

GOING ON A PICNIC

Theme: Me and My Choices

Overview: In this series of activities, students will explore the concept of a balanced diet by going on an imaginary picnic. In the first activity, they will choose the foods they would like to pack for their picnic and sing a song about them. In the second activity, they will select foods of different colors and different food groups for some imaginary friends. In the third activity, they will integrate movement as they grab foods and beverages from different food groups from under their “picnic blanket.”

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: Munch, Munch, Munch

Type of Activity: Energy to Discover, Energy to Perform

Domain: Cognitive, Language, Social Emotional

Students will:

- Describe their experiences with picnics.
- Select foods and beverages they would like to take on an imaginary picnic.
- Name the foods and beverages they have selected.

Materials:

- Sheet or blanket
- Cut-out pictures of foods and beverages from magazines and newspaper circulars
- Picnic basket or brown paper bag

Time Frame: 20-30 minutes

Directions:

1. Ask students if they have ever gone on a picnic. Invite those who have to describe what they remember. Ask: Was the picnic inside or outside? What did they do? What did they eat or drink? Did they have fun?
2. Explain that today the class will be going on a pretend picnic! And they will get to make choices about what they want to pack.

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3. Distribute two food or beverage pictures to each student. Ask them to choose which one they would like to pack for the picnic. They can return the pictures they did not choose to you.
4. Invite students to sit on a blanket or sheet, possibly outside, and tell them they are going to see what they chose to pack for their picnic lunch.
5. Ask students to recite the following rhyme: *Going on a picnic, Gotta pack a lunch, What should we bring to munch, munch, munch?*
6. Go around the circle and ask students to share the food or beverage they chose to pack. Ask students to answer, *"I'm going on a picnic. Gotta pack a lunch. Here's what I chose to munch, munch, munch."* Ask them to name the food or beverage and say whether they have ever tried it. Then, ask them to place the picture of the food or beverage in the picnic basket or bag.
7. When all of the students have finished, unpack the basket or bag and lay the pictures in the middle of the blanket. Ask students to look at what they have chosen for their picnic. Do they think a picnic would be more fun with just one food or lots of different foods? Explain that it's fun and can be healthier to eat lots of different types of food each day. That's called balance!

Activity 2: Balance our Picnic Blanket!

Type of Activity: Energy to Discover

Domain: Cognitive, Social Emotional

Students will:

- Sort foods for their picnic by their foods groups and colors.

Materials:

- Sheet or blanket
- Pictures of foods and beverages, cut from magazines and newspaper circulars
- Paper plates
- Markers or crayons
- Picture of MyPlate:
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/HealthyEatingForPreschoolers-MiniPoster.pdf>

Time Frame: 20-30 minutes

Directions:

1. Have students place all of the foods from the picnic basket or bag in the center of their picnic blanket.

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2. Tell students that a very friendly bear has decided to join their picnic. His name is Rainbow Bear. He loves to eat foods of different colors! If you have a stuffed animal or picture of a bear, you can show it to students.
3. Hold up a paper plate and write the name “Rainbow Bear” on it. Explain that this will be Rainbow Bear’s plate for the picnic! Their job is to fill his plate with foods of different colors.
4. Ask a student volunteer to pick a color for Rainbow Bear’s plate. Then, ask another student to find a food of that color in the group of pictures on the blanket and put it on the plate. If there is not a food or beverage of that color, invite students to draw a picture of a food of that color or to pick a different color.
5. Ask a different student to choose a new color. Then, ask another student to find a food or beverage of that color from the pictures and put it on the plate. Continue until you have at least four or five foods or beverages on the plate.
6. Review the foods for Rainbow Bear’s picnic plate.
Optional enrichment: Older students can create their own plates for Rainbow Bear instead of one class plate.
7. Ask students to place all of the pictures back in the center of the blanket.
8. Then, tell students that a friendly frog will also be joining them for their picnic. His name is Food Group Frog. Food Group Frog likes to eat foods from all of the different food groups. If you have a stuffed animal or picture of a frog, show it to students.
9. Show students the picture of MyPlate. If they are not familiar with MyPlate, explain that it is a picture that shows them there is a place on their plate for all different types of foods and drinks. They should have fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy on their plates or in their cups!
10. Hold up a second paper plate and write “Food Group Frog” on it. Explain that they will need to decide what foods to give Food Group Frog at the picnic so that he has one from each food group.
11. Start with fruits. Ask a student volunteer to pick a picture that shows a food or beverage from the fruit group. Before putting it on the plate, ask the other student if they agree that it is a fruit. If so, allow the student to put the fruit on Food Group Frog’s plate. Continue the process with each food group.
12. Review the foods and beverages on Food Group Frog’s plate.

Activity 3: Picnic Moves

Type of Activity: Energy to Move, Energy to Discover

Domain: Physical

Students will:

- Play a game to help them identify foods from different colors and food groups.

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Materials:

- Sheet or blanket
- Pictures of foods and beverages, cut from magazines and newspaper circulars

Time Frame: 10-20 minutes

Directions:

1. Place the pictures of the foods and beverages on the rug or place where students sit for circle time. Cover them with the sheet or blanket so students cannot see them.
2. Then, explain to students that they are going to play a fun game to help them choose foods for the picnic.
3. Ask each student to stand in a circle around the blanket. The class will repeat the rhyme from Activity 1. But this time you will also ask a specific student to find a food with a certain color or food group. Then, all students will count to three and lift the sheet or blanket as if it's a parachute. The selected student will run under the sheet or blanket when it's lifted and try to find a picture that matches the description. Once they find it, they will take the picture and rejoin the circle. Here are two examples:

Going on a picnic.

Gotta pack a lunch.

What can we find to munch, munch, munch?

Sara, can you find a fruit to munch, munch, munch?

Going on a picnic.

Gotta pack a lunch.

What can we find to munch, munch, munch?

Jose', can you find a red food to munch, munch, munch?

4. Repeat the game until each student has had a chance to find a picture or until all of the pictures have been removed from the blanket.

Modifications:

Pump It Up for Older Students

- Older students can make a placemat for their picnic that shows a balance of foods from different food groups or colors.
- Older students can challenge each other in Activity 3 by coming up with their own food groups and color words for the game.

Cool It Down for Younger Students

- For younger students, it may be easier to use food models or to cut out the pictures of foods ahead of time to make sure there is a balance of different colors and different food groups represented.

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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.C.04** Children have varied opportunities and are provided equipment to engage in large motor experiences that stimulate a variety of skills; enhance sensory-motor integration; develop controlled movement; enable children with varying abilities to have large-motor experiences similar to those of their peers; range from familiar to new and challenging; help them learn physical games with rules and structure.
- **2.F.03** Children are provided varied opportunities and materials to categorize by one or two attributes such as shape, size, and color.
- **2.J.06** Children are provided many and varied open-ended opportunities and materials to express themselves creatively through (a) music.
- **2.L.01** Children are provided varied learning opportunities that foster positive identity and an emerging sense of self and others.

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.

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, the class went on an imaginary picnic where they had to pack a balance of different types of foods and beverages. They then had to choose foods of all different colors for Rainbow Bear to eat and foods from different food groups for Food Group Frog to eat!

Eating a balance of different types of foods from the five foods groups can help contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Different types of foods provide different nutrients for children and adults. At your next family meal, ask your child to point out the different colors and food groups on their plate. See if they can point out a fruit, vegetable, protein, grain, and dairy! The more balance they have, the better!