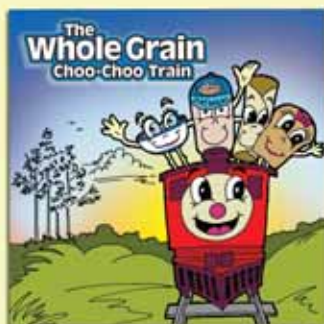


for children ages 3–4½

## concept

Introduce children to whole grains, and encourage them to make whole grains a part of a complete breakfast.

# The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train



## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Several empty boxes or packages of a variety of whole grain products such as spaghetti, cereal, bread, and crackers
- *The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train* by Reeves, Stickney, and Bowden
- Pictures of wheat, corn, and rice fields (included)
- *Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train Ticket* coloring sheet (included)
- Scissors for the teacher
- Non-toxic crayons
- *Rachel's Fun Time* music CD (optional)
- Tape
- Picture of a train (included)
- Whole grain tortillas or wraps (5-inch) and a slice of cheese for each child

## goals

1. Children are introduced to whole grains as a healthy choice for breakfast.
2. Children learn about whole grains and where they come from.

## objectives

1. Children will participate in identifying whole grains.
2. Children will recognize the importance of eating whole grains at breakfast.

## activities

**1** Prior to starting this activity, arrange several empty boxes or packages of whole grain foods where each child can see them as they are discussed.

**2** Begin by having the children sit in a circle and then read the book *The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train*.



# The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train

**3** After reading the book, announce, "Today, let's pretend to ride on the Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train!"

Make a whistle sound like "Wooo, wooo" while motioning right hand up and down.

Say, "Before we board the train and meet our Whole Grain Friends, let's find out what a whole grain is."

**4** Say, "We are going to be learning about whole grains. You may have eaten whole grains this morning at breakfast. Do you remember what you ate for breakfast?"

Wait for a response and then share what you had to eat for breakfast. Say, "Breads, rice, cereal, pasta, waffles, and pancakes can be whole grains. Whole grains have all (emphasize all) their vitamins. We know our bodies need foods that give us vitamins. When we eat whole grains we have energy to run, think, and play!"

**5** Say, "We are going to learn where whole grains come from."

Show the children pictures of wheat, corn, and rice fields (included) while saying, "Whole grains come from plants like wheat, corn, rice, and oats."

Hold up a picture of the wheat field again and say, "This is where wheat comes from. Raise your hand if you have ever been to a farm or seen one on television or while riding in a car?"

Allow enough time for the children to respond. Then hold up a box or package of a whole wheat grain food and say, "This food started here (pointing to the picture of the wheat field) before your parents were able to buy it."

You can do the same with the picture of the corn field and a box or package of food made from corn. If possible, show the children a real husk of corn to help the children make the connection between the food and the corn field. Ask, "What whole grain foods do you like to eat for breakfast?"

Allow the children an opportunity to respond. As you point to each package, tell the children that their parents have to read the box or package to make sure it's a whole grain.

Smile and say, "We have the easy part—we get to eat it. When we eat whole grain foods we eat foods that are good for our growing bodies!"

**6** Have the children stand up. Ask, "Which one of the Whole Grain Friends was your favorite? Raise your hand if it was Bonita Brown Rice or Ollie Oatmeal, or Tito Soft Tortilla. Oh, I almost forgot Haley Whole Wheat Bread!"

Allow the children time to respond to their favorite character. Encourage the children to do some of the same movements the Whole Grain Friends do in the book by saying, "Let's all do what our Whole Grain Friends do!"

Demonstrate and call out the movements so the children can run, turn around, hop, and jump like the Whole Grain Friends in the book. Then say,

"Run in place like Tito Soft Tortilla,

Turn around and around like Haley Whole Wheat Bread,

Hop like Bonita Brown Rice,

Jump like Ollie Oatmeal!"

**7** After the movement activity, make copies of the *Whole Grain Train Tickets* handout (included) and cut the tickets so each child can receive one to color and later use it to board the train. Provide each child with a ticket and crayons then announce, "Let's color our tickets so we can ride on the Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train!"

