



LESSON PLAN

Level: Grades K to 3
About the Author: MediaSmarts

Eating Under the Rainbow

Overview

Studies have found that fast-food ads dominate children's programming. In order to give children a perspective on the lure of snack-food advertisements, it's important that they understand where snacks can fit into a healthy diet. Once they have an understanding of where snack food fits into their lives, they can begin to deconstruct the ads themselves.

Learning Outcomes

Students will demonstrate:

- an awareness of the types of foods needed to maintain a healthy body
- beginning awareness of the principles of balance and moderation in fitting snack foods into a healthy diet
- an appreciation of the importance of maintaining an active lifestyle

Preparation and Materials

For background material on the nutritional needs of young children, read:

- Canada's Food Guide Healthy Eating Recommendations (<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations/>)
- Canada's Food Guide (<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en>)
- Have students collect and bring in pictures of various foods from grocery store flyers or visit a local grocery store's website and print out their flyer

Photocopy the student handout:

- *My Daily Food Record*
- Draw a rainbow, like the one in *My Daily Food Record*, on the chalkboard.



Procedure

Guided Discussion

All foods can fit into healthy eating when the basic principles of balance and moderation are applied. Healthy eating means eating mostly vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods such as meat, lentils or tofu.

Healthy eating also means taking the time to eat and enjoy your food and recognizing your body's signals regarding how much to eat. A good strategy in teaching children about balance and moderation is explaining that a healthy diet is much like a puzzle; each piece is an important part of the whole picture. So, just as there are puzzle pieces with different colours, shapes and sizes, there are foods with different amounts of fibre, vitamins, minerals, sugar, fat, salt and calories. That's what balance and moderation are all about.

To make it easy to remember the foods we need, teach kids to organize their food in a rainbow. Use green for Fruits and Vegetables, yellow for Whole Grain Foods, red for High Protein Foods and blue for water.

- Using the collected food flyers, have each child cut out three or four of his or her favourite foods.
- Afterward, ask each child to place his or her pictures into its proper food group on the blackboard rainbow. Place snack food to the side of the rainbow as "other" foods.

Discussion

Review the foods that have been placed on the rainbow and fill in any blanks that may help the children better understand these different types of foods. (For example, if there are no beans, peas or lentils in High Protein Foods, you may want to add a picture or two to help children understand their options.)

Discuss the snack food surrounding the rainbow. Ask the children:

- Where do these foods fit into the rainbow?
- Why isn't there a food group for them?
- Why aren't these foods as healthy as the foods on the rainbow?
- Can we eat these foods and still be healthy?
- How much snack food may we eat each day?

Activity

Distribute the *Daily Food Record* to students. Tell them that they will be monitoring their eating for one day to find out how well they fill their own food rainbows. Beginning with today's breakfast, have children draw or write the foods they have eaten in the appropriate sections and then colour each section appropriately (green for Fruits and Vegetables, yellow for Whole Grain Foods, red for High Protein Foods and blue for water). Tell them to draw a special place for snack food outside the rainbow, perhaps in a cloud or sun.

The following day, review their findings and discuss ways that they may fill in any "gaps" in their rainbows.

Evaluation

- Completed food rainbows.



Extension

One of the key habits of healthy eating under the Canada Food Guide is to be aware that food marketing can influence your choices. You can use the following MediaSmarts lessons to explore this idea:

- Adversmarts: Introduction to Food Advertising Online (<http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/adversmarts-introduction-food-advertising-online>)
- Adversmarts: Understanding Food Advertising Online (<http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/adversmarts-understanding-food-advertising-online>)
- Healthy Food Web (<http://mediasmarts.ca/teacher-resources/healthy-food-web>)
- Looking at Food Advertising (<http://mediasmarts.ca/lessonplan/looking-food-advertising-lesson>)
- Packaging Tricks (<http://mediasmarts.ca/lessonplan/packaging-tricks-lesson>)



My Daily Food Record

