

# Nutrition Education

## Overview

Why do I have to eat my broccoli?  
Why do I have to take milk with my lunch? You've probably heard these questions before. Kids are curious, and teaching them about nutrition can explain why we serve healthy meals at school and encourage them to choose healthy snacks.



## Take Action

1. Have your school join [Team Nutrition](#) for free resources from the USDA.
2. Provide nutrition education during ancillary periods such as art, music and library to ensure all students receive similar messages.
3. Connect your nutrition lesson to what is being served in the cafeteria that day as a way to encourage kids to try new, healthy foods.
4. Designate a school-level nutrition education champion to help each grade level create a nutrition education scope and sequence.

## Social Emotional Health Highlights

Activities such as these help students explore...

**Self-Awareness:** Lessons about optimal nutrition teaches children the importance of taking ownership of their own health. Encourage students to think about how they feel physically and mentally depending on the foods they eat. Exploring the mind-

body connection leads to students' greater self-awareness and skills to make better choices to nourish their bodies and help them feel their best.

**Social Awareness:** Nutrition education serves as an opportunity to teach children about food and the relation to culture and family heritage. Discussing culinary variances across cultures helps expose children to different foods and traditional practices, increasing their understanding and appreciation for diversity.

## Tips

-  Whenever teaching nutrition, make sure the content is age-appropriate and culturally sensitive.
-  Use meal times, such as school breakfast, snacks or lunch, to teach students about healthy options.
-  Make half of your plate fruits and vegetables.
-  Consume 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
-  Eating whole fruits is best, but drink 100% juice when choosing fruit juice.
-  Make at least half of your grains whole grains.
-  Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) dairy.
-  Consume 3 servings of dairy each day.
-  Limit soda and other sugar sweetened beverages. Water is the best option!
-  Teach through online nutrition games. When students have free computer time, provide specific links where they can learn about nutrition.
-  Offer nutrition education in a systematic way (i.e. monthly, weekly, as a unit) as opposed to one-time or occasional lessons to help kids internalize the
-  Invite local experts such as dietitians to teach a lesson on portion sizes or shopping on a budget.

information.

-  Recruit a local chef to teach kids about seasonal, local foods.
-  Include a nutrition-focused worksheet or tip sheet in every [parent newsletter that is sent home](#).
-  Does your classroom have centers or stations? Include nutrition education activity sheets as part of one of a center or as something students can do after they complete their work.
-  Integrate nutrition education into math and literacy. For example, [select books with a nutrition focus](#) or graph the number of fruits students ate the previous day.
-  [Host a taste test](#) to allow students to sample the foods they learn about in class.
-  Join the [Chefs Move to Schools](#) initiative to bring local chefs to your school to teach kids about healthy eating and local food.
-  Teach students how to read a food label so they have the skills to make healthy choices at the grocery store and at home.

For more activities and ideas like this one, be sure to [sign up for our news and updates](#). And if you like what you see, please [donate to support our work](#) creating more ways to help build a healthier future for kids.

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# Additional Resources

[Nutrition Education and Promotion Tip Sheet \(ENGLISH\) \(Action for Healthy Kids\)](#)

[Serving Up My Plate: A Yummy Curriculum \(United States Department of Agriculture\)](#)

[Produce for Better Health Foundation](#)

[Harvest of the Month](#)

[Food Images \(Dairy Council of California\)](#)

[My Plate Food Group Servings and Daily Amounts \(ENGLISH\) \(Nourish Interactive\)](#)

[Fruit and Vegetable Fact Sheets \(University of Nebraska - Lincoln\)](#)

[Food Smarts: Reading about Eating and Moving \(United States Department of Agriculture\)](#)

[Nutrition Education and Promotion Tip Sheet \(SPANISH\) \(Action for Healthy Kids\)](#)

[MyPlate E-books \(United States Department of Agriculture\)](#)

[Whole Grains Council](#)

[Fruits and Veggies More Matters](#)

[5-4-3-2-1-Go! \(Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children\)](#)

[My Plate Food Group Servings and Daily Amounts \(SPANISH\) \(Nourish Interactive\)](#)

[Healthy Food Heritages: Investigating Nutrition Across Cultures \(United States Department of Agriculture\)](#)

[Nibbles for Health \(United States Department of Agriculture\)](#)

[Create a Classroom the Moves! \(Ohio Department of Education\)](#)

[Chefs Move to Schools \(Chefs Move to Schools\)](#)

[Go, Slow, Whoa](#)

[Go, Slow, Whoa - Flash Cards](#)

[Go, Slow, Whoa - Easy Read Chart](#)

[Go, Slow, Whoa - Poster](#)

[MyPlate eBooks](#)

## Related Activities

### Healthy Cooking Club

Cooking with kids is a great way to educate them about good nutrition, what's in season, planning and preparing meals, and reading food labels.

### Host a Taste Test

Expose your students to a variety of healthy food items so they'll eat better!

### Nutrition Promotion

Take a look around your school building. How does your school promote good nutrition? Nutrition promotion can take place across the school, formally and informally, inside and outside of the classroom

### Rethink Your Drink

A Rethink Your Drink campaign is a great way to teach kids about the amount of sugar that can be found in commonly consumed beverages.

— in the cafeteria, in the hallway and  
at school events.