

I Love My Veggies!

Early Childhood Health Lesson



Objective: Learn the importance of eating a variety of vegetables every day.

WE CAN! MESSAGES

Eat a variety of vegetables daily.

Increase availability and accessibility of healthy foods in the home.

Limit the availability and accessibility of high-fat, high-density/low nutrient foods.

NATIONAL PRE-K–2ND GRADE HEALTH PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Identify that healthy behaviors impact personal health.

ADULT MESSAGE

Eating a variety of vegetables each day helps provide your body with essential nutrients, antioxidants, fiber, and water, and helps reduce the risk of developing certain diseases.

DEVELOPING PRESCHOOL READINESS SKILLS

Help your children learn pre-math skills, such as: counting, sorting, categorizing, color, shape, and pattern recognition.

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. Introduce the subject of the day by explaining how vegetables are similar to fruits. Review the benefits of fruit (water, nutrients, fiber, carbohydrates). Explain that vegetables are equally good for our body, since vegetables have many nutrients, are low in fat, and help our bodies greatly. Explain that each fruit and vegetable has its own selection of nutrients, so it’s important to eat a variety. Ask families if they can give examples of vegetables; what are their favorite vegetables, and when and how do they eat them. As they suggest vegetables, have children try to describe their favorite. After the discussion, distribute three fresh vegetable choices to children and adults. Take time before tasting to discuss and introduce descriptive vocabulary to help identify colors and textures (i.e., bumpy, smooth, hard, soft, long, short, wide, and narrow). When ready, families can taste and enjoy describing.

Visual References: Pictures of familiar and less common vegetables and where they grow. Chart listing benefits of different vegetables. Chart of vegetables by their color.

Key Teaching Messages

- Vegetables are nutrient-dense foods. “Nutrient-dense” means foods that have many nutrients per serving.

- Vegetables have some nutrients you cannot get from any other source.
- Vegetables are naturally a GO food, but how they are prepared can make a difference.

ART ACTIVITY: BODY TRACING WITH VEGETABLE BENEFIT COLLAGE!

Adults and children will work together to trace child's body on large paper. Families will then color pre-drawn vegetable shapes, learning which body parts the vegetable's nutrients benefit, then cut out the shapes and paste shapes on tracing of body. For example, two carrots would be placed on the eyes.

Materials: Large pieces of butcher paper, markers, vegetable cut-outs, tape/glue stick.

Set-up: Place two pieces of masking tape, one on each end of the butcher paper, and then secure the butcher paper to the floor. While the children are being traced, spread the vegetable shapes and crayons on the table. Once children are finished being traced, they will make their way to the tables where they can color the vegetables. Make sure that all children at the table can reach the materials. While the children color, place a glue stick at each piece of butcher paper with a tracing. When the children are finished coloring the vegetables, invite them back to their butcher paper and show them how to take the top off the glue stick. Demonstrate that they can place glue on the back of their vegetable cutouts or on the butcher paper itself. When the children are finished, write their names on the back of the tracing and find a place to let the glue 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."

Art Activity Resources:

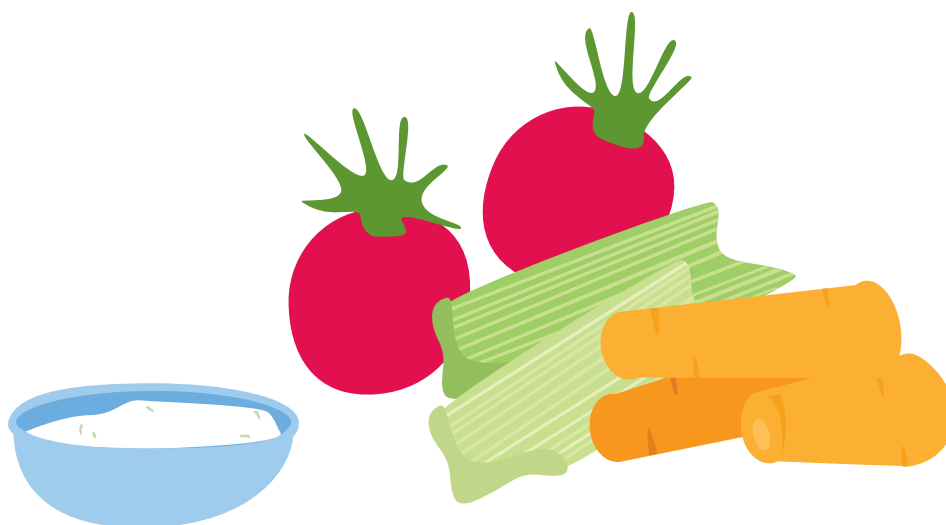
Fruit & Vegetable Body Benefits:

