



## Kids Cart Smart Food Choices At Home, Shopping, and Eating Out

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### Objectives

- To recognize, name, and select a variety of foods from the Food Guide Pyramid daily.
- To identify foods by nutrient category.
- To select nutritious food in the grocery.
- To identify foods high in fat, sugar, and sodium.

In this series, the developmental skills in the preschool years are divided into three general levels:

2-3 years = naming & identifying

3-5 years = sorting & classifying

4-6 years = ordering, sequencing & comprehension

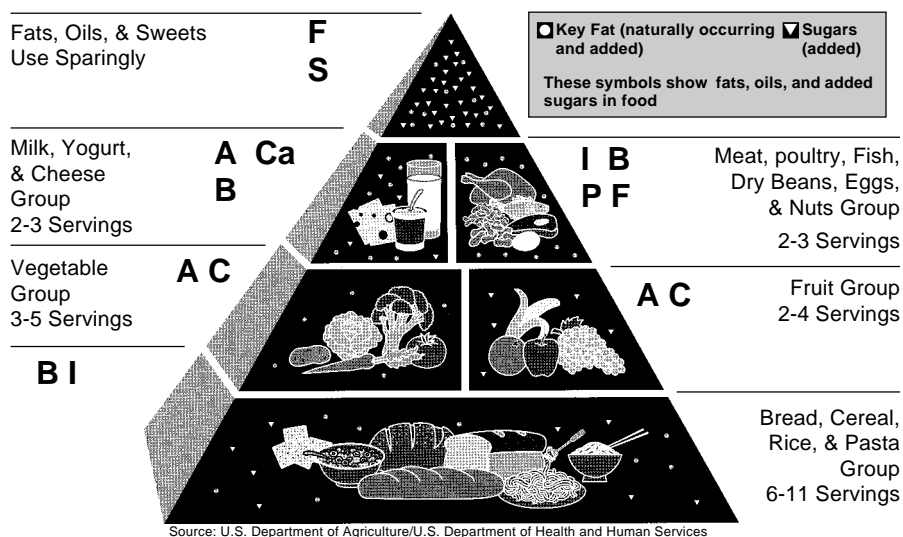
▲ = suggested activities and questions

of foods from the five groups and use fats/oils/sweets sparingly.

No one food contains all nutrients needed for growth and health. Food guides such as the Food Guide Pyramid translate the latest scientific standards into food choices. Current guidelines are to eat a variety

Nutrients can be taught to young children in a variety of ways using the nutrient alphabet, symbols, pictures, and actual food. Make alphabet labels. Have children name symbols, classify nutrients, anognize

## Food Guide Pyramid A Guide to Daily Food Choices



### Nutrient Symbols

Vitamin A	<b>A</b>
Vitamin B	<b>B</b>
Vitamin C	<b>C</b>
Iron	<b>I</b>
Calcium	<b>Ca</b>
Protein	<b>P</b>
Fat	<b>F</b>
Sweets	<b>S</b>

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## Food Identification (Grocery—TV—Eating Out)

### 3 years. Naming and Identifying Game.

- ▲ Name foods by color, shape, texture, and taste.

#### Colors

red: beets  
yellow: corn  
green: spinach  
white: potato

#### Shapes

square: bread  
pear: pear  
round: apple, orange  
long: greenbeans

#### Textures

rough: orange  
soft: mashed potatoes  
smooth: banana  
hard: nuts, carrot

#### Taste

sweet: sugar  
sour: lemon  
bitter: tea  
salty: salt

### 3-5 years. Classify basic foods by their color, shape, and texture (feel).

- ▲ Foods can be grouped in many ways. Try grouping food models, cutouts, or real foods with the children: by food groups, nutrients, food for guests, for holidays, for baby, or for sickness.
- ▲ Count 5 fruits and vegetables you ate today.

### 3-6 years. Comprehension game: guess foods by color, shapes, and feel.

- ▲ What food is white inside and brown outside?
- ▲ What fruit is round and red?
- ▲ I see something on your plate that is green. What is it?  
What else do you see that is green?
- ▲ Name green foods.
- ▲ What food group does the food belong in? or  
What foods are in the milk group?
- ▲ Make a mystery box: ask children to feel inside. What is the shape?  
How does it feel?  
What is the food?

### 4-6 years. Classify foods by nutrients.

Classify foods and nutrients that work with protein to build and keep the body healthy, that build bones and teeth (calcium); blood (iron); skin/eyes, (Vitamin A/B carotene and Vitamin C). (See Virginia Cooperative Extension Publication 348-371, *Iron Check List and Calcium Check List*).

#### Protein

Foods containing **protein** are found in 3 of the 5 Food Guide Pyramid groups.

- ▲ Name 1 **protein** food you eat each day.

#### Calcium

Everyone (children, parents, grandparents) needs 2 **calcium** foods every day.

- ▲ What foods are high in **calcium**?  
milk            cheese  
yogurt        ice cream
- ▲ What **calcium** foods do you eat daily at meals?  
at snacks?
- ▲ **Count 5 calcium** foods you ate today.
- ▲ Review the day's menu for **calcium** foods.

#### Iron

Everyone needs **iron** foods each day.

