

concept

Introduce children to MyPlate and the health benefits of eating a variety of foods and being active every day.

Choose MyPlate



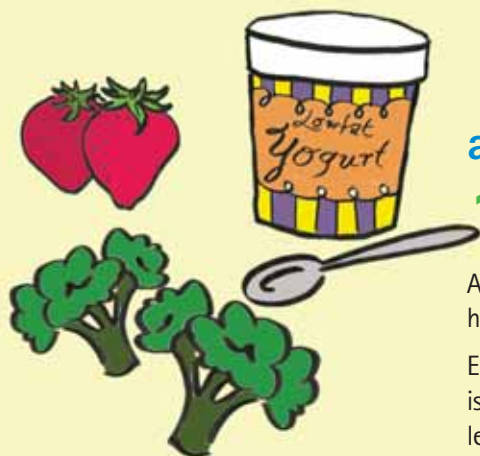
goals

1. Children are made aware of five food groups (dairy, protein, vegetables, fruits, and grains) of MyPlate.
2. Children are made aware of different foods from each food group.
3. Children are informed that eating different foods from each food group will help them grow, think, and have energy to play.



objectives

1. Children repeat the names of MyPlate food groups and learn how to recognize different foods from each group.
2. Children learn that eating a variety of food from each food group provides energy to grow and be active.



activities

1. Begin the discussion by saying, "Did you know there are five food groups?"

Allow the children to respond. Then say, "What about MyPlate? Have you ever heard of it?"

Encourage the children to respond. Point to the MyPlate poster, and say, "This is MyPlate; it is made up of the five food groups and shaped like a plate. Let's learn the food groups together."

Point to each food group, starting with the grains group and discuss it. For example, say, "Look at the orange section of the plate; this is the grains group. Can you say, 'grain'? Do you know what foods you would find in this group?"

Prompt the children to name foods such as bread, crackers, cereal, pasta, etc. Continue the discussion with the vegetables, fruits, dairy, and protein groups.

Say, "Eating different foods from each food group will help you grow and think and give you energy to play!"

MATERIALS NEEDED

- MyPlate poster
- *The Two Bite Club* by the Food and Nutrition Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture)
- Pictures of food from the five food groups (use pictures from magazines, the internet, or other lessons)
- Non-toxic glue sticks
- Construction paper: orange, green, red, yellow, blue, and purple
- Tape

2 Read the book *The Two Bite Club* by the Food and Nutrition Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture). Read the book with great animation to keep the children's attention.

After reading the book, ask the children if they remember what foods Anna and Will tried for their snack. Allow children to respond. For each food mentioned, ask the children what food group it belongs to and point to that group on the poster.

For example, if the child says apple, you can say, "What food group does an apple belong to?"

Encourage the children to answer. Point to the red section of the plate and say, "That's right, the fruits group."

3 Prior to this activity, find pictures of food from magazines or the internet to correspond with each of the five food groups. Paste the pictures onto construction paper that corresponds to each food group color. For example, paste a picture of a slice or loaf of bread on orange construction paper. Show the children the pictures and say, "This is a picture of bread. Do you remember what food group bread belongs to?"

Allow time for children to answer and provide lots of praise and encouragement!

4 Play the game **MyPlate Race**. Organize the children into five groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, and protein. Give each child a picture of a food that has been pasted onto construction paper (food card) with the corresponding food group color. You can use the pictures from the previous activity.

Use five pieces of colored construction paper to represent the five food groups: orange, green, red, blue, and purple. Tape each piece of paper to a wall or place them on the floor or ground as food group "bases." Provide ample space between the five base colors (so that children don't run into each other!).

Have the children stand at an appropriate distance from the five bases which will be their starting line so that each group is standing directly in front of their base color. After counting to five, have the children run, hop, skip, or jump to the different bases.

Have the children tag the base color matching the food card they are holding and run back to the starting line.

This can be done several times. Have children change food cards (and colors) and try again.

This activity can be done indoors or outdoors.

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.



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goals

1. Children are made aware of five food groups (dairy, protein, vegetables, fruits, and grains) of MyPlate.
2. Children are made aware of different foods from each food group.
3. Children are informed that eating different foods from each food group will help them grow, think, and have energy to play.

objectives

1. Children identify the names of MyPlate food groups and indicate different foods from each group.
2. Children discuss how eating different foods from each food group will help them grow, think, and have energy to play.

activities

1 Begin the discussion by saying, "Did you know there are five food groups?" Allow the children to respond. Then say, "What about MyPlate? Have you ever heard of it?"

