

## Background Information for Teachers

- Serve at least five servings of a wide variety of fruits and vegetables every day to help boost the immune system, contribute to a healthy weight and help with digestion.
- Five fruits/veggies every day reduces risk for chronic disease like diabetes, certain cancers, heart disease, and hypertension.
- Choosing water and low-fat milk are healthy options for beverages. Sugary drinks (pop, juice, sports drinks) add extra calories and can harm teeth.
- Over 30% of children in the US are either overweight or obese. More physical activity and less sedentary time, helps with energy balance. Movement contributes to physical, social and brain development.
- Healthy kids do better in school and miss school less often.
- Lead by example - kids make more healthy choices when they see adults including healthy habits in their lives.

## GOAL

**Children will know at least three healthy choices.**

## Healthy Habits throughout the day

### At Meals and Snacks

Talk with children about the foods they are eating. Encourage them to describe the taste, texture and colors of their food.

Encourage children to identify foods/practice vocabulary by asking questions such as “What vegetables do we have today?” “What fruit are we eating?” AND by asking open ended questions such as “What vegetables do you eat at home?” “What is your favorite fruit?”

Sing a simple song about fruits and vegetables that you have used at circle time, or have the children make one up with you to reinforce the concept that healthy choices include eating fruits and vegetables every day.

Have children take turns setting the table. Use this time to talk about the foods that will be served that day. Have your table setters “announce” what fruits and vegetables are included in today’s meal or snack.

Model healthy habits: sit with your class at meal times and eat fruits and vegetables!

## Centers

Include books about fruits, vegetables, healthy foods and being active when you read aloud to your class, then add them to your classroom **library/reading center**.

Use Dairy Council Food Cards or other pictures of foods as a sorting activity. It may fit into your **math or puzzles center** (colors/shapes) or **science/discovery center** (categorizing fruits and vegetables). Consider using a resource book to guide children in their sorting.

Make word cards for each fruit and vegetable you are studying (hand written or on the computer.) Add a picture to the end of the card and add them to your **writing center**.

Make healthy food murals or mobiles in the **art center**. Let children figure out how to make 3-D fruit and vegetable shapes out of scrap paper and using tape, glue or staples. Let them paint the shapes before they attach them to a mobile. Provide real foods and/or plastic foods as a model.

Provide materials for imaginative play in the **dramatic play center** that incorporate healthy choices. Grocery stores, farmers markets, or tea parties are a few suggestions.

## Transitions

Say a chant about healthy eating while waiting in line or transitioning to a new activity. For example, use the Military March Cadence below and encourage children to march in place until the line starts moving:

*Healthy Choices make us strong, (children repeat); We eat healthy foods all day long, (repeat)*  
*Sound Off (1, 2) Sound off (3, 4) Sound Off (1, 2, 3, 4) And one more!*

While waiting in line to wash hands, ask students to think of one thing they did for exercise after school yesterday or on the weekend. Running, dancing to music, riding bikes, walking the dog, raking leaves are all ideas to mention if they have trouble getting started. Have them tell you/show you one at a time when you touch their head.

Ask each child to name a fruit or vegetable as you dismiss them from circle. Have pictures available so children new to English can point at a picture while you say the English word. Consider asking for the name of that food in their first language and have the whole group practice saying it.

## Inside and Outside Exercise

Do a mini warm-up before going outside, waiting to wash hands or during circle time, reminding children that exercise is a healthy choice for our brains and bodies. Here are some ideas:

- Half neck circles
- Shoulder shrugs
- Arm Shrugs
- Side Bends

- Stretch like a fruit or vegetable (make your body round like an apple, tall like a string bean, pop like popcorn.)

Use food model cards or plastic fruits and vegetables for a “healthy choice relay.” Put children into teams and have a corresponding number of items at the other end of the play area. Have the first child run to a bowl with the cards or fruit in it, pick one then bring it back to the starting line. The next team member goes and repeats until all team members have crossed the line. This could be organized as a cooperative game rather than a competitive game if you prefer.

### Possible Related Inquiry Topics:

- Cooking
- Exercise
- Sports
- Water
- Gardening
- Farming
- Farmer’s Market
- Grocery Store
- Creative Careers: Artist, Author, Architect, Builder, Engineer, etc.
- Health Related Careers: Dentist, Doctor, Pediatrician, etc.

### Home-School Connection

Families often ask for homework. We also want to include families in planning curriculum. Here are some ideas to support meaningful learning activities at home, to promote family involvement in the curriculum, and to strengthen the home-school connection:

- Ask families to send in their favorite recipe that uses vegetables. Provide a form or index card for them to write the recipe in whatever language they want to use. Make a class book out of the recipes with a picture of the child and their family included on the recipe page.
- Ask families to bring in pictures of healthy foods from their culture. Create a class rainbow using colorful pictures of foods. Families can also help by bringing magazines for the project and you can have children cut out the pictures in the classroom. Paste them in a rainbow shape on a board or the wall.
- Send home a note to families asking them to write down something their family does for exercise. Graph all the different activities to see what your classroom “Exercise Profile” is.

## Example Songs and Chants for Healthy Habits

### We Stay Healthy (Frere Jacques)

We stay healthy, we stay healthy  
When we eat fruit, when we eat fruit  
Fruit every day, fruit every day  
Helps us learn & play, helps us learn & play.

We stay healthy, we stay healthy  
When we eat vegetables, when we eat vegetables  
Vegetables every day, vegetables every day  
Helps us learn & play, helps us learn & play.

We stay healthy, we stay healthy;  
When we make puzzles, build blocks & paint; when we make puzzles, build blocks & paint;  
Creating every day, creating every day  
Helps us learn & play, helps us learn & play.

We stay healthy, we stay healthy;  
When we run, jump & climb; when we run, jump & climb  
Moving every day, moving every day  
Helps us learn & play, helps us learn & play.

We stay healthy, we stay healthy;  
When we drink milk & water, when we drink milk & water  
Milk & water every day, milk & water every day  
Helps us learn & play, helps us learn & play.

## The Bananas are Here Today (Hi, Ho the Derry-ho)

Verse 1: The bananas are here today, the bananas are here today,

Everybody say HURRAY the bananas are here today.

Verses 2-infinity: Replace “bananas” with any other fruit or vegetable.

## If You’re Thirsty and You Know It (If You’re Happy and You Know It)

If you’re thirsty and you know it say, “I’m Thirsty!”

(Repeat two times)

If you’re thirsty and you know it, and you really want to show it.

If you’re thirsty and you know it, drink some water!

## An Apple Chant

Apples in the attic,

Apples in the hall,

Apples in the summer,

Apples in the fall.

Apples make you healthy,

Apples make you tall.

I will eat some apples,

I will eat them all!

## Military March Cadence

*Healthy Choices make us strong,*

*(children repeat);*

*We eat healthy foods all day long,*

*(children repeat)*

*Sound Off (1, 2) Sound off (3, 4)*

*Sound Off (1, 2, 3, 4) And one more!*

## Healthy Habits

## 5-2-1-0 Example Lessons

Ideas and Notes: