

Food Group Fort

Nutrition Lesson(s) Supported:

- My Pyramid Food Groups
- Balanced Plate

Supplies Needed:

- Tablecloth
- Food assignments for each child (can be written on cards or verbally assigned a random 'go' food)

Length of Time to Complete:

10 minutes

Audience (grades): K-3

Background:

A balanced meal includes: whole grains, lean protein, calcium rich foods, vegetables and fruits. Whole grains (such as oatmeal, barley whole grain bread, and brown rice) give our bodies energy. Lean proteins (such as turkey, beans, eggs, lentils and chicken) help our bodies build strong muscles. Fruits and vegetables give our bodies vitamins and nutrients that help us grow and stay healthy. Calcium rich foods (such milk or yogurt) help our bodies build strong bones and teeth. We need to eat all of these foods to grow strong, healthy bodies.

Process:

Assign each child a 'go' food. Suspend a tablecloth in the middle of the room by having the children hold one end of the tablecloth. Starting with one of the food groups, ask students who were assigned vegetables to let go of the tablecloth. Ask the students what happens when we don't eat vegetables? (We don't get essential vitamins and minerals to stay healthy). Move on to protein, then fruit, then calcium rich foods, and finally whole grains. Every time you remove a food group, ask the children what happens to their body if they don't eat that particular food group. The children will see that as a meal becomes less and less balanced, the tablecloth sags and eventually falls to the ground. Our bodies need all five food groups to stay healthy and strong.

