

## CREATE MYPLATE? HOW GREAT!

### Theme: Me and My Choices

**Overview:** In this lesson, students will learn about MyPlate and the different food groups they should eat each day. They will work together to make a giant version of MyPlate and draw pictures of foods that could be placed in each section of the plate. They then will play a game where they sort models or pictures of foods into the appropriate groups on their giant plate.

### Vocabulary:

- Energy: What we need to move, work and play. Some activities require more energy than others.
- MyPlate: A way to help us remember what to put on our plate each day.

### Activity 1: A Great Plate

**Type of Activity:** Energy to Read

**Domain:** Cognitive, Social Emotional

### Students will:

- Learn about the five food groups.
- Learn that eating a balance of all of the groups can help them grow and give them energy to learn and play.

### Materials:

- Paper plate
- Scissors
- Picture of MyPlate:  
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/HealthyEatingForPreschoolers-MiniPoster.pdf>
- Pictures of foods from different food groups (optional)

**Time Frame:** 20-30 minutes

### Directions:

1. Hold up a paper plate and ask students to tell you what they see. Then, ask students to imagine that the plate is magical and it can tell them what they should eat each day. What do they think the plate would tell them? You may want to model one or two possible answers. Allow each student to share one thing the magic plate might say about what they should eat each day.

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2. Explain that there is actually a plate that can help them decide what to eat each day. It's called MyPlate. Explain that MyPlate is a way to help us remember the foods we should eat every day. Show students the picture of MyPlate. Ask them to describe what they see.
3. Say the name and color of each group on MyPlate. For example, the orange section of the plate reminds us to put grains on our plates. Ask students to repeat the word "grains." Explain that grains are foods like bread, cereal, crackers, and noodles. If you have pictures of these foods, it would be helpful to show them as visual cues. Continue the discussion with each food group.
4. Then, show pictures or say the names of some common kid-friendly foods and beverages and ask student volunteers to point to their food groups on MyPlate. Ex: apples=fruit; carrots= vegetables; cereal= grains; turkey= proteins; and milk= dairy. Ideally, these pictures will be representative of the cultures of the children.  
**Optional enrichment:** Encourage students to say the names of their favorite foods and then point to their place on MyPlate. Note: Younger students may only be able to learn one or two food groups at a time.
5. Share with students that their real plates should have different foods from all of the food groups every day. This will help them grow and give them lots of energy to play.

## **Activity 2: Create the Plate**

**Type of Activity:** Energy to Create

**Domain:** Cognitive, Social Emotional, Physical

**Students will:**

- Create and illustrate a large model of the MyPlate graphic.
- Sort models or pictures of foods into the correct places on MyPlate.

**Materials:**

- Large sheet of butcher paper
- Crayons or markers
- Scissors
- Picture of MyPlate:  
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/HealthyEatingForPreschoolers-MiniPoster.pdf>
- Pictures of different foods (from magazines or labels) glued to index cards
- Models of different foods (optional)

**Time Frame:** 20-30 minutes

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## Directions:

1. Once again, show students the graphic or picture of MyPlate. Point out how fruits and vegetables make up one side of the plate. Ask which section is a little bigger (vegetables). That means you should eat just a little more vegetables each day than fruits.
2. Then, show students how grains and proteins make up the other side of the plate. Ask which part of this side of the plate is a little bigger (Answer: grains). That means you should eat just a little more grains than protein. Finally, show them the circle of dairy on the side of the plate to represent a glass of milk. In addition to milk, dairy can also be represented on the plate with foods like cheese and yogurt. If you have models of foods available, you can show students what it means to have more vegetables than fruits or more grains than proteins.
3. Put out the large sheet of butcher paper, markers and crayons. Tell students they are going to help you make a giant MyPlate to hang in the classroom. Ask students what they think you should do first to make the plate. Allow students to come up with ideas. There is no one right way to make the plate, but below is a list of possible steps. Allow students to be involved in helping to make the plate as much as is appropriate for their developmental level:
  - Make a big circle.
  - Cut it out.
  - Draw a line down the middle of circle.
  - Draw two lines from the middle line to the outside circle, making one bigger and one smaller section on each side.
  - Color the top left (smaller) section red. Write the word “fruits” in that section.
  - Color the bottom left (bigger) section green. Write the word “vegetables” in that section.
  - Color the top right (bigger) section orange. Write the word “grains” in that section.
  - Color the bottom right (smaller) section purple. Write the word “protein” in that section.
  - Draw a small circle at the outside right of the circle and color it blue. Write the word “dairy” in that section.
4. Once the plate is complete, say the names of each food group again.
5. Distribute a crayon to each student and ask them to think of a food or drink they like. As a class, try to identify where their food would be placed on MyPlate. Once you come up with the correct answer, invite each student to draw a picture of their food or drink on the plate.
6. Then tell students that they are going to use their giant plate for a fun game!
7. Give each student one of the index cards with a picture of a food on it.
8. One at a time, ask each student to say the name of the food on his or her picture. Then let students place their index cards in the part of MyPlate where they think it goes. If they need help, they can say so. When they are finished, ask other students if they

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agree or disagree with the placement and why. Note: Some foods (like pizza) may belong to more than one group.