Encourage the children to respond. Point to the MyPlate poster, and say, "This is MyPlate; it is made up of the five food groups and shaped like a plate. Let's learn the food groups together."

Point to each food group, starting with the grains group and discuss it. For example, say, "Look at the orange section of the plate; this is the grains group. Can you say, 'grain'? Do you know what foods you would find in this group?"

Prompt the children to name foods such as bread, crackers, cereal, pasta, etc. Continue the discussion with the vegetables, fruits, dairy, and protein groups.

Say, "Eating different foods from each food group will help you grow and think and give you energy to play!"

MATERIALS NEEDED

- MyPlate poster
- *The Two Bite Club* by the Food and Nutrition Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture)
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Choose MyPlate

2 Read the book *The Two Bite Club* by the Food and Nutrition Service (U.S. Department of Agriculture).

Read the book with great animation to keep the children's attention. After reading the book, ask the children if they remember what foods Anna and Will tried for their snack. Allow children time to respond. For each food mentioned, ask the children what food group it belongs to and point to that group on the poster. For example, if the child says apple, you can say, "What food group does an apple belong to?"

Encourage the children to answer. Point to the red section of the plate and say, "That's right, the fruits group."

3 Set up five "picture stations." Each station should

have colored construction paper and pictures of food from one of the five food groups. For example, one station would have orange construction paper and pictures of cereal, bread, rice, etc. You may want to cut the paper in quarters or halves depending on the size of the pictures. Using glue sticks, have the children paste the food pictures on the construction paper to make food cards.

4 Afterwards, have the children sit in a circle or

group on the floor with their food cards. Allow each child to stand up with their food card and show the group. Help the children identify the food item and what food group it belongs to. For example, a child holds up a picture of a slice or loaf of bread (pasted on orange construction paper) and say, "What food is shown in this picture? Yes, bread—that's right! What food group does bread belong to? Yes, the grains group—that's correct!"

Allow time for children to answer and provide lots of praise and encouragement!

5 Play the game MyPlate Race.

Organize the children into five groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, and protein. Give each child a picture of a food that has been pasted onto construction paper—a food card—with the corresponding food group color. You can use the pictures from the previous activities.

Use five pieces of colored construction paper to represent the five food groups: orange, green, red, blue, and purple. Tape each piece of paper to a wall or place them on the floor or ground as food group "bases." Provide ample space between the five base colors (so that children don't run into each other!).

Have the children stand at an appropriate distance from the five bases which will be their starting line so that each group is standing directly in front of their base color. After counting to five, have the children run, hop, skip, or jump to the different bases.

Have the children tag the base color matching the food card they are holding and run back to the starting line.

This can be done several times. Have children change food cards (and colors) and try again.

This activity can be done indoors or outdoors.

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additional activities for either age group

MyPlate Hat Activity

MATERIALS NEEDED

- MyPlate Hat template (included)
- MyPlate Hat pictures (included)
- Construction paper
- Non-toxic glue sticks

Using the hat pattern provided in this lesson plan, cut out shapes from construction paper for each child.

- Make copies of food pictures, which are included, for each child to color.
- Have children tear or cut out food pictures.
- Using glue sticks, help children glue food pictures to the hat.
- You may wish to make one hat (or crown) and have a different child be the “MyPlate King or Queen” for the day. While wearing the hat, the child can tell the class about their favorite food from each food group.

