

Big Ideas:

- A You can find healthy food in a garden.**
- B Healthy food gives our bodies what they need to grow and stay healthy.**
- C Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains should be a large part of what we eat.**
- D Cooking and preparing our own meals is fun and healthy.**

Expanded Content:

E Balanced plate

1. About $\frac{1}{2}$ our plate should be fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are filled with vitamins and minerals, and help protect us from illness.
2. About $\frac{1}{4}$ of our plate should be foods that are rich in protein. Proteins are building blocks for cells. Foods with protein help our bodies build and repair muscles and bones and give us lasting energy.
3. About $\frac{1}{4}$ of our plate should be grains. These foods give us lots of available energy. Whole grains are heart-healthy and help us regulate the digestive system.

F Healthy Eating Habits

1. *Whole foods* are foods that come straight from plants and animals. They are often nutrient-dense (packed with healthy vitamins and minerals).
2. Herbs can help us enjoy vegetables and whole grains by adding some vitamins and minerals and a lot of great flavor.
3. Eating food of many colors ensures you will receive a broad range of vitamins and minerals.

G Processed Foods

1. *Processed foods* have been changed from their natural state, often including unhealthy amounts of added sugars and fats. These foods are often high in calories and include more energy than our bodies need.
2. Processed foods can have “empty calories” that will give us energy, but they won’t keep us healthy.
3. Some foods are “everyday foods” and some are “once in a while foods.” Sugary and high-fat food should be enjoyed in moderation.

H Healthy food gives us energy and keeps us healthy to run and play. We should balance the energy we take in through food with time spent outdoors, being active.

I Seeds

1. Seeds provide energy because they are the food source for germinating plants before sunlight.
2. Some seeds (wheat, barley) provide more carbohydrates (energy sources).
3. Others seeds (sunflower, legumes) provide more protein and/or fat.

Garden elements and activities:

Garden element or activity	Description	Age-level appropriate content suggestions			
			K-2	3-5	6-8
Identify, harvest and taste local produce	When possible, stop to taste samples. Harvest and wash an ingredient for the final snack, reinforcing its unique nutritional benefits.	A, C	A, C	A, C	A, C
Herb garden tour	Taste, smell and feel the herbs. Discuss their unique flavors and uses.	A	F2	F2	F2
Poptart Garden	Have students guess what percent of Strawberry Poptarts are real strawberries (only 2%). Discuss poptart alternatives, such as eating corn, whole strawberries, etc.	G1	G	G	G
My Plate Garden	Identify and harvest, as available, from the My Plate Garden. Use the visual reminder to discuss the major food groups, their benefits, and optimal proportions.	C, E1	C, E	C, E	C, E
Food preparation and eating together	Reinforce the source of the ingredients. Count the colors, discuss how much the foods are processed, and identify where they	D	D	D	D

	<p>belong on My Plate. Identify the food groups our snack is missing and what we could add to include this food group.</p>				
Sugary drinks demonstration	<p>This activity is best for older students. Set up a table with examples of different sugary beverages, a bag of table sugar, and measuring spoons or scales. Review how to read a nutrition label and have students work in small groups to measure and record the grams of sugar for each beverage.</p>	N/A	N/A	G	G
Honey tasting	<p>Describe basic habits of bees and how they produce a very sugary food that should be enjoyed in moderation (bees and flowers work so hard to produce a very small amount of honey), that provides us energy to move and grow.</p>	G3	G3	G3	G3
Sensory garden	<p>Use sensory engagement with cotton and sunflowers as a jumping off point for discussing the role of seeds in our diet.</p>		I, E3	I, E3	I, E3
Sudan Grass maze	<p>Identify the seeds of the grass, explain that all grains are seeds. Explore the maze.</p>		I1, E3	I1, E3	I1, E3
Nature Explorer Classroom (NEC)	<p>Explain that healthy food gives us energy and keeps us healthy to run and play. We should balance the energy we take in through food with time spent outdoors, being active. Give young students up to 10 minutes to run and play.</p>	H	H	N/A	N/A

Materials List:

Sensory garden, bees

- Sunflower seeds
- Bowl for cotton seeds
- Honey in easy-squeeze bottle

Poptart Garden

- Pre-cut sugar cane
- Strawberry Poptarts box

Harvesting

- Pre-set harvest baskets
- Compost bucket next to washing stations

In-garden tasting station

- Small table
- Knife
- Cutting board
- Bowl of water

Sugary drink demonstration

- Large nutrition facts
- Sugary drink bottles
- Bag of sugar
- Scales or measuring spoons
- Note cards and pens

Food preparation/eating