

Activities to Support Nutrition Education

Pyramid Relay Game- make two big pyramids on the floor with masking tape, mark the sections. Have two teams and have one child from each group pull an item from a bag of empty food containers. They then run up and put it in the right category. Run back and tag the next child, etc. Place an item in each category to get them started in the right categories of the pyramid. No one really wins. When all items are placed, have the children sit around the pyramid and see if things are placed correctly. Discuss.

Concentration, etc.- get two fruits/vegetables posters from the American Cancer Society. Laminate them if possible or mount on cardboard. Cut apart and let the children sort the pictures by shape, where they grow (above or below the ground), color, fruit or vegetable, etc. Have them turn them upside down in rows and play concentration. Young children, only use 2-5 sets of pictures.

Place mat activity- Place a paper plate on each of three place mats and have the children cut out pictures or use food models to make up a healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner. Could do snack too. Count the servings. Look for color.

Table Setting Relay- Have two bags of items for a place setting (plate, cup, napkin, silver wear, placemat, napkin ring, etc.) First child pulls an item out of the bag, runs up to a table and places it at the right place, runs back and tags the next child, and so on.

Hop to It- Have children cut out pictures of foods. Mount on cardboard to make more durable. Put a 1 on the back of occasional foods (chips, soda, cookies, etc.) and a 2 on the back of anytime foods (fruits, vegetables, etc.) Children pull an item out of a bag and take one hop forward if they pull an occasional food and 2 hops forward if they pull an anytime food.

Favorite Cereal Puzzles- Each child brings in an empty box of their favorite cereal. Put the child's name on the front and cut the front out. Mount it on a piece of poster or cardboard. Cut into pieces and make a puzzle.

Feely Cups-Place a cup in the inside of an old sock. Put food items in the cup and have the children stick their hand way down in and try to identify the food item. Don't use anything squishy! Good items include dried apples, coconut, shredded carrots, salt, potato, crackers, oatmeal, flour, etc.) Talk about the food items.

Very Hungry Caterpillar- To go along with the story, have children make a caterpillar out of a cardboard egg carton, make a butterfly out of a coffee filter colored with markers. Let the children cut out pictures of the items the caterpillar eats in the story. As you read the story they can add the item to a brown paper bag with the caterpillar sticking his head out of, then out comes the butterfly.

Above & Below- Children can cut pictures of fruits & vegetables out of magazines, mount on index cards and draw arrows up or down to indicate where the items grow. Each child could have their own stack and place them on the proper above & below pile, etc. Add on—grow something with the children (above & below ground to reinforce the concept).

Cereal Boxes for Housekeeping- Each child can bring in their favorite cereal box. Cut out the front, laminate, if desired. Put the child's name on the front. Punch a hole in the corner and put them all on a ring. When playing, each child can pour their own favorite cereal.

Mystery Bags- Have food models in a tote bag and let the children come up and without looking pull a food from the "Food Mystery Bag". Identify the food and they then can place it on food guide pyramid model or on a flat table with a pyramid drawn on paper.

Fishing for Healthy Foods- Make a fishing pole with a stick, string and magnet. Have food pictures mounted on cardstock and with a paper clip attached. Let the children fish for foods. Identify the foods they catch and talk about them.

Food Bingo- Make your own food bingo game to use with the children. Top categories would include: Fruit, Vegetables, Grain, Dairy and Meat. Have the name and picture of the food on the children's card. Call out the food, i.e. chicken, and let the children tell you which category it should be under. Use dried beans for markers.

Pass the Potato- Have children sit in a circle and pass a potato around. Each child names a fruit or vegetable (choose one for each game) and passes the potato on to the next child. If someone can't think of a fruit, they get eliminated. The one who wins has (each time) named a fruit that has not been named.

This gets everyone to really think about all of the options out there, and to realize that he or she is usually eating the same fruit or vegetable all the time.

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