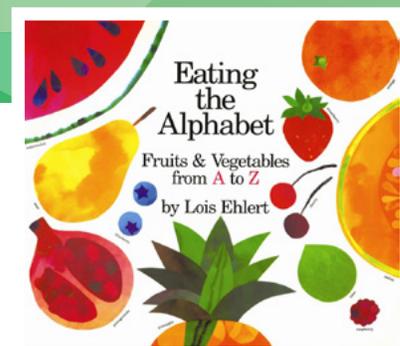
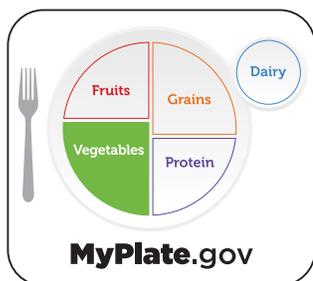


# Vegetables Lesson



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

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**NUTRITION FOCUS** Children will learn about the MyPlate Vegetables group and learn about “eating a rainbow” of fruits and vegetables.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY** “Reggie Veggie Says” Game

**SNACK** Veggie Creatures OR Veggie Taste Test

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

### Children will be able to do the following:

1. Name some foods in the Vegetable Group.
2. Identify major nutrients in vegetables like vitamins A or C.
3. Name some types of physical activity that are good for us.

## LESSON ORDER

### The lesson should be taught in this order:

1. Introduce the MyPlate Vegetable Foods Group.
2. Read a children’s storybook, “Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z” by Lois Ehlert.
3. Talk about the MyPlate Vegetable Foods Group.
4. Play a physically active game.
5. Make and enjoy a healthy snack.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Storybook “Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z” by Lois Ehlert.
- MyPlate chart, poster, or plate.
- Eat a Rainbow of Vegetables poster and Rainbow Color posters (red, orange, yellow, green and purple).
- Reggie Veggie laminated poster.
- Plastic or plush eyeball.
- Ingredients for Veggie Creatures or Veggie Taste Test.
- OPTIONAL: Plastic play vegetable foods from the MyPlate plastic food play set.

## TEACHING THE LESSON

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

*“Today we will read a book together, talk about MyPlate and make a healthy snack. We will play a fun and active game. We are learning about vegetables! The Vegetables group is part of MyPlate.”*

Show the MyPlate chart, poster, or plate.  
Show the book.

*“Can you see where the Vegetables 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.”*

*“As we read the book, see if you can think about what the story has to do with the MyPlate Vegetables Group.”*

Read the Book

## NUTRITION

Hold up the MyPlate poster or plate.

*“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 foods group every day. Foods are divided up into five different good group: Grains, Vegetables, Fruits, Protein Foods, and Dairy.”*

Which group are we talking about today?

*“That’s right! Vegetables.”*

## TIPS FOR INCREASING ENGAGEMENT WHILE READING THE BOOK

- Since the book is so large you may want to consider only reading the first 10 letters or so. Explain that the other letters also have yummy fruits and vegetables, but you won’t be reading about them today.
- If kids are losing interest, you can quickly go through some of the letters. For example, say something like, “The next letters in the alphabet are Q,R,S,T.” Flip through those pages quickly, and then go back to spending more time on the rest of the pages.
- As you read some of the letters encourage kids to pick a vegetable on the page and pretend to eat it.

*"Do you remember all the different colors of fruits and vegetables in the book? Did you know that you should try to 'eat the rainbow' when eating fruits and vegetables?"*

*"What do you think this means? Vegetables come in all different colors and the various colors help us stay healthy in different ways. That's why it is important we eat all the colors. Let's see if we can come up with vegetables that are different colors. The top row of the rainbow is red."*

Refer to the posters of the rainbow and show the tomato poster.

*"Tomatoes are red, and they are a vegetable. What other vegetables are red? Continue through the colors of the rainbow, identifying different vegetables for each color."*

Use the food color poster to help you know other foods that are in each color group.

*"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?"*

Show the plastic eye 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...

**Show the poster of "Reggie Veggie" and explain the game.** This game is played like Simon Says with a twist. Each motion is related to food. The instructor starts by asking everyone 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. Optional: Once someone has three points they are out.

