

**Building Blocks**  
**Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, and Oral Health**  
**A Lesson Plan Module for Teachers**  
**Junior Kindergarten – Grade 6**

**Healthy Eating**  
**Grade 4**  
**Lesson 1**

**Lesson 1 – Why I Eat and TV Food Commercial Survey**

**Curriculum Expectations:**

Students will outline the factors that influence body shape and size (e.g., heredity, diet, exercise).

**Objectives:**

Students will learn about why they eat and about television food commercials.

**Suggested Outline**

Section 1: Introduce Today’s Lesson

Section 2: Discussion/Background Information

Section 3: Activity #1 and Activity #2

Section 4: Conclusion

**Section 1: Introduce Today’s Lesson**

Today we will learn about why we eat and about television food commercials by completing “Why I Eat” and “Food Commercial Survey” activity sheets.

**Section 2: Discussion/Background Information**

**Factors Influencing Food Choices and Body Shape and Size**

Children come in many shapes and sizes, and make different choices about their food practices. A variety of factors influence their food choices, body image and self-esteem. To promote good health, it is important to foster healthy eating habits, regular physical activity, acceptance of individual shapes and sizes, and a positive sense of self-worth.

**Media messages**

Children absorb an enormous amount of information from the media. Advertisements, TV shows, movies, celebrities and sports stars can have a big influence on children and their physical activity choices, food choices and body image. Children are often not aware of how much influence TV and other media have on them.

Advertisers use a variety of techniques in their advertisements to encourage children to consume foods that are high in fat and Calories. There are many different kinds of techniques used including nutrition claims, give-aways/prizes, testimonials, new/improved statements, claims of social success, jingles, and humour.



Media can be a powerful influence on how young people view themselves. The media delivers the message that "thin is in" and a large body shape is unacceptable. The media or corporate view of the "ideal" body type for women is now at the thinnest 5% of a normal weight distribution. This excludes 95% of women in our society. The increasing pressure to be thin is reflected in cultural images. The typical female model weighs in at 13% to 19% below expected weight for their height and age. It is not always easy to resist the pressures from the media to conform to an "ideal body image". The media often presents or creates false images of what people should look like, sometimes glamorizing unhealthy images. They create a distorted picture of reality by:

- frequently propagating myths and falsehoods;
- normalizing and glamorizing what is abnormal or unhealthy; and
- creating the false impression that all women and men are the same by not representing whole segments of the population;
- sending the message that one must continually improve and that they are never good enough.

A lot of girls are taught at a young age that looking beautiful can mean having power and control. Young girls feel pressured into being thinner than their healthy weight because that is what is accepted as beautiful in Western culture. Many girls have a distorted idea of what their body shape or size should be.

Boys are also affected by pressure to shape their bodies to match current ideals. Fitness, muscle and body sculpting magazines and products are increasingly targeting them. Studies suggest that the body concerns of most boys is focused on building body mass and sculpting rather than reducing weight. The value being taught is that only physical "perfection" is acceptable.

### **Heredity**

Different body shapes and sizes are among the things that make each person unique, and they are determined largely by heredity. Some individuals and their families tend to gain body fat more easily than others do. Because body shape and size are determined by genetics, many heavy children will never be "thin". However, they can be healthy active people who feel good about themselves. Being comfortable with one's body is an important step in developing a good sense of self.

Today's culture can be cruel to children who are heavier than what is considered to be "normal". Some children try to lose weight by dieting because they fear becoming fat. This action can be the start of restrictive eating in a fruitless effort to reach unrealistic goals of thinness and body shape. Professionals need to help children of all sizes understand and accept that to a great extent their bodies have been programmed to be a certain size and shape. All children should be encouraged to establish a healthy eating pattern and participate in regular physical activity as a way to feel healthy, energetic, fit, and have fun.



### **Section 3: Activity #1 Why I Eat**

Instruct students to brainstorm factors that influence what they choose to eat (e.g., taste, availability of food, family/culture, friends, TV commercial). Have students brainstorm factors that influence why they eat (e.g., hunger, time of day, habit, mood, appeal of food to senses). Discuss how food is often associated with pleasant events (e.g., parties, celebrations, and holidays).

Instruct students to list their five favourite foods. Then, using the “Why I Eat” activity sheet, have them consider why they eat these and/or other foods.

- Discuss that sometimes we eat when we are not even hungry because we smell food, see other people eating, are bored, or are watching a commercial on TV that makes us think we are hungry and want that particular food.
- Ask them if it is harmful to our health if we eat when we are not hungry.

Ask why they think it is important to be aware of their personal eating triggers (e.g., being bored, watching TV).

Instruct students to set a goal to be aware of one personal eating trigger other than hunger and select another activity to do instead of eating. Remind students that they should eat if they are hungry.

### **Activity #2 TV Food Commercial Survey**

Instruct students to brainstorm the different products they eat, which are advertised on television. Discuss how advertising on TV and in other media affect food buying decisions. Discuss the methods used by advertisers to influence children to buy their products. With their families or classmates, have students observe TV commercials for different food ads. Using the TV Food Commercial Survey activity sheet, have students record the different ads that they and their family members or classmates observed. Have students bring their survey results to class and have a discussion on the advertising methods used by the commercials they observed.

- Ask them to describe their favourite ad and whether or not the ad persuaded them to want to try the food.
- Ask them if they have ever purchased a food product because of a commercial or ad.
- Ask them if commercials confuse them.

Discuss how television commercials and other advertisements can help them to make nutritious food choices.

### **Section 4: Conclusion**

Today we learned about why we eat and about television food commercials by completing “Why I Eat” and “Food Commercial Survey” activity sheets.