You may want to play the song "Purple Train," from the CD *Rachel's Fun Time*, in the background.

# The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train

**8** After the children have colored their tickets of the Whole Grain Friends, decide which of the following options works best.

**A. Have the children stand up with their tickets.** Say, "Let's all get in a line; the Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train is coming!"

In a very animated voice say, "All aboard the Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train! Please have your tickets ready!"

Collect each child's ticket as they pretend to board the train (save the tickets to be given back later). Make the train whistle sound "Wooo, wooo" and motion up and down with your right hand asking the children to also pull the train whistle.

Demonstrate how to make circular movements on each side of the body while making the sound of a train like "Chuga, chuga, chuga."

Encourage the children to do the same. You can tape a picture of a train (included) on your back and have the children follow behind making the sounds and movements of a train.

**B. If space is available, set up rows of chairs with an aisle down the center (2 to 3 chairs on each side of the aisle) to pretend the children are riding in the train.** In a very animated voice say, "All aboard the Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train! Please sit down and have your tickets ready!"

Go down the aisle collecting tickets; these will be given back to the children at the end of the day. Make the whistle sound "Wooo, wooo!" and motion up and down with your right hand asking the children to also pull the whistle on the train.

Demonstrate how to make circular movements on each side of the body while making the sound of a train like "Chuga, chuga, chuga."

Encourage the children to do the same while sitting in the chairs.

**9** If sitting in chairs, ask the children to stand up and get into "train formation." Have the children ride the train to the sink (while making the circular movements with their arms) to wash their hands before eating their snack. Say, "Let's ride the train to the rest room to wash our hands and then ride back to have a whole grain snack!"

Have the children help make the snack by providing each child with a whole grain tortilla and a slice of cheese. Say, "Let's have fun eating a Choo-Choo Wrap."

The children can roll up the cheese inside the tortilla and sit in their seats pretending they are eating in the train's dining car. You can have the children pretend they are riding past a farm with different types of fields. Encourage the children to imagine the different types of fields and animals on the farm. In an enthusiastic voice say, "I see a cornfield and cows. What do you see?"

Allow the children time to respond.

**10** After the children have finished their snack, say, "I enjoyed riding on the Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train today. Did you enjoy it too? I am so proud of you because now you know that when we eat whole grains our bodies have lots of energy to think and play."

Return each child's train ticket and tell the children to take them home to their parents and talk about their whole grain train ride!

**Remember to make copies of the parent letter with the take-home activity sheet printed on the reverse side to send home with each child. The community fact sheet is also included for you to copy and display at your center or distribute as appropriate.**

for children ages 4½–5

## concept

Introduce children to whole grains, and encourage them to make whole grains a part of a complete breakfast.

# The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train



## goals

1. Children are introduced to whole grains as a healthy choice for breakfast.
2. Children will learn about whole grains and where they come from.

## objectives

1. Children will participate in identifying whole grains.
2. Children will recognize the importance of eating whole grains for breakfast.
3. Children will identify that whole grains come from plants.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Empty boxes or packages of whole grain and non-whole grain products for comparison, such as spaghetti, cereal, bread, and crackers
- *The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train* by Reeves, Stickney, and Bowden
- Pictures of wheat, corn, and rice fields (included)
- *Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train Tickets* coloring sheet (included)
- *Whole Grain Friends* coloring sheet (included)
- Scissors for the teacher
- Non-toxic crayons
- *Rachel's Fun Time* music CD (optional)
- Non-toxic glue sticks
- Craft sticks (1 for each child)
- Tape
- Picture of a train (included)
- Whole grain tortillas or wraps (5-inch) and a slice of cheese for each child

## activities

**1** Prior to starting this activity, arrange several empty boxes or packages of whole grain foods where each child can see them as they are discussed.

**2** Begin by having the children sit in a circle and then read the book *The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train*.

**3** After reading the book say, "Today we are going to learn about whole grains. Does anyone know what a whole grain is?" Allow children an opportunity to respond.

