

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

Healthy Eating
Grade 6
Lesson 1

Lesson 1 – The World in Our Classroom

Curriculum Expectations:

Students will determine the influence of various factors (e.g., the media, family traditions, allergies) on personal food choices, body image, and self-esteem.

Objectives:

Students will learn about identifying the variety of ethno-cultural groups.

Suggested Outline

Section 1: Introduce Today’s Lesson

Section 2: Discussion/Background Information

Section 3: Activity

Section 4: Conclusion

Section 1: Introduce Today’s Lesson

Today students will learn about identifying the variety of ethno-cultural groups in their class/school by completing the “The World in our Classroom” activity sheet.

Section 2: Discussion/Background Information

Family Influences and Traditions

Parents are children’s most important source of information and influence about food and eating. Family eating habits, activity patterns and attitudes toward food and eating have an enormous influence on children. For example, if the family eats breakfast, it is likely the children will too. Family income is another factor that influences what children eat and the food choices that are available to them. Families develop patterns of eating based on what they eat, when, and where, to accommodate their schedules, family size, and activity levels of different members. Families may eat one or more meals a week in restaurants or from take-out establishments. They may use a large proportion of already prepared foods.

Culture

The Canadian population consists of many diverse ethnic groups. This is exciting because it provides the opportunity to choose from a large variety of foods in addition to the traditional Canadian cuisine. Children can begin to learn about the differences in people's eating habits, likes, dislikes, and cultural backgrounds. They can learn that people from different parts of the world can choose different, but equally healthy foods (e.g., bread, rice, tortillas, roti). Discussion about food in the classroom should enable each child to feel individually involved by including foods that relate to their own food habits.



When discussing the food practices of multicultural groups, understanding value systems of the cultural groups is required. Food habits are greatly influenced by the group's values. The perception of healthy foods differs from one cultural group to another. It is important that you do not make the students feel that one value system and food practice is superior to another. When there is discussion around cultural foods, keep the following in mind:

- do not assume that students from a particular group have adopted the food and dietary practices of their new country. Ask students to share with the class their food practices and current eating patterns of their family.
- children sharing food experiences can help establish trust, as well as knowledge, among classmates. Ask questions with an open mind – don't be judgmental.

Allergies

Children and adults alike need to be more aware and sensitive to food allergies. This means always asking about food allergies before sharing food. The number of life-threatening reactions to food allergies is increasing. These can happen anywhere – at home, in school or recreational facilities, at camp and on field trips. Make sure your school has a policy for handling these allergies and that you are familiar with it.

Section 3: Activity

Students complete *The World in our Classroom* activity sheet and report their response to their classmates. Reassure students that words for their cultural background can be spelled in English letters by sounding it out. Discuss how culture and cultural practices affect people's food selections. Ask students to think about foods from other countries that bring variety to menus and influence what people eat (e.g., naan, souvlaki, chilli, and tofu).

Organize a taste testing party. Each student can bring a food or a dish from home that represents their ethnic or cultural background or that their family likes to make. This is a good opportunity to talk to the class about food allergies and the impact they make on the food choices some people must make. If applicable, reinforce that certain types of foods are not permitted into the classroom due to food allergies.

Section 4: Conclusion

Today Students learned about identifying the variety of ethno-cultural groups in their class/school by completing the “The World in our Classroom” activity sheet.