MyPlate Pineapple Pizza Snack Activity

MATERIALS NEEDED

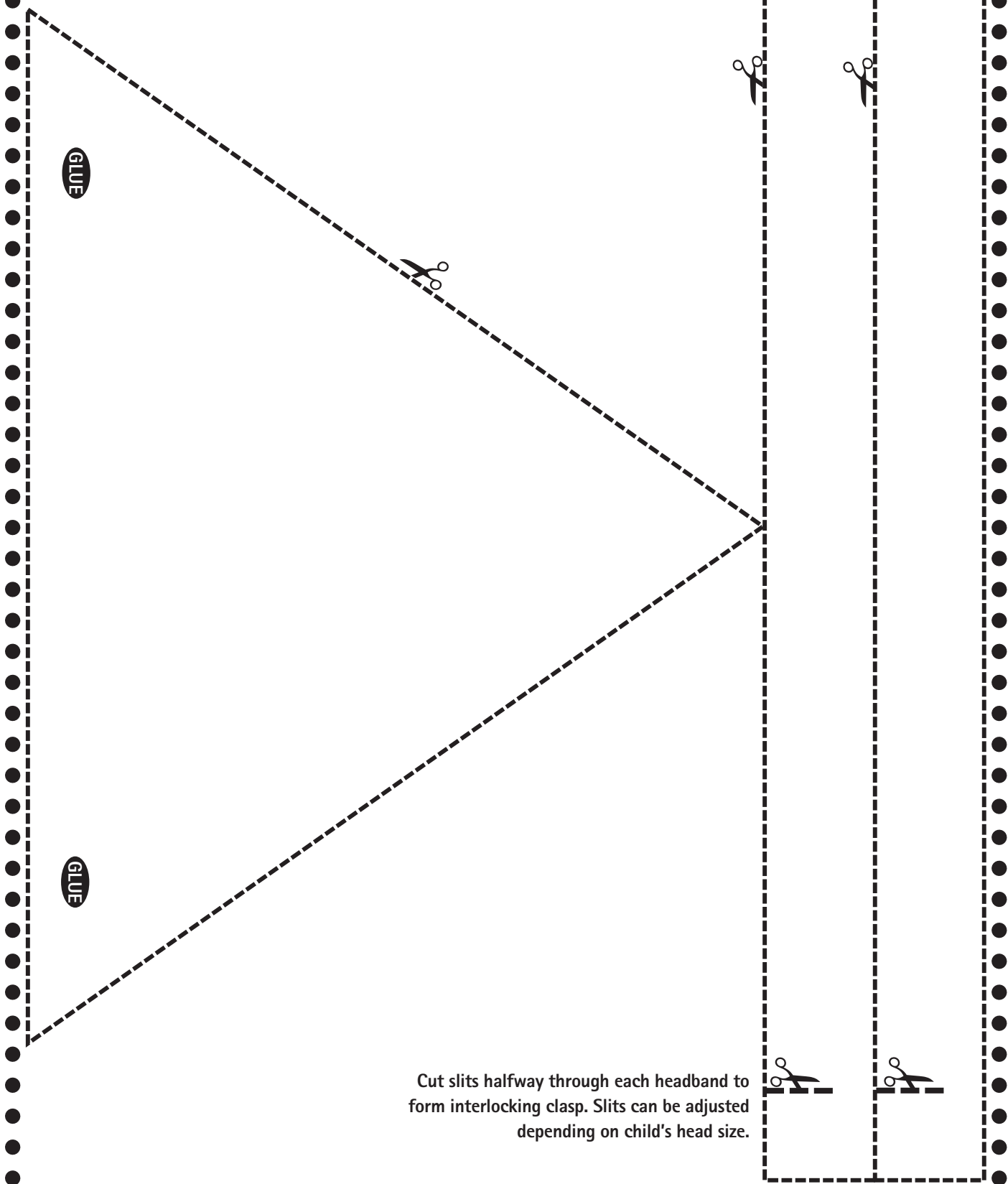
- English muffins (½ a muffin for each child)
- Pineapple (fresh or canned, drained and cut into chunks)
- Tomato sauce
- Mozzarella cheese (shredded)
- Paper plates (1 for each child)
- Serving utensils

Prepare MyPlate Pineapple Pizzas as a snack. Involve the children in making their own personal size pizzas for a snack using foods from several food groups included in MyPlate.

- Instruct the children to wash their hands in preparation for their snack. Then have them sit in groups at various tables.
- Provide each child with a paper plate and ½ an English muffin.
- On each table, place one bowl of tomato sauce, one bowl of pineapple chunks, and one bowl of shredded mozzarella cheese. Be sure to include serving utensils with each bowl.
- Assist children in assembling their pizzas by first spreading tomato sauce on their English muffin, then topping it with pineapple and sprinkling cheese on top.
- Talk to the children about the four food groups represented in the snack (English muffins from the grains group, tomato sauce from the vegetables group, pineapple from the fruits group, and cheese from the dairy group).

MyPlate Hat Template

Cut out and use these patterns to make hats. Glue strips where indicated to the triangle.



