Discover MyPlate

Lesson **1**

Children learn the basics of **MyPlate** and the importance of **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**.

Let's Get Started

1. **Print** the MyPlate graphic and introduce it to your children.
2. **Point out** the five MyPlate food groups. Identify each food group by its color, such as **Fruits** (red), **Vegetables** (green), **Grains** (orange), **Protein** (purple), and **Dairy** (blue).
3. **Talk** about the foods represented in each group, such as **apples, bananas,** and **grapes** (Fruits), **carrots, broccoli,** and **bell peppers** (Vegetables), **bread, pasta,** and **rice** (Grains), **beans, chicken,** and **eggs** (Protein), **low-fat milk, yogurt,** and **cheese** (Dairy).
4. **Explain** the importance of eating from all five food groups. Each group gives us energy and different nutrients to keep our bodies growing and staying healthy. Eating from only one group will not make us healthier. It is the combination of all five food groups that keeps us healthy and strong. Just like the many colors of the rainbow go together, all the MyPlate food groups work together to make our bodies healthy. Try to eat a RAINBOW of colors every day!
5. **Explain** that physical activity combined with healthy eating is important for keeping us healthy.
6. **Ask ...** What else keeps us healthy besides eating from all the food groups? That's right—we need to EXERCISE.

Hands-On Learning Activities

- **Print** out the MyPlate character cards. Use these cards to help your children visualize the foods found in each food group. **Ask** what foods they can name and count how many different foods they can find.
- **Play** the Five Food-Groups Scavenger Hunt. Ask your children to search the kitchen and pantry and look for a favorite food from each food group.
- **Create** a Family Exercise Jar. Ask everyone to write down an exercise on a piece of paper. Fold the paper in half and place it in the exercise jar. Each day, ask someone to pull one piece of paper out of the jar. Then get moving together as a family!

Online Activities

- **Take the pledge.** Ask your children to be a MyPlate Challenge Champion, and promise to eat healthy and be active every day. Visit this link to learn more and print a certificate to help your children stay on the healthy track!
- **Cook** together with your whole family. Watch *Kids Rock Nutrition in the Kitchen* video and learn a new recipe to prepare with your family.

UMass Extension
Nutrition Education Program

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