Then ask, "Did anyone have oatmeal, bread, pancakes, or cereal today?"

Allow the children an opportunity to share what they had to eat earlier and then share what you had to eat as well. Say, "Did you know they can be made with whole grains? Remember the grains group from MyPlate?"

Then show the children pictures of the wheat, corn, and rice fields (included) while saying, "Whole grains come from plants like wheat, corn, rice, and oats." >>>

# The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train

>>>Hold the picture of the wheat field again and say, "This is where wheat comes from. Raise your hand if you have ever been to a farm or seen one on television or while riding in a car?"

Allow enough time for the children to respond. Hold up a box or package of a whole wheat grain food and say, "This food started here (pointing to the picture of the wheat field) before your parents were able to buy it."

Smile and say, "We have the easy part we get to eat it. When we eat whole grain foods we eat foods that are good for our growing bodies!"

You can do the same with the picture of the corn field and a box or package of food made from corn. If possible, show the children a real husk of corn to help the children make the connection between the food and the corn field.

**4** Say, "Raise your hand if you can tell me the name of a food that you eat at home that can be a whole grain."

Allow time for the children to respond. Praise them if they said rice, tortillas, spaghetti or another whole grain food. Hold up an empty box of spaghetti and say, "This is a box of spaghetti. Did you know you can buy healthy spaghetti? Raise your hand if you know what we call healthy spaghetti. We call it whole wheat spaghetti!"

Hold up the various food packages collected and ask the same questions for each one.

**5** Make copies of the *Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train Tickets* and the *Whole Grain Friends* handouts (included). Cut the sheets so each child can receive a ticket and a *Whole Grain Friends* rectangle for later activities.

**6** Next have the children move to their seats and provide them with crayons and a train ticket to color. When the children have finished, say, "Which one of the Whole Grain Friends was your favorite? Raise your hand if it was Bonita Brown Rice or Ollie Oatmeal, or Tito Soft Tortilla. Oh I almost forgot Haley Whole Wheat Bread!"

Allow the children time to respond to their favorite character. Encourage the children to do some of the same movements the Whole Grain Friends do in the book by saying, "Let's all stand up and do what our Whole Grain Friends do!"

Demonstrate and call out the movements so the children can run, turn around, hop and jump like the Whole Grain Friends in the book. Say,

"Run in place like Tito Soft Tortilla,

Turn around and around like Haley Whole Wheat Bread,

Hop like Bonita Brown Rice,

Jump like Ollie Oatmeal!"

**7** Have the children return to their seats and provide them with a *Whole Grain Friends* rectangle to color. You may want to play the song "Purple Train," from the CD *Rachel's Fun Time*, in the background during this activity. After the children finish coloring, provide each child with a glue stick and a craft stick. Assist the children with gluing the characters onto the craft stick if needed. When the children are finished, enthusiastically say, "Let's take our new Whole Grain Friends on a pretend Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train ride!"

Make a "Wooo, wooo" sound while motioning right hand up and down, like pulling on a train whistle.



# The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train

**8** You can decide which of the following options works best:

**A. Have the children stand up with their tickets and Whole Grain Friends cutouts.** Say, "Let's all get in a line; the Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train is coming!"

In a very animated voice say, "All aboard the Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train! Please have your tickets ready!"

Collect each child's ticket as they pretend to board the train (save the tickets to be given back later). Make the train whistle sound "Wooo, wooo" and motion up and down with your right hand asking the children to also pull the train whistle.

Demonstrate how to make circular movements on each side of the body while making the sound of a train like "Chuga, chuga, chuga."

Encourage the children to do the same. You can tape a picture of a train (included) on your back and have the children follow behind making the sounds and movements of a train.

**B. If space is available, set up rows of chairs with an aisle down the center (2 to 3 chairs on each side of the aisle) to pretend the children are riding in the train.** In a very animated voice say, "All aboard the Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train! Please sit down and have your tickets ready!"

Go down the aisle collecting tickets; these will be given back to the children at the end of the day. Make the train whistle sound "Wooo, wooo!" and motion up and down with your right hand asking the children to also pull the whistle on the train.

