

Perfect Portion

Early Childhood Health Lesson



Objective: Learn about the importance of portion control to maintain a healthy weight.

WE CAN! MESSAGES

Limit intake of high-fat and high-calorie foods that are low in nutrients.

Control portion sizes.

Make sure to have a sufficient fruit and vegetable intake every day.

Drink water and fat-free or low-fat milk instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.

NATIONAL PRE-K–2ND GRADE HEALTH PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Identify that healthy behaviors impact personal health.

Demonstrate healthy practices and behaviors to maintain or improve personal health.

ADULT MESSAGE

Small portion sizes and healthier food choices are essential to building a healthy body.

DEVELOPING PRESCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

Help your child compare and contrast concepts of scale: large and small.

PROGRAM CONTENT

Themed lesson plans incorporating art, literacy, movement and music support a multi-disciplinary approach to teaching young children and adults.

Program Length: 70 minutes

INTRODUCTION/DISCUSSION

Materials: Name stickers, markers

Welcome families with name stickers and “hello” song. Begin the discussion with a review of previous classes. Ask questions like: Why do we eat? (Get nutrients to grow, learn, and play!) What is good for us? (Fruits and vegetables!) What else is good for us to include on our plate? (Whole grains!) Intake of whole grains can be increased by choosing whole wheat breads and cereals, brown rice, and whole wheat pasta. Whole grains are good sources of complex carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Make at least half your grain servings whole grains. What is not so good for us? (High-sugar food/drinks and high-fat processed foods like potato chips). So, if you know some things are better for you and some things are worse for you, which should we eat more of? (Fruits and vegetables!) Using the portion plates, the educator will show families how fruits and vegetables are half of what they should be eating. Reinforce messages like eating mostly GO foods. Introduce the concept of “portion” and how a “portion” is the amount of a food that you choose to eat for a meal or snack. Explain that each body requires certain nutrients. Discuss the importance of proper “serving sizes” in creating a balanced meal. Understanding serving size will help families understand portion control, just like the portion plate will remind families to eat fruits and vegetables at meals. (Show parents that The Nutrition Facts label, located on packaged foods, lists the nutrients found in a single serving size.)

Visual References: One portion plate with representative foods, and one portion plate with objects.

Key Teaching Messages

- Smaller portion sizes can give your body the amount of calories and nutrients it needs to live and grow.
- Getting the right amount of nutrients is critical to healthy brain development and body growth in children.

ART ACTIVITY: BALANCED MEAL PLATE WITH LOW-FAT MILK, WATER, OR FORTIFIED SOY BEVERAGE

Children and adults will create a balanced, appropriately sized plate of colorful food with model magic, yarn, and corrugated paper that will serve as a creative and fun reminder of portion control and a healthy balanced meal.

Materials: Paper plates (or MyPlate), glue, craft sticks, model magic, markers, and yarn.

Set-up: Place a piece of tape on the back of the plates so they stick to the table. Remember to have pre-cut strips of masking tape available. Fill glue cups halfway full with white glue. Place a glue cup at each seat and a craft stick next to each glue cup. Place a golf ball size of model magic at each seat. Spread one to two handfuls of yarn and the markers across the table. Have a marker in hand to write the children's names on their artwork. Designate an area for the art projects to dry.

Clean up: Give children a 5 minute warning. Always let children know that you will be transitioning and ending the project soon. After the warning, sing a clean-up song to focus children and encourage participation in the clean-up process. One example: "Clean up, clean up, one, two, three. I'll help you and you help me. Clean up, clean up, one, two, three. I'll help you and you help me."

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: MOVEMENT/MUSIC

Weekly Structure: Warm-up, Active Play Time, Movement/Music (song/activity), Cool-down. Children should do at least 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity each day.

Warm-up:

Marching Movement Song

We're marching, marching, marching
We're marching in a circle
We're marching, marching, marching until it's time to stop!
We're jumping, jumping, jumping
We're jumping in a circle,
We're jumping, jumping, jumping until it's time to stop!
(add hopping, stomping, running, tiptoeing, etc.)

In and Out Circle Song

Let's go in and in and in
And out and out and out
And in and in and in and in
And out and out and out!





Active Play Time:

Do 5 or 10 minutes of each exercise

- Playing Tag
- Hopscotch
- Jumping Jacks
- Jumping (one foot, together then apart, front to back)

Movement/Music:

Big and little movement games enhance a child's understanding of the concepts of scale and size.

Children and their caretakers will be led through a series of movements that reinforce balance, and then will move their bodies to music that makes them feel "big" and music that makes them feel "small."

Parachute can also be used.

Cool-down:

It is important for the body to cool down gradually.

- Breathing—Place hands on belly or lower back. Inhale and fill the lungs. Feel the abdomen and ribs inflate. Exhale and empty the lungs. Feel the chest and abdomen relax.
- Yoga Moves
 - Downward Dog—Have the children make a bridge with their bodies. From here you can kick one leg up at a time and start to stretch body long.
 - Tree Pose—Have the children balance on one leg, bending their other leg at a 90 degree angle, stretching their hands above their heads.
 - The Horse—Stand in place for 30 seconds with a wide stance and knees bent (like a half way down squat position).

GROUP STORYTIME

The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry and the Big Hungry Bear by Don Wood

Eat Your Dinner, Please by Allia Zobel-Nolan

Mouse Mess by Linnea Riley

HEALTHY SNACK

An educator-led discussion will give children and adults the opportunity to learn how to make healthy portion size choices as they create a yogurt parfait by measuring and pouring a ½ cup of plain yogurt, ½ cup of fruit, and a small handful of oat cereal. Discussion will include the importance of snack size and how it relates to hunger level, nutrient content, and the importance of ensuring that the child will still eat a proper dinner.

Encourage children to wash hands with soap and warm water before eating snack. **Hand Washing Strategy:** Wash hands for 20 seconds to fight off all germs and then rinse well under running water. Sing the ABC Song while you wash.

REVIEW FAMILY HANDOUT

Goal: Prepare three dinners that use the portion plate.

Fact of the Week: The example the adult sets is an important influence for their child's healthy eating.

At-Home Strategies:

- Serve a variety of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Use smaller plates to serve food.
- Eat when hungry, but eat more nutrient-dense foods.
- Always have fruits and vegetables available to children.
- Serve smaller portions to your children and to yourself.
- Eating fiber (whole grains, fruits, and vegetables) will help body feel full for longer periods and aids in digestion.
- Replace refined grains (white flour/white bread) with whole grains such as whole wheat bread, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, oatmeal, and barley. At least half of all grains eaten should be whole grains.

Teaching Tools: Portion Sizes

Average Serving Size for Common Foods	What It Looks Like
Meat (2–3) ounces	Deck of cards
Pasta or Rice (1/2 cup)	Baseball or ice cream scoop
Bread (1 slice)	CD/DVD size
Peanut butter (2 tablespoons)	Ping pong ball
Vegetables or Fruit (1/2 cup)	Light bulb
Cheese (1 ounce)	Four dice

LESSON VISUALS

- MyPlate
- Portion Control Chart