Eating a wide variety of different colored fruits and vegetables helps ensure your body gets all of the vitamins and nutrients that play an important role in overall health. See below for details:

- **Red:** Deep red vegetables including tomatoes, red bell peppers, radishes, and beets all contain lycopene. Lycopene is a powerful antioxidant believed to fight heart disease and some cancers.
- **Green:** Green vegetables are high in phytochemicals, essential vitamins, and fiber, which keep bodies healthy. Spinach, collard greens, kale, and broccoli support eyesight by keeping retinas strong, and provide calcium to fortify healthy bones. Cabbage, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale, and turnips may reduce the risk of cancer.
- **Orange:** Sweet potatoes, pumpkin, squash, and carrots contain beta-carotene and folate. Beta-carotene may help to strengthen your immune system. Folate is a B vitamin that may help prevent certain birth defects and heart disease.
- **Yellow:** Yellow vegetables, like yellow squash and yellow bell pepper, have similar health benefits to orange ones.
- **Blue and Purple:** Blue and purple foods like eggplant, purple asparagus, and purple carrots are high in compounds that may reduce the risk of cancer.
- **White:** Vegetables in the onion family including garlic, chives, scallions and leeks, and cauliflower, parsnips, potatoes, and turnips may all lower cholesterol and blood pressure, and increase the body's ability to fight infections.

Nutrients/ Vitamins	Body Benefit	Fruit/Vegetable Source
Fiber	Diets rich in fiber have been shown to have a number of beneficial effects including decreased risk of coronary heart disease.	Navy beans, kidney beans, black beans, pinto beans, lima beans, white beans, soybeans, split peas, chick peas, black-eyed peas, lentils, artichokes, and leafy-green vegetables
Folate	Healthful diets providing adequate folate may reduce a woman's risk of having a child with a brain or spinal cord defect.	Black-eyed peas, cooked spinach, great northern beans, asparagus
Potassium	Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain a healthy blood pressure.	Sweet potatoes, tomato paste, tomato puree, beet greens, white potatoes, white beans, lima beans, cooked greens, carrot juice
Vitamin A	Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.	Sweet potatoes, pumpkin, carrots, spinach, turnip greens, mustard greens, kale, collard greens, winter squash, red peppers, Chinese cabbage
Vitamin C	Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy.	Red & green peppers, sweet potatoes, kale, broccoli, brussels sprouts, tomato juice, cauliflower

Based on information from the CDC: www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/nutrient-info.html



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:

Veggie Pick Game – Children and adults will be led in a series of fun movement activities that help children learn how vegetables grow. (Example: standing on tiptoes to pick corn, digging in the ground for carrots, rolling on the floor like a pumpkin.)

Vegetable Songs (Please see next page)

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 halfway down squat position).

GROUP STORYTIME

Lunch by Denise Fleming

Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato by Lauren Child

HEALTHY SNACK

Offer a variety of raw vegetables (i.e., zucchini, cucumbers, broccoli, red peppers, carrots, celery) and hummus dip. An educator-led discussion will give children and adults the opportunity to learn more about the importance of eating vegetables every day and creative ideas for incorporating vegetables into their daily lives. Children will organize and count real vegetables as well as smell and taste a variety of vegetables.

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: Add one more serving of vegetables a day. Bonus: Introduce 2 new vegetables.

Fact of the week: Eating a rainbow of vegetables provides a variety of nutrients.

At-Home Strategies:

- Add some crunch to your sandwich by including lettuce, tomato, cucumber, or carrots.
- Eat fresh, canned, or frozen vegetables.

VEGETABLE SONGS

The Vegetable Song

(Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star")

Carrots, Peas and Broccoli,
Vegetables are good for me.
For my snack and in my lunch,
Veggie sticks are great to munch.
Carrots, Peas and Broccoli,
Vegetables are good for me.

The Good Food Song

(Tune: "Old MacDonald Had A Farm")

Vegetables are good for me, EE I EE I O
And so I eat them happily, EE I EE I O
(Children take turns naming vegetables that they like)
With a carrot, carrot here, and a carrot, carrot there
Here a carrot, there a carrot
Everywhere a carrot, carrot.
Vegetables are good for me, EE I EE I O.

Grow the Vegetable

(You can fill in any vegetable)

Grow tomato, grow, grow tomato (bring your side as you plump up)

Chop tomato, chop, chop tomato (move your arms in a chopping motion)

Go tomatoes, go, go tomatoes (jump up and down doing the mashed tomato)



LESSON VISUALS

- Body with body parts labeled
- Body Outline
- Pea Plant
- Five (5) pages of vegetable images
- The Hidden Vegetable Truth