Demonstrate how to make circular movements on each side of the body while making the sound of a train like "Chuga, chuga, chuga."

Encourage the children to do the same while sitting in the chairs.

**9** If sitting in chairs, ask the children to stand up and get into "train formation." Have the children ride the train to the sink (while making the circular movements with their arms) to wash their hands before eating their snack. Say, "Let's ride the train to the rest room to wash our hands and then ride back to have a whole grain snack!"

Have the children help make the snack by providing each child with a whole grain tortilla and a slice of cheese. Say, "Let's have fun eating a Choo-Choo Wrap."

The children can roll up the cheese inside the tortilla and sit in their seats pretending they are eating in the train's dining car. Have the children pretend they are riding past a farm with different types of fields. Encourage the children to imagine the different types of fields and animals on the farm. In an enthusiastic voice say, "I see a cornfield and cows. What do you see?"

Allow the children time to respond.

**10** After the children have finished their snack, say, "I enjoyed riding on the Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train today. Did you enjoy it too? I am so proud of you because now you know that when we eat whole grains our bodies have lots of energy to think and play."

Return each child's train ticket and tell the children to take them home along with their Whole Grain Friends to their parents and talk about their whole grain train ride!

**Remember to make copies of the parent letter with the take-home activity sheet printed on the reverse side to send home with each child. The community fact sheet is also included for you to copy and display at your center or distribute as appropriate.**

## additional activities for either age group

### Apple Knockers Recipe (French Toast with Applesauce)

- 15 eggs, well beaten
- 3 cups milk
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons +  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cinnamon, divided
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 25 slices whole grain bread
- 2 108-ounce cans applesauce

The following recipe can be prepared and served to children for breakfast. While enjoying this delicious breakfast, you can explain how good it is to start each day eating a whole grain breakfast. Whole grains have important vitamins and when we eat whole grains we have energy to run, think, and play!

- Beat eggs, milk, salt,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon cinnamon and vanilla together.
- Dip slices of bread into egg mixture.
- Place on greased cookie sheets.
- Bake in oven at 425° F until golden.
- While bread squares are baking, mix applesauce and remaining cinnamon.
- Slice bread in half. Serve  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup applesauce over  $\frac{1}{2}$  slice of bread.

Number of portions: 50

Size of portion:  $\frac{1}{2}$  slice of bread and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of applesauce

Meal Pattern contribution:  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain/bread,  $\frac{3}{8}$  cup fruit/vegetable

PLEASE NOTE: If you need to adjust this recipe for a different amount, see page 23 of *Planning Healthy Menus: A Companion Booklet to the CCFP Cookbook* at: [www.doh.state.fl.us/ccfp/Nutrition/Children/cookbook.htm](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/ccfp/Nutrition/Children/cookbook.htm).