### Reggie Veggie Says...

1. Reggie Veggie says: Spin like a salad spinner!
  - Move your body back and forth like a salad getting the water spun out—similar to the twist.
2. Twist the top off a bottle of soda pop.
  - Move your hand like twisting off a pop top.
  - Oops, did you move? Reggie Veggie didn't say so. Do you know why? Because soda pop isn't healthy for you, it is a "sometimes" food. Sometimes foods are okay to enjoy, but not every day.
3. Reggie Veggie says: Pick some carrots...5 times!
  - Bend down to the floor and pull up, then stand back up. Count together.



4. Rip open some potato chips.
  - Put hands together like ripping open a bag.
  - **Oops, did you move? Reggie Veggie didn't say so. Do you know why? Potato chips are a sometimes food. They don't have a lot of nutrients.**
5. Reggie Veggie says: Peel the cucumber...5 times.
  - Hold your left hand as if holding a cucumber and pretend to peel away toward the front.
6. Reggie Veggie says: Jump up and pick the corn...10 times.
  - Jump up and reach upward while pretending to pick the corn. Count together.
7. Reggie Veggie says: Reach up high to pick the apples off the tree... 5 times.
  - Reach upward and pretend to pick the apples. Count together.
8. Reach for the TV remote.
  - Reach your hand over like picking up a TV remote.
  - **Oops, did you move? Reggie Veggie didn't say so. Do you know why? It is okay to watch TV sometimes, but it is much better to get active and play games like the one we are playing right now!**
9. Reggie Veggie says: Dig up those potatoes... 5 times.
  - Squat and reach down like you are using a shovel to dig. Count together.
10. Reggie Veggie says: Move like tomato plants in the garden blowing in the wind.
  - Twist, turn, and sway like the wind is blowing you around.

### **Alternative Activity: Red light, Green light**

Line kids up across room. Explain that you will be saying names of foods. If the food is in the vegetable group, the children should step forward. If it is in another food group kids should stand still.

## **HEALTHY SNACK**

**NOTE ABOUT FOOD ALLERGIES:** Check with teachers 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 allergen such as peanut butter, make sure to have an alternative.

**INSTRUCTOR NOTE:** Please instruct children to wash hands prior to eating. Instructor should wear disposable gloves when preparing food.



## VEGGIE CREATURES

### Instructions

Put on food preparation gloves prior to preparing the following veggie creatures.

**Caterpillars:** Cut slices of cucumber and zucchini and stand them up in veggie dip or peanut butter\* inside a slice of celery. Cut up chives or break up pretzels for the antennas of the caterpillars. For eyes, cut up a raisin into smaller pieces or use mini chocolate chips.

\*If using peanut butter, ALWAYS ask about food allergies ahead of time. Though more expensive, sunflower butter can be a good option when there is concern about peanut or tree nut allergies.

**Butterflies:** Place a line of peas in a row on a plate. Cut baby carrots in half. Place two on each side of peas to make wings for a butterfly. Add whole grain cereal that is round- or oval-shaped at the top for eyes.

Be creative! Ask kids to use the ingredients given to create their own creature. If time permits, invite the children to show their creature and give it a name before they eat it.

**Snakes:** Cut string cheese into 1-inch sections. Break toothpicks in half. Spear cheese at an angle and add cherry tomatoes. Continue adding at an angle until the snake is as long as you want. Cut a small tongue out of a slice of cheese. Cut a slit at the bottom of the first tomato. Insert the cheese tongue. Insert whole cloves for eyes. **IMPORTANT:** Make sure children know they should not eat the clove eyes.

**Choking caution:** If using toothpicks or parts of toothpicks, watch closely for choking hazard. If working with younger children, try to avoid toothpicks completely.



## Alternative recipe idea

### VEGGIE TASTE TEST

Serves 8

Buy a selection of vegetables that kids may not have tried before such as jicama, small sweet peppers, and sugar snap peas. Cut the vegetables up into bite-sized 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 or make veggie dip.



### VEGGIE DIP

#### Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups Greek plain yogurt
- 3/4 cup light mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon dried minced onion
- 2 teaspoons garlic salt
- 1 teaspoon dill weed
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes

#### Instructions

Mix everything together thoroughly. Refrigerate, covered, for at least one hour so flavors mix.

## LESSON REVIEW

While enjoying the snack, review the lesson. Ask the 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 it is vitamin A. Ask which parts of the body does vitamin A help? Show the plastic eyeball. Point to your eyes and skin.