Cut slits halfway through each headband to form interlocking clasp. Slits can be adjusted depending on child's head size.

MyPlate Hat Pictures

Color foods—what color would whole grain bread be?—then cut out pictures and glue on hats.



b a n a n a



c a r r o t s



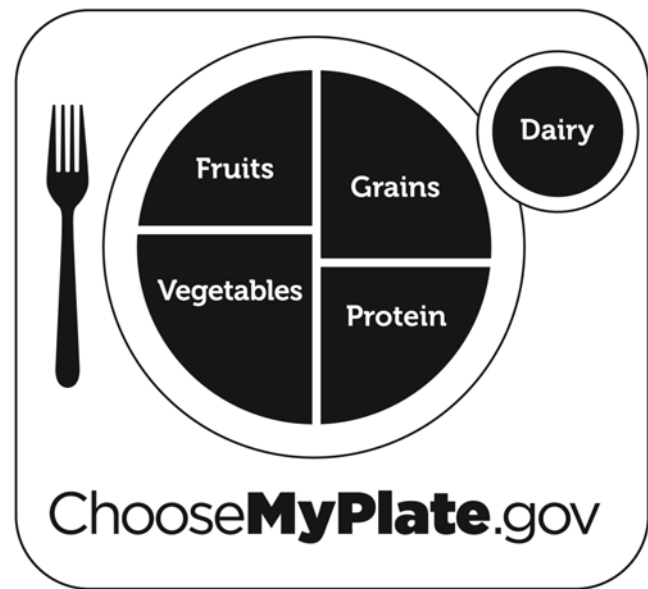
b r o c c o l i

w h o l e g r a i n
b r e a d



Dear Parent:

Your child has been learning about the five food groups of MyPlate and identifying foods that belong in each group. We have been discussing how eating healthy foods and being active every day is important for strong bodies. You play a major role in teaching your child how to develop healthful habits that will last a lifetime. Children learn from watching you. Eat fruits and veggies and they will too.



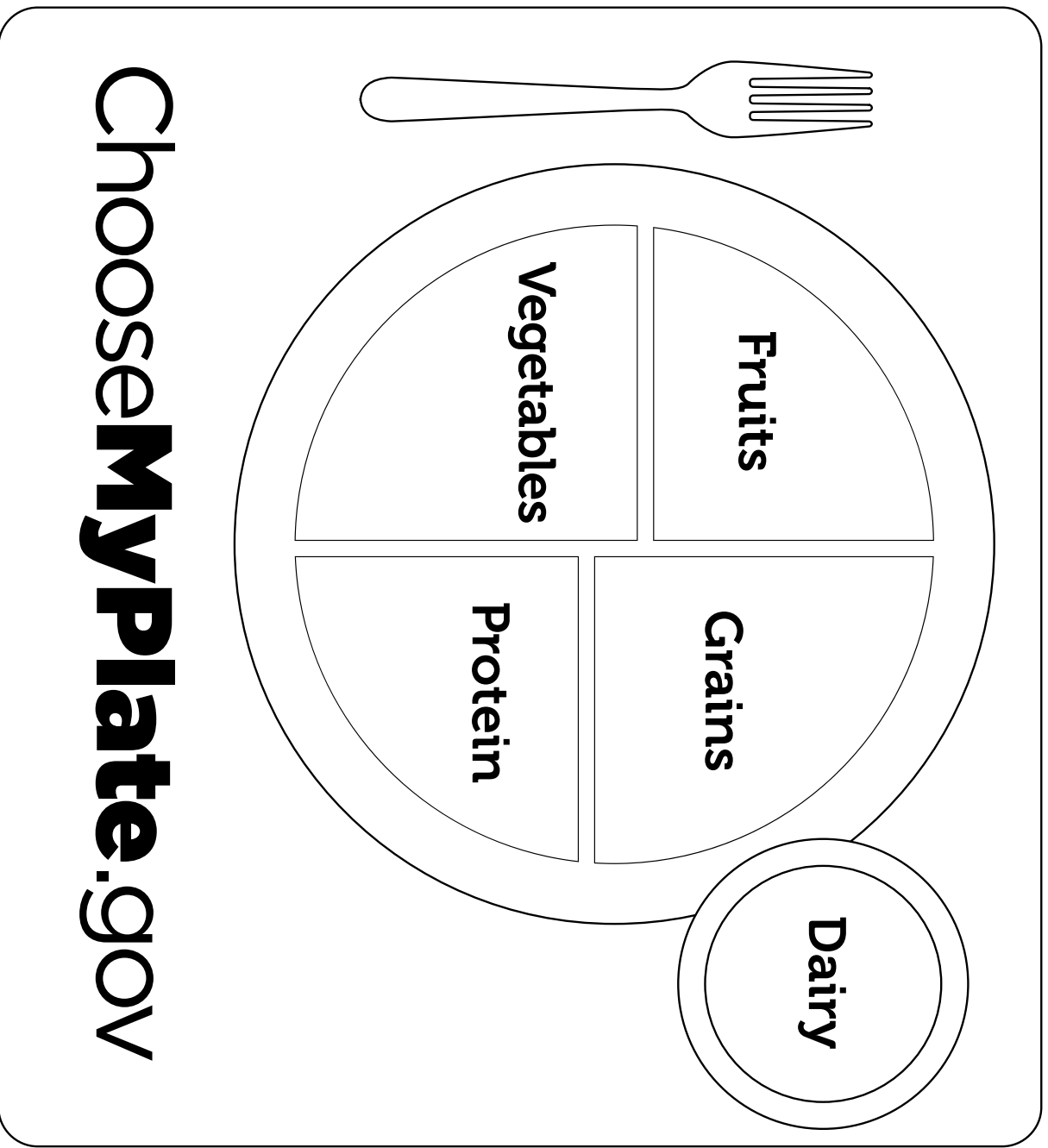
MyPlate focuses on eating a variety of foods from each food group throughout the day. Each food group by itself provides some, but not all, of the nutrients and energy children need. This is why variety is the key to planning meals using MyPlate. The foods we offer children each day should include choices from all five food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, and protein. To see how much of each food group your child should eat, visit the Choose MyPlate website at www.choosemyplate.gov and enter your child's age, gender, and physical activity level. MyPlate recognizes the importance of physical activity. Children should be active for at least 60 minutes each day.