9. Give each student several opportunities to play the game.
10. Finally, hang the plate in a prominent place in the room. As you eat snack or lunch each day, encourage students to point to the different food groups that they are eating and to give a loud cheer on the days that all groups are named.

## Modifications:

### Pump It Up For Older Students

- Let older students make their own personal plates that they can take home to remind them to eat a balance of different foods at every meal.
- Keep track of what foods the class has eaten during snack time and at lunch. Then chart or graph the foods by food groups.

### Cool It Down For Younger Students

- Before class, cut the different food group sections for the giant plate and let students place the pieces in the appropriate spot on the plate.

## NAEYC Standards Alignment

- **2.A.10** The curriculum guides teachers to incorporate content, concepts, and activities that foster social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development and integrate key areas of content including literacy, mathematics, science, technology, creative expression and the arts, health and safety, and social studies.
- **2.K.01** Children are provided varied opportunities and materials that encourage good health practices such as serving and feeding themselves, rest, good nutrition, exercise, hand washing, and tooth brushing.
- **2.J.06** Children are provided many and varied open-ended opportunities and materials to express themselves creatively through (d) two- and three-dimensional art.
- **2.F.03** Children are provided varied opportunities and materials to categorize by one or two attributes such as shape, size, and color.

## Be Smart from the Start at Home!

Preschool-aged children are not expected to understand calories or how their bodies use energy, but they can begin to learn foundational information to help them make healthy decisions around diet and exercise. The Smart from the Start lessons are a set of flexible activities designed to introduce and reinforce these concepts, and we encourage you to integrate the rest of the activities in Me and My Choices and Give it a Try! into your existing curriculum. Throughout these activities, children will learn about energy they need to work and play; to make healthy choices about what they eat and drink from a variety of food groups; and how to move throughout the day with fun activities that help keep their hearts strong and healthy.

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As your students progress to elementary school, the Healthy Decisions, Healthy Habits Together Counts™ curriculum can help them focus on more rigorous concepts related to self-esteem, decision-making, healthy nutrition and regular physical activity.

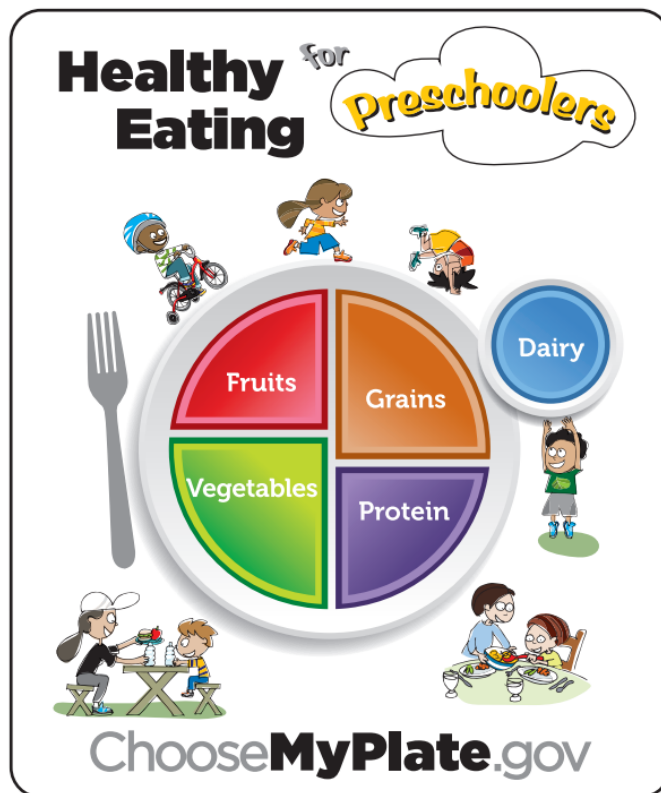
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## Energy at Home

This week, your child learned about MyPlate. A picture of MyPlate is included below. MyPlate is an easy way to help us remember to eat foods from different food groups each day. We need to eat fruits, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy each day. Eating a balance of different foods can help give kids energy to learn and play. It can also help them lead an active, healthy lifestyle.

Ask your child to tell you what he or she learned about each food group. Then hang your own version of MyPlate or a list of the food groups on your refrigerator. Each time your child eats a different food group, encourage him or her to make a line next to the appropriate group. At the end of each day or week, count the lines and see how balanced your child's diet is or which food groups he or she needs to eat a little more!



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