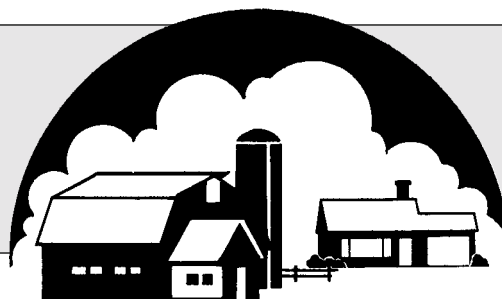
- ▲ What **iron** foods do you eat each day?  
vegetables        breads  
cereals            meats
- ▲ **Count** how many **iron** foods you eat daily.  
-weekly.

#### Vitamin A/Beta carotene & Vitamin C

**Beta carotene**, a form of **vitamin A**, is found in dark green (spinach, broccoli, collards; mustard, turnip, or beet greens) and orange fruits and vegetables (carrots, cantaloupe, apricots, sweet potatoes). **Vitamin C** foods are citrus, cabbage, greens, melons, tomatoes, and berries.

- ▲ Can you name **vitamin A/C** foods you eat each day?
- ▲ Plan a food tasting, cutting, and peeling activity using specific nutrients.

**Creative play—prop box—farmer**  
fruits, vegetables; tools (shovel, rake,  
hoe); hat, overalls; watering can; tractor  
(tricycle, wagon)



## Food Shopping

### 3 years. Coin exchange.

- ▲ Give the child large tokens or large buttons to spend in a dramatic play grocery store; or make **Food Group Bucks** to denote food groups. Beginning developmental levels are trading 1 Food Group Buck or token or coin for 1 item; more advanced levels use elementary concepts of play money and making change (see Virginia Cooperative Extension Publication 348-077, *Kids, Food, and Money*).
- ▲ Who pays for food?
- ▲ Where do you get money to pay for food?

### 3-5 years. Matching cue cards.

- ▲ In the grocery store or in the dramatic play area, give children food pictures for cue card shopping lists. When the first item is chosen, give the child another cue (picture). Make magnet holders or refrigerator pockets in which to keep shopping “cue” cards.
- ▲ What food is this picture? Use your cue card to find this food in the grocery store.

### 3-5 years. Name foods in the grocery store (or grocery play area).

- ▲ Children can read labels for colors and shape of pictures, logos, and package shapes.
- ▲ What fresh foods do you see?
- ▲ Name the food in the package.
- ▲ How do you know what is in the package?

### 3-5 years. Name foods on TV.

- ▲ Tape clips of TV ads to view with children. (See Virginia Cooperative Extension Publication 348-008, *Kids, Food, and Television*).
- ▲ What foods are advertised on TV?
- ▲ What nutrients are in these foods?
- ▲ What foods do you see?

### 4-6 years. Classify TV messages.

- ▲ Use TV clips to talk about feelings provoked by ads.
- ▲ What do TV messages mean to you?
- ▲ What people are in the TV message?
- ▲ What are they doing?
- ▲ What messages or meanings are for taste? for health? for fun?

### Creative play—grocery store

A play store provides the chance for children to act out their ideas, model family practices, and question ways of doing things as well as learning label and picture matching, comparing package sizes, developing pre-reading skills and interacting socially.

Involve families in collecting props:

empty food containers,

2-D pictures

**or**

3-D forms of fruits and vegetables

paper bags

uniforms

vests

cash register

grocery cart or wagon

play money (buttons, poker chips, colored paper)

cardboard cartons for shelves



## Rewards

### 4-6 years. Comprehension: what about rewards?

- ▲ Are rewards given for special behavior? for being the best?
- ▲ Should you be rewarded for helping in the kitchen? for cleaning your plate?
- ▲ What are some rewards which are given? money? toys? sweets (candy)? fats (cookies)?
- ▲ What other ways can you say “thank you” for a good job?

## Testing for Fat, Sugar, and Salt

Everyone needs some fat every day. But too much fat adds extra calories for weight or for heart problems.

### 3 years. Name fats, sweets, and salty foods.

- ▲ Name fats you eat (spreads, salad dressings).
- ▲ Name sweets you eat (table sugar, jam/jelly, candy, etc.).
- ▲ Name salty foods you eat.

### 3-5 years. Classification: taste-test differences.

- ▲ Learn how to distinguish the flavor and feel of fat, sugar, and sodium. Taste-test and compare snack chips, crackers, and dip. Sodium in products disguises sugar so it is harder to detect sweet and salty taste.
- ▲ Use pictures or real foods to classify foods by fat, sugar, and salt taste.
- ▲ How can you tell if a food contains. . .  
**sugar?**  
cereal with/without sugar  
seasoning substitutes  
cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg

#### **sodium?**

packaged, canned foods  
seasoning substitute  
lemon

#### **fat?**

skim/regular milk  
low-high fat cheese  
low-high fat hotdogs

### 4-6 years. Comprehension: the fat ring test.

- ▲ Can you see fat on paper?  
on plate?  
on pans?
- ▲ Put a drop of fat on a piece of brown paper bag or paper towel; put a drop of water next to it. Dry the towel near heat from a radiator or sunny window. The water drop disappears. The fat ring does not go away. Look for fat rings on plates or in pans.



- ▲ Test foods in the pyramid and in different forms to discover which foods leave fat rings.  
apple slice/salad  
rolls  
egg white/yolk  
potato slice/chip/fries  
mayonnaise  
cake  
crackers  
croissants  
fried/baked food  
lemon juice  
unsweetened chocolate  
bread  
biscuit  
popcorn with/without butter  
sour cream  
cream cheese  
cheese with/without fat

### Creative play—prop box—consumer specialist/food buyer

telephone	food posters and charts
foods to test or food models	pencils
nutrition pamphlets	forms
books about nutrition	

