



Daily Dairy Ideas

- Try a flavored milk, such as chocolate or strawberry.
- Use a cup of yogurt as a dip for fruits and other snacks.
- Make a fruit smoothie with fruit, ice, milk, and frozen yogurt or ice cream.
- Pull string cheese into ribbons before eating.
- Choose a glass of milk instead of a soda or juice.
- Add shredded cheese to a bowl of soup or on top of a taco.
- Enjoy mini-pizza topped with cheese or a hot or cold cheese sandwich.



What you need:

1. *From Your Local Farmer to You* coloring book featuring Coco the Cow (1 for each child)
2. Copies of Coco the Cow coloring sheet (1 for each child)
3. An envelope with your school/center return address and one postage stamp for each child
4. Cover letters for each child
Note: coloring book, sheets, and cover letters can be downloaded from www.stldairycouncil.org. Or use the print masters included in this kit.

What to do

- Read *From Your Local Farmer to You* coloring book featuring Coco the Cow aloud to the children as a group (*If you have one, use a cow puppet/toy to help tell the story*). Talk about the path milk travels from farm to table. (*You can also show them SLDDC's "From Your Local Farmer to You" DVD**)
- Distribute coloring books and let children color at least one page.
- Explain that they will each send Coco on an adventure to find out about new places, other cows and animals, and what dairy foods people like to eat and drink. Remind them of the path milk traveled from Coco the Cow to the table in the coloring book.
- Have children color and cut out their Coco the Cow coloring sheet. Help children write their names on the sheets.
- Ask the children to think of a friend or relative to host Coco the Cow.
- Provide each child a return-addressed envelope, stamp, and cover letter with the due date filled in.



- Instruct them to place the cover letter and Coco the Cow in the envelope, put the stamp in the top right corner of the envelope and take it home.
- Ask parents to fill in the cover letter and address the envelope to a family member or friend, seal and mail it.
- Place a calendar on the wall to track the days until Coco returns. Each day for the next 3 weeks have a child place a sticker on the calendar.
- As the due date for the letters approaches, suggest to the children that they remind their families and friends to return Coco to the classroom.
- When all (or most) responses have been received (approximately 3 weeks after mailing), read any returned Coco the Cow responses aloud to the class.
- Discuss the different dairy foods and animals Coco discovered.
- Post all the Coco the Cows on the wall or let each child take his/her Coco home.

4. Cowabunga Cow

The goal of this activity is to increase consumption of dairy foods to meet recommendations of the USDA's MyPlate.

What you need:

- Butcher paper, markers, stickers

What to do

- Outline a large cow on the butcher paper. Name the cow "Cowabunga Cow" and hang Cowabunga Cow on the wall.
- Explain that dairy foods are made from cows' milk; they are important because they build strong teeth and bones and give us energy; children need at least three servings of dairy foods every day.
- Explain that for every dairy serving they consume at breakfast, lunch or snack they can apply one "spot" to the Cowabunga Cow using stickers or markers.

- Ask the children to name some dairy foods (e.g., milk, cheese, ice cream, yogurt). Ask which dairy foods they think they'd like most? Ask if they think they'll consume enough dairy foods to cover Cowabunga Cow with spots!
- Each day count the number of spots on Cowabunga Cow.



Additional resources:

You can download the MyPlate placemat and other graphics at www.choosemyplate.gov.

Since 1932, SLDDC has served central/southern Illinois and eastern Missouri as "The Nutrition Education People." For additional resources, including classroom programs, downloadable handouts, tip sheets and nutrition information, please contact us at www.stldairycouncil.org or (314) 835-9668.

*SLDDC's *From Your Local Farmer to You* DVD is designed to teach kids that dairy foods are fresh, local, delicious and nutritious. This 10-minute video brings the "farm to table" movement to life and is available at no cost to teachers in SLDDC's service area. Visit www.stldairycouncil.org and find "Farmer to You" under the Community Programs page to order.



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An early childhood educator's guide for promoting nutrition and fitness among preschool/kindergarten students

Growing up is hard work. Growing up healthy is even harder!