# The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train Tickets

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

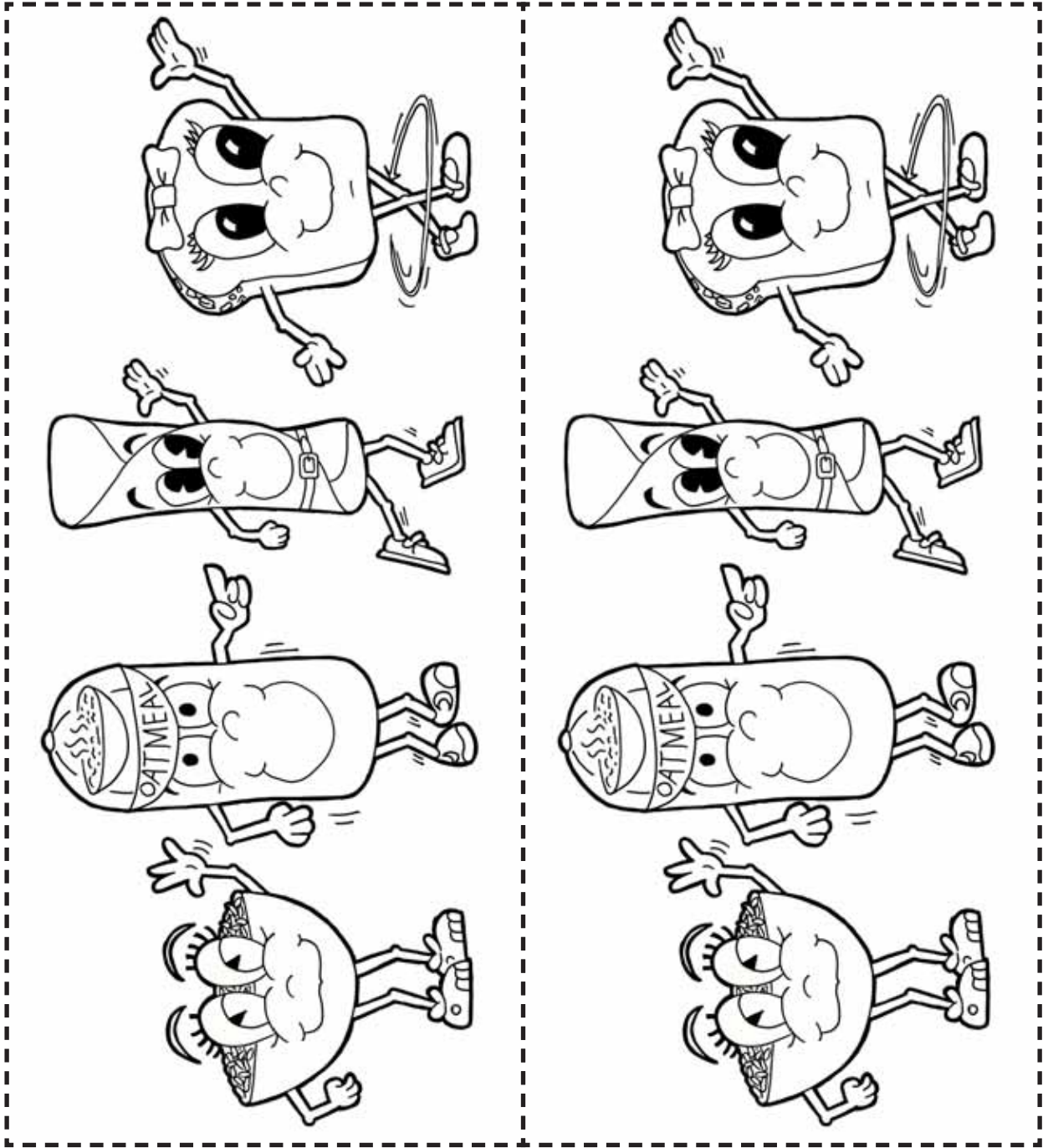
The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train

