



What did you eat today?

Curriculum Idea: We need to eat a balanced diet of the right kinds of food to stay healthy, have energy, and help us grow. Other animals also have to eat certain kinds of foods that are right for their bodies.

Related Episodes: Ick Alone, Sappy Monkey, Food and Plenty of It

Age Range: 5-6

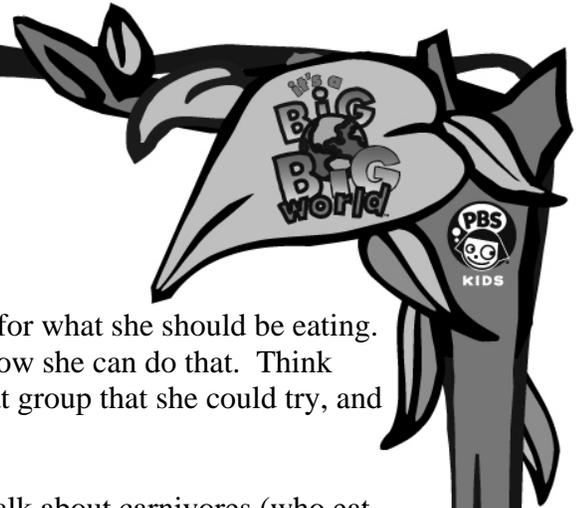
Subject: Health & Nutrition

Skills: Classify, Sort, Label, Plan, Compare, Differentiate

Materials: paper, crayons/markers/pencils, copy of USDA “My Pyramid for Kids” food pyramid (available at <http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index.html>)

Directions: Review the USDA food pyramid (<http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index.html>) with your child. Talk about the idea of different kinds of food and describe the five main food groups. Help her make a list or draw pictures of all of the different kinds of food she ate yesterday or today. Then, go through each item and ask her what food group it belongs to. Help her think through items that may be part of more than one food group, such as a ham and cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread. Once she has classified each thing she ate, ask her to count how many servings of each food group she consumed. Compare that to the USDA recommended daily amounts. Ask her which food groups she ate the right amounts of and which she needed more or less of.

Talk About It: Talk about the different vitamins and minerals she gets from different foods and why it is important to eat food from all of the groups every day. For example, if she ate only bread all day, she wouldn't feel very well because she would be missing important vitamins, minerals, and protein that she gets from the other food groups. She needs fruits and vegetables to give her energy and help her have healthy skin and eyes, she needs calcium to have strong bones and teeth, and protein to help her muscles grow. For information on the vitamins and minerals found in the food groups, go to <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/index.html> and click on the “Health benefits and nutrients” link in each of the groups.



Talk about how her meals compared with the recommendations for what she should be eating. If she needs to be eating more from a certain group, talk about how she can do that. Think about foods from that group that she likes or new foods from that group that she could try, and make a plan for adding those to her diet.

Take It Further: Learn more about animals' different diets. Talk about carnivores (who eat only meat), herbivores (who eat only plants), and omnivores (which eat both). Look in your neighborhood for clues about what local animals are eating. Look for tracks near berry bushes and other food sources. Or put out different kinds of bird seed and see what type of birds eat which seeds.

Make a list of animals that your child is interested in and visit the library or look online to learn what they eat. Make a chart that compares their diets. Do any of them eat food that she also enjoys?