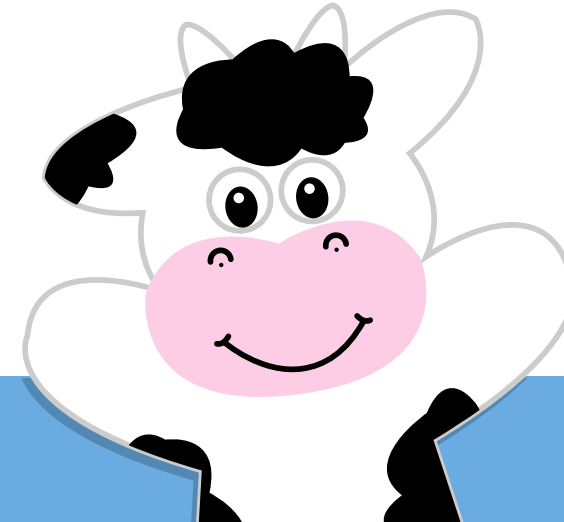
- About 30% of kids ages 4 to 8 don't get the recommended amount of calcium in their diets¹.
- Fewer than half of all children ages 2 to 8 meet the recommended dairy food intake².
- As they grow, children continue to fall short: more than 90% of preteen girls and 70% of preteen boys don't get enough calcium in their diets.

That's where *you* come in! As an early childhood educator, you hold incredible influence over the eating habits of young children—and even their parents! The eating habits developed by preschoolers and kindergarteners lay the foundation for the future. Positive messages help create good nutrition habits that last a lifetime!

St. Louis District Dairy Council (SLDDC) is your partner when it comes to nutrition education. Our program, *Healthy Me!*, is designed specifically to help early childhood educators foster good eating habits among the preschool and kindergarten set...and engage their parents and guardians at the same time. After all, adults are responsible for family food decisions and purchases, so their involvement is necessary for a successful nutrition education program. Please share the *Healthy Me!* educational program and materials with your colleagues. Although the materials are copyrighted, you have permission to photocopy as many sets as necessary for educational purposes.

¹What We Eat in America, NHANES 2001-2002 : Usual Nutrient Intakes from Food Compared to Dietary Reference Intakes; www.ars.usda.gov/foodsurvey

²National Dairy Council, unpublished data based on the National Health and Nutrition Survey (NHANES), 1999-2002



HEALTHY me!



Program Objectives

- Help early childhood educators promote adoption of healthy food choices and exercise habits to preschoolers and kindergarteners by providing age-appropriate interactive materials, strategies and tools.
- Engage families of preschoolers and kindergarteners in supporting and modeling healthy eating and exercise habits.
- Excite preschoolers and kindergarteners about the many dairy choices available.

Program Components

- Four reproducible activity masters to serve as worksheets for individual children
- This teacher's guide which includes suggestions for introducing the activities, and follow-up suggestions to enrich each lesson
- Two reproducible masters for Extended Activity 3

ACTIVITY ONE: FOODS TO GROW ON

This activity helps children sort foods into five different food groups: FRUITS, VEGETABLES, GRAINS, PROTEIN FOODS, DAIRY.

Getting Started

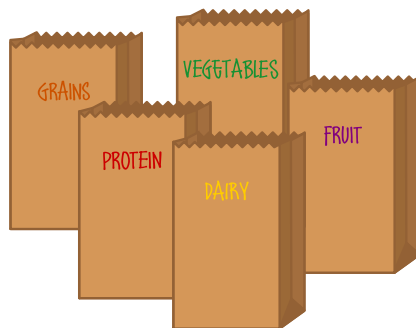
What you need:

1. Five brown paper grocery bags
2. Several catalogs, magazines and newspapers with pictures of food
3. Crayons, markers or colorful food-related decorations (such as stickers), safety scissors, glue or tape

What to do

- Write a different food group name on each of the five bags.
- Divide the students into five groups, giving each group one bag and some decorating materials.
- After all the bags are decorated, help the children cut out pictures of different types of foods from the catalogs, magazines and newspapers (*or ask the children to cut them out at home with the help of an adult and bring them to class*).
- *Idea: You can supplement the children's clippings with real or play foods or food packages.*
- Place all the pictures on a table and help the children determine the group in which each food belongs (e.g., foods in the Dairy Group are milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, etc.).

- Let children pick out different pictures and place them in the correct food group bags. (*Note: Some foods may fit in several food groups. You can leave these on the table and explain, for example, why a cheeseburger belongs in the Grains Group (roll), the Dairy Group (cheese) and the Protein Foods Group (meat).*)
- When all the pictures have been placed in their appropriate bags, pull out one picture at a time and help the children identify each food.



Using the Activity Sheet

Hand out **Activity One** (*Optional: allow the children to color the cards.*) Review the names of the five food groups with your students. Help them cut out their cards, mix them up, and turn all their cards face down. Explain the game of memory to them: the object of the game is to turn the cards over two at a time to find a matching pair. If two cards do not match, turn them face down and try again until a match is found. Students can play individually or in pairs.

ACTIVITY TWO: IN THE MOOD FOR FOOD

This activity introduces young children to the concept of variety and different food choices. It reinforces the idea of eating regular meals, especially breakfast, to give them energy to play and learn.