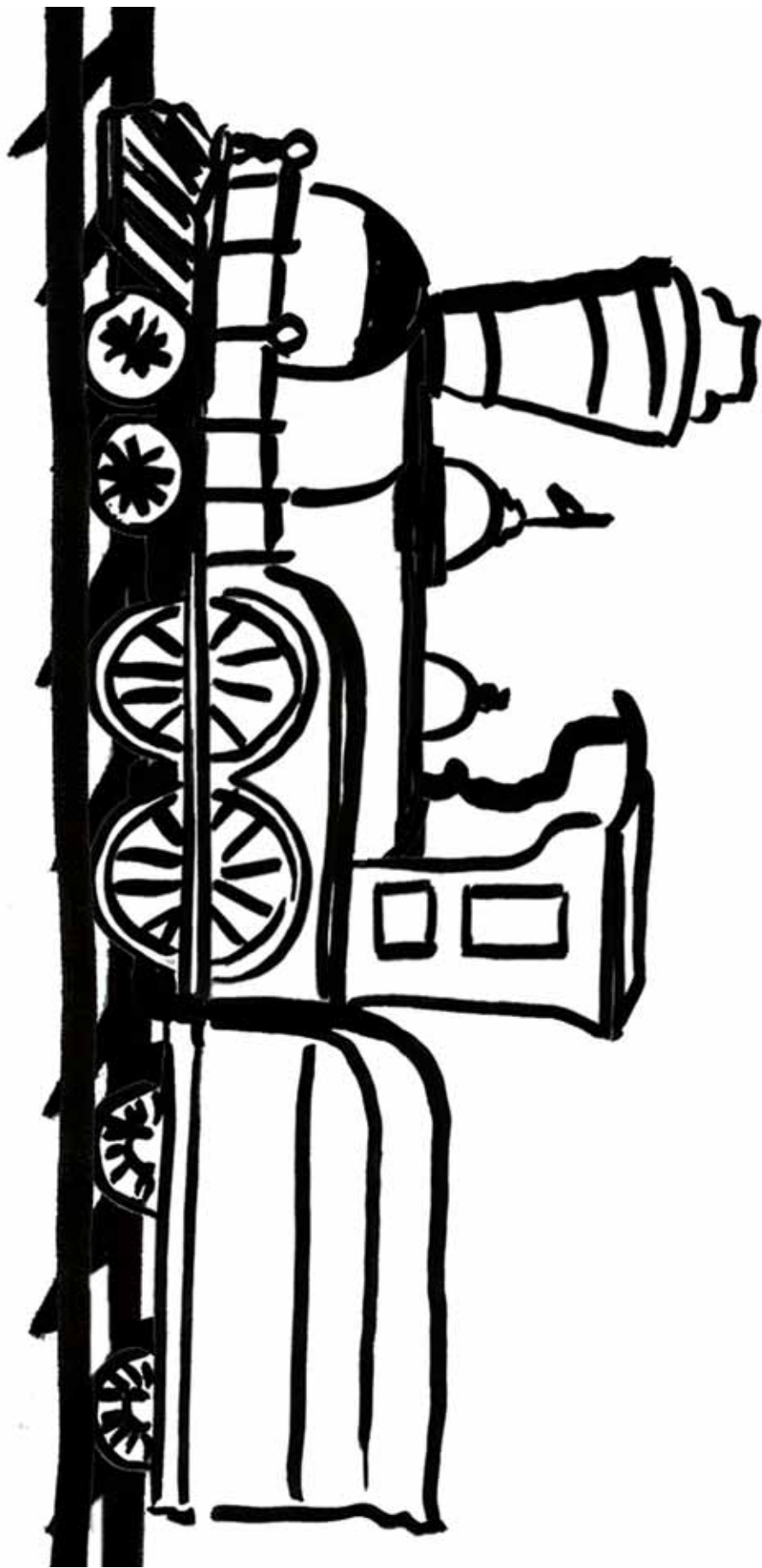
NAME \_\_\_\_\_

The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train



# Whole Grain Friends





# Dear Parent:

Your child has been learning about the importance of eating whole grains in the *The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train* lesson. Your child participated and enjoyed an imaginary train ride where they learned that eating whole grains at breakfast can help them have energy to think, run, and play.

We also learned about whole grains and where they come from. Your child was encouraged to "wake up to breakfast" by eating whole grains in the morning and throughout the day. They also learned that whole grains provide important vitamins and energy for their growing bodies.

Recognizing whole grains is easy—look for ingredients listed on the food label. The word "whole" should be listed before the type of grain, such as whole wheat flour, whole durum flour, whole grain barley, whole corn meal, and whole oats.

