal to the following: 1 cup sliced, cubed, or pureed fresh or canned fruit; 1/2 cup dried fruit; 1 cup 100% fruit juice.

Sources: www.choosemyplate.gov; https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/ http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/139/6/e20170967

Required Materials:
- The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry and the BIG HUNGRY BEAR book
- MyPlate Poster or Plate
- Large Dice
- Fruit Basket activity cards

Teaching the Lesson:

Sample Instructor Narrative (in blue)

Begin explaining you will read a book together, talk about MyPlate, make a healthy snack, and play a fun physically active game.

Today we are going to learn about the Fruits group. The Fruits group is part of MyPlate. (Show MyPlate poster or plate). Can you see where the Fruits group is on MyPlate?

We are going to read the book The little mouse the red ripe strawberry and the big hungry bear (show the book). While we are reading the book- think about how it might related to the MyPlate Fruits group.
Tips for reading to a group of children:
- Make sure to read the book yourself ahead of time so you are familiar with it.
- Sit in a chair or on the floor in the center. Ask children to sit around you in a semi-circle. Ask kids to “sit on their pockets”.
- Read the book holding it up
- Hold book up high and slowly show it around the entire circle so all kids can see.
- Speak loudly with a clear voice – articulating voices for characters, etc when it applies.

After reading the book:
Hold up the MyPlate poster or plate again. This is MyPlate which helps us to know how to eat in a healthy way. It reminds us that we should eat food from each of the food groups each day. Foods are divided up into five different food groups: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Protein and Dairy.

The book we read had a red ripe strawberry in it. How many of you like strawberries? What other fruits are your favorites? (allow children to name a few). Fruits are good for us, aren’t they? In fact, MyPlate recommends that we make half of our plate fruits and vegetables. (show myplate poster or plate again.) That means when you sit down to eat dinner with your family—half of this plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables! This is because these foods are full of nutrients that help us grow and stay healthy. One of the vitamins that is found in fruits is Vitamin C. Can you hold your hand so it looks like a C? That will help us remember Vitamin C!

Now - raise your hand if you have ever fallen and skinned your knee or cut yourself on something sharp. I think we all have. Did you know that the vitamin C that is found in the fruits we eat helps our wounds and cuts heal? Raise your hand if you have ever had a cold or the flu? Unfortunately we probably all have suffered through it. Did you know that Vitamin C can help keep us fight infection and keep us healthy?

Physical Activity: Fruit Basket Dice Game

Print and cut up Fruit Basket cards ahead of time. Fold cards and place them in a basket or bowl. Start the game by explaining you will roll the dice to get a number. Next— a card from the fruit basket will be pulled. For example: the Fruit Basket card might say “jumping jacks”. If the pair of dice was rolled to a six (one dice with a 1 and one dice with a 5) then the group will do 6 jumping jacks. Then – roll the dice again and pull a new activity out of the fruit basket.

Alternate Game: Orange, Orange, Grapefruit

Ask children to sit in a circle. One person will be selected to start the game as “it.” “It” will walk around the circle. Touching each person’s head “it” will say orange, orange, orange until “it” randomly picks someone and says grapefruit. That person must stand up and run after “it”. If that person is able to tag “it” then “it” has to go around the circle again. If “it” reaches the spot open and sits down- than there is a new “it”.
**Healthy Snack:**

**Strawberry Mice**

**Ingredients:**
- Strawberries
- Mini Chocolate Chips
- Licorice whips
- Almond slices

Rinse strawberries. Cut off top with leaves. Slice bottom off slightly (so the mouse will sit). Cut licorice whip about 2 times the length of the strawberry. Place in the back of strawberry. Add mini choco chips for eyes and nose. Stick two almond slices on top for ears.

**Alternative recipe idea:**

**Fruit Kabobs**

**Ingredients:**
- Different fresh fruit (for example: blueberries, strawberries, pineapple, honeydew, cantaloupe)
- Wooden skewers
- Small heart cookie cutter (optional)

Wash, hull and cut fruit into big size pieces. If in season cut cantaloupe and/or honeydew into 1 inch rounds. Use small cookie cutter to make hearts or other shapes.

After children wash their hand encourage them to string fruit carefully on the skewer to make a fruit kabob. Ask parent to help children.

**Note about food allergies:** Check with parents before any snacks are served to see if there are any food allergies. If a snack has an ingredient known to be a common allergy such as peanut butter—make sure to have an alternative such as a low fat ranch dip.

**While enjoying the snack review the lesson**

Ask children:
1) Show myplate poster or plate. Do you remember how much your plate should be fruits and vegetables? (Allow children to guess answers). Yes—half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables.
2) Why do you think we should have half our plate full of fruits and vegetables? (Allow children to guess answers). They are especially healthy for us—so it important to eat a lot of them each day.
3) Hold your hand so it makes the letter C. Do you remember what vitamin is found in a lot of fruits? That’s right! Vitamin C. Vitamin C helps our wounds and cuts heal and it also helps keep us stay healthy and fight infection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jumping Jacks</th>
<th>Mountain Climb in Place</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sit Ups</td>
<td>Somersaults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push Ups</td>
<td>Jump to Sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump Backs</td>
<td>Arm Circles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Books Children Might Enjoy:

- *The Fruit Bowl* by Dianne Warren
- *The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear* by Don Wood
- *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl
- *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey
- *Apples, Cherries, Red Raspberries* by Brian Cleary
- *A Fruit Is a Suitcase for Seeds* by Jean Richards
- *Orange Pear Apple Bear* by Emily Gravett
- *Apples For Everyone* by Jill Esbaum