Young children's appetites can vary widely from day to day, depending on how fast they are growing and how active they are. No one food group is more important than another. Meals and snacks should also include different choices within each food group. For example, offer different types of breads, such as whole grain, instead of white at least half of the time. Provide a variety of vegetables, especially dark-green leafy and deep-yellow ones, and try beans and peas instead of meat.

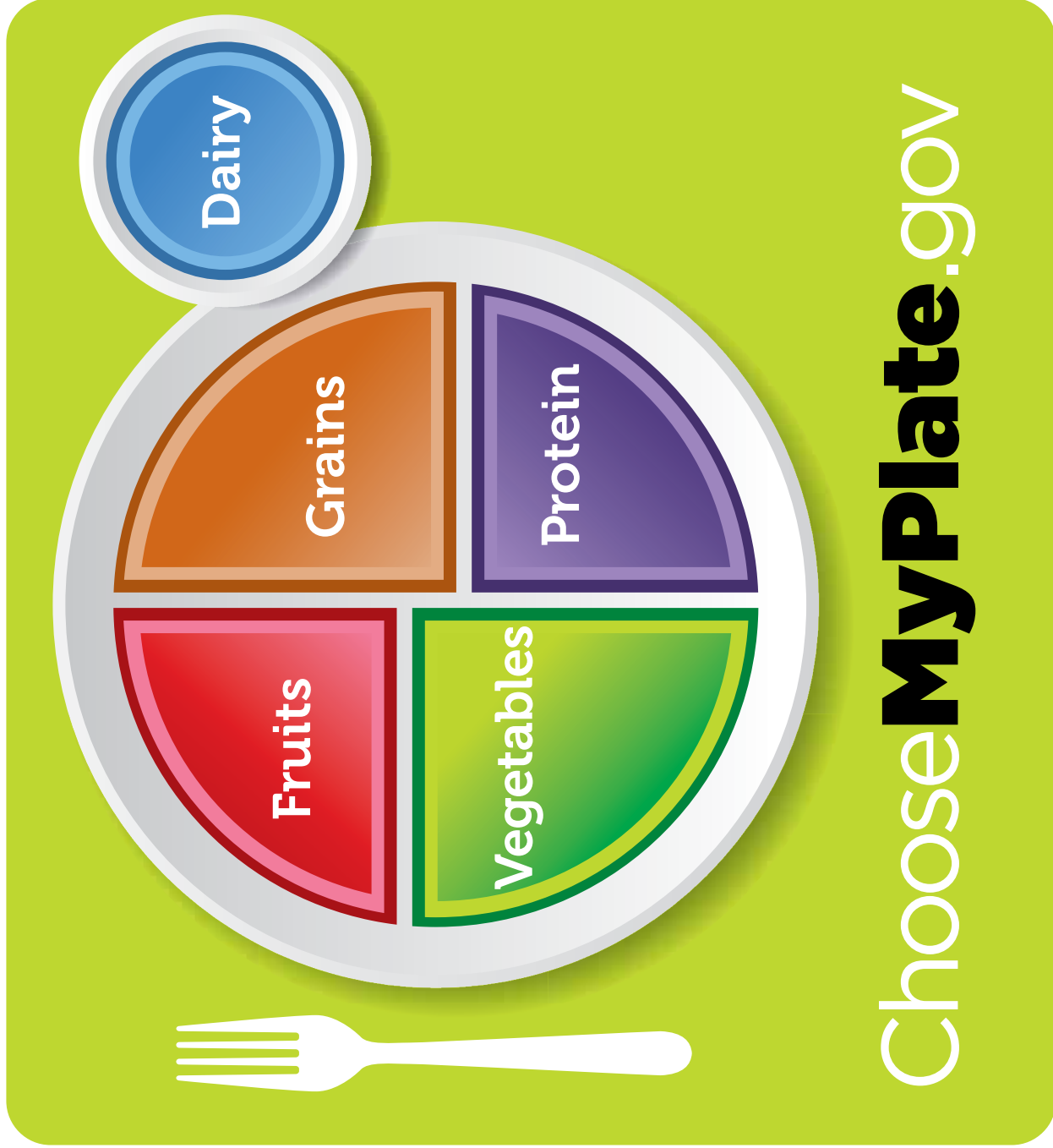
When children are offered a balanced diet over time, they will develop good eating habits. Check out the back of this letter for a fun activity for your child.

Remember that being active is important too. It is our responsibility to provide nutritious foods and encourage physical activity to ensure a healthy lifestyle for our children.

Sincerely,



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Taking MyPlate Home



Food shopping can be a fun family event

- **Start by asking everyone to help you make a grocery list.** Then you can assign someone to help you find whole grain foods, and colorful fruits and veggies. Remember they can be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried—all forms matter!
- **Everyone wants to have strong bones and teeth** so don't forget your calcium-rich foods like lowfat and fat-free milk and other dairy products like yogurt and cheese.
- **Go lean with protein.** Choose lean and lowfat meats, chicken, turkey, and fish. Add more dry beans and peas, chick peas, nuts or seeds to your salads.
- **Choose healthy fats** like fish, nuts, and seeds. When you cook, use liquid oils like corn, canola, olive, and soybean.

Eat fruits and veggies at every meal and at snack time.

Snacking