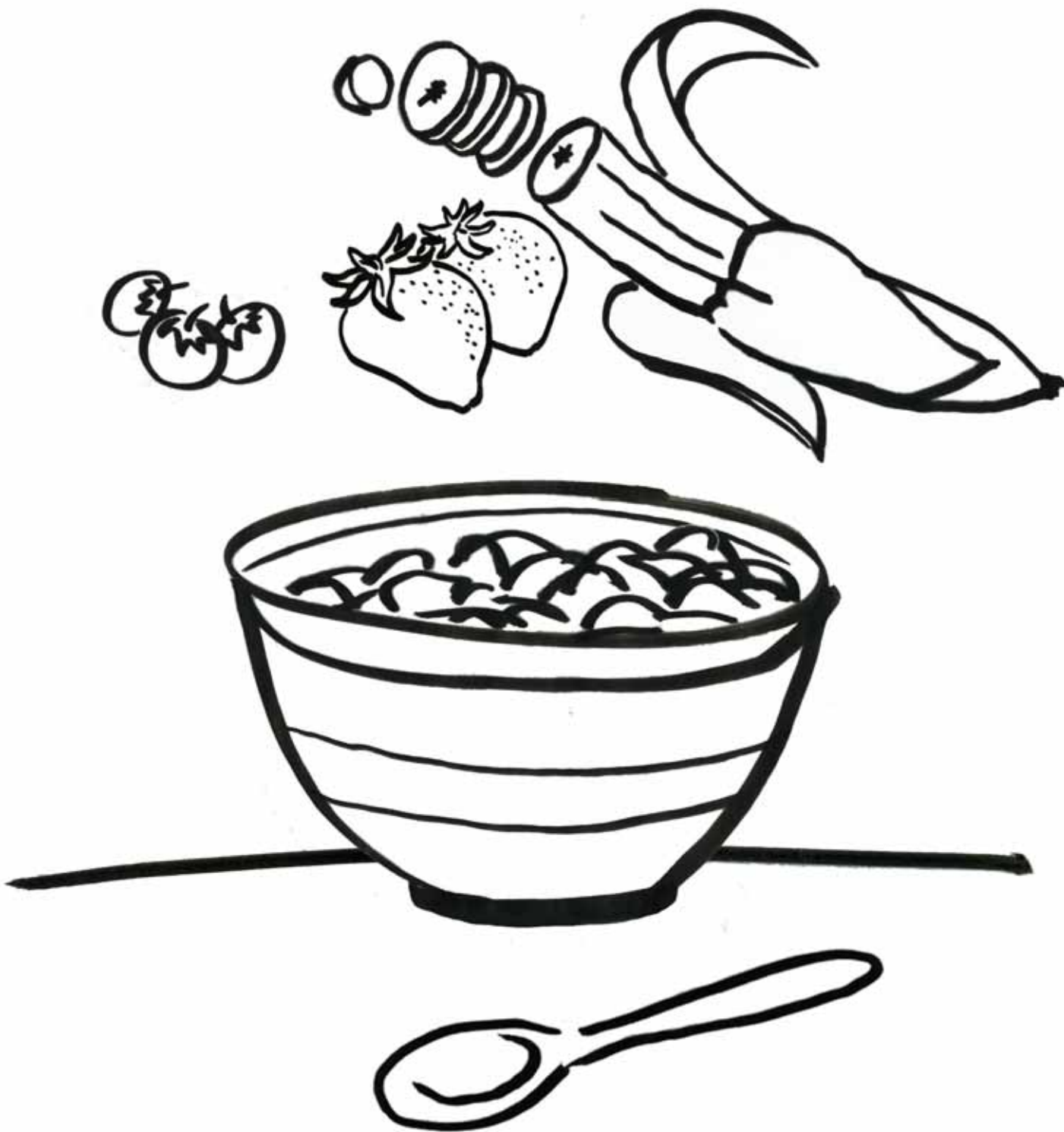


When shopping, choose whole grain products like pasta, rice, waffles, whole grain tortillas, crackers, pancakes, breads, rolls, and pizza crusts. When eating out, ask which meals are available with whole grain products.

Encouraging your child and family to eat whole grain foods can help them develop lifelong healthy eating habits. Turn the page and help your child with the whole grain cereal activity.

Sincerely,

**Which fruit would you like to try in your whole grain cereal?** Circle the fruit you would like to try, and then color it in.