Getting Started

What you need:

1. Food from each food group

What to do

- If your school allows it, assign inexpensive foods for students to bring in to class, giving parents plenty of notice to purchase the foods.
- Or create a snack list and ask your school's foodservice director to supply one snack to represent each of the food groups for this lesson.
- *Note: These snacks collectively should encompass all five food groups, such as crackers and cheese, celery with peanut butter, apple or pear slices, carrot sticks, or mozzarella string cheese, hard cooked eggs, milk and 100% juice.*

Using the Activity Sheet

Hand out **Activity Two** featuring a placemat with a plate, fork, knife, spoon, napkin and glass. (*Optional: allow the children to color the place setting.*) Help students cut out the food items on the activity sheet. The foods represent breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack foods. Ask them to pick their favorite foods and create a meal they would like to eat.



Students can paste their selections on their plates and color those foods. Help them write their names on their placemat for display in the classroom. To extend this activity, teach students about the proper placement of the fork, knife, spoon, napkin, and glass on the placemat.



ACTIVITY THREE: COUNT ME IN FOR NUTRITION

This activity uses the five food groups to help preschoolers practice their counting skills.

Getting Started

What you need:

- Activity Three handout for each child

What to do

- Ask the children to name some foods and create a list. (*Note: If the children don't name at least one food for each of the five food groups, suggest some to fill the gaps.*)
- Help the students group the foods by color (e.g., Which foods are red? Yellow? Green? etc.)
- Discuss the different ways the foods in the list look, feel, and taste (e.g., for a banana, they may say it looks yellow, feels slippery or smooth, tastes sweet, etc.).

Using the Activity Sheet

Hand out **Activity Three**. Explain that they are to use their counting skills to count the number of food pictures in each food group, then circle the matching number. When they are finished counting, they can color the foods on the activity sheet.



ACTIVITY FOUR: DO THE DAIRY SEARCH

This activity helps young children identify foods that belong in the Dairy Group.

Getting Started

What you need:

1. Pictures or empty packages of different kinds of dairy foods (e.g., cottage cheese, sour cream, milk, yogurt, ice cream)
2. Picture or hand puppet or toy cow
3. Copies of Daily Dairy Ideas (one for each child)

What to do

- Hold up pictures (or empty packages) of different dairy foods and the cow picture, puppet or toy.
- Ask what the foods and the cow have in common.
- Explain that dairy foods are made with cows' milk. Ask students if they know why dairy foods are good for them. Look for answers such as build strong bones and teeth, give us energy, and keep us healthy.
- Give each child a copy of Daily Dairy Ideas and talk about each idea. Students can put a checkmark next to each one that they have tried, then see who has tried the most ideas.
- Remind students to take the list home to share with their parents.

Using the Activity Sheet

Hand out **Activity Four** and review the pictured foods on the activity sheet. Ask students to circle the foods they think have milk in them. Remind them that five of the foods are dairy foods.

Ask students what flavor ice cream is their favorite. Vote on the class favorite and have students color the ice cream on their activity sheet.

Answers to Activity Four

The following are dairy foods:

1. Cottage cheese
2. Yogurt
3. Milkshake
4. Swiss cheese
5. Ice cream

Extended Activities

Teaching preschoolers and kindergarteners about nutrition and exercise is as much about role modeling as it is about classroom activities. Be a good role model!

1. Get up and stretch!

Active children have more energy and better coordination. Show the children the following items and ask them to stretch their bodies into those shapes: a ball, a banana, a table, a butterfly, a tree, a star, a cat, and an octopus. Explain that stretching and moving are good exercises; stretching also helps warm up muscles and makes our bodies more limber. Ask: "Does stretching and moving make you feel good?"

What you need:

1. Paper
2. Crayons or markers

What to do

- Distribute paper and crayons or markers. Ask children to draw an example of one of the following activities:
 - Walking with friends, family members, or a pet

- Riding a bike
- Playing outdoor games, such as tag
- Jumping rope
- Roller skating or roller blading
- Let the children take turns sharing their pictures with the others.

2. Community Helpers Theme Day

Invite health professionals from your school or community—perhaps a parent—(e.g., school nurse or foodservice director, a registered dietitian, dentist, doctor, etc.) to your class to discuss the importance of eating healthy foods for strong bones and teeth. You can even plan a theme day for parents, too. After all, parents are the primary role models in establishing healthy eating patterns.

3. Coco the Cow

This activity asks influencers from other areas of the children's lives to share things about the dairy foods they like. It extends the idea of role modeling beyond the classroom and immediate family and engages others in the children's lives.