- **Everyone likes to snack.** A great way to have snacks ready is to use small sandwich bags and fill them with fruits and veggies and nuts or seeds. Keep a few small containers with ranch style dressing on hand for a delicious dip.
- **Rethink your drink!** Try reducing your family's sugar intake by choosing drinks that do not have sugar as their first ingredient.

Eat smart to play hard—be active every day!

- **Be a good role model for your children and find fun ways to be active.**
 - **Take a walk after dinner and bond with your family.**
 - **Dance with your children or do an exercise video.**
 - **Play backyard Olympics or relay races.**
 - **Take the stairs, or park your car a little further away from the building.**
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Choose MyPlate

references and resources

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Choosemyplate.gov. Website: www.choosemyplate.gov
2. Team Nutrition—USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Website: www.fns.usda.gov/tn
3. U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. *The Two Bite Club*. Website: www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/2biteclub.html
4. *The Florida Child Care Food Program Cookbook*—Cereal Snack Mix recipe. The Florida Department of Health, Child Care Food Program, 2007. Website: www.doh.state.fl.us/ccfp/Nutrition/Children/cookbook.htm
5. Florida Department of Education: Office of Early Learning, 2008 Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Standards. Website: www.fldoe.org/earlyLearning/pdf/FINALVPKEducationStandards.pdf
6. U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service's Core Nutrition Messages. Website: www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/default.htm