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# Whole Grains and You

## What are whole grains?

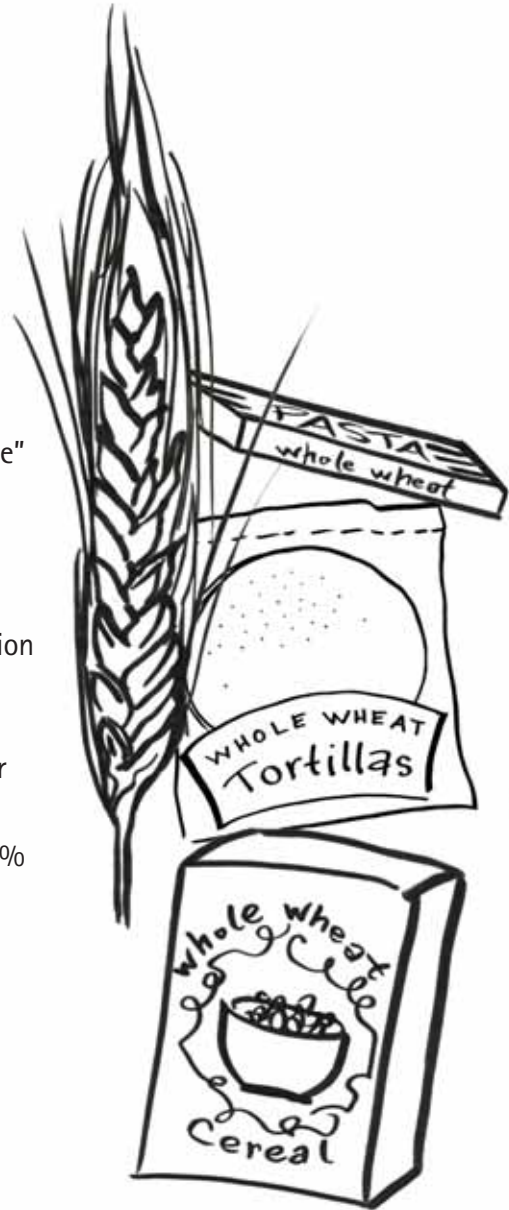
- Grains made from the **entire kernel**
- You should see **"whole"** as the first ingredient
- Whole wheat, barley, corn, and rye are a few examples
- They contain **more vitamins and protein** than refined "white" grains

## Why are they important?

- They **contain good amounts of fiber** that helps with digestion and can even lower your risk of heart disease and high cholesterol
- They are **full of vitamins and minerals** that are essential for your body
- They can help **decrease your risk for type 2 diabetes** by 20% or more
- They **help you feel full** and can aid in weight maintenance

## Ready to take the plunge?

- **Substitute half the white flour for whole wheat flour** in cookies, breads, and pancakes
- **Try oatmeal** for a filling breakfast or satisfying snack
- **Buy whole grain pasta**, breads, and cereals
- **Try whole grain crackers** or pita with cheese for a quick snack
- **Add an unexpected crunch** to your yogurt by **adding oatmeal or crushed whole grain cereal**
- **Try to make half of your daily grain servings whole**



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## Want more information?

[www.wholegrainscouncil.org](http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org)  
[www.choosemyplate.gov/foodgroups/grains\\_tips.html](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/foodgroups/grains_tips.html)

# The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train

## references and resources

1. Reeves, K., Stickney M., & Bowden D. *The Whole Grain Choo-Choo Train*. The Florida Department of Health, Women, Infants, & Children Program, 2007.
2. *The Florida Child Care Food Program Cookbook*—Apple Knockers recipe. The Florida Department of Health, Child Care Food Program, 2007. Website: [www.doh.state.fl.us/ccfp/Nutrition/Children/cookbook.htm](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/ccfp/Nutrition/Children/cookbook.htm)
3. Songs for Teaching—Rachel Sumner: *Rachel's Fun Time* CD, "Purple Train." Website: [www.songsforteaching.com/rachelsumner/purpletrain.htm](http://www.songsforteaching.com/rachelsumner/purpletrain.htm)
4. Florida Department of Education: Office of Early Learning, 2008 Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Standards. Website: [www.fldoe.org/earlyLearning/pdf/FINALVPKEducationStandards.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/earlyLearning/pdf/FINALVPKEducationStandards.pdf)
5. U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service's Core Nutrition Messages. Website: [www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/default.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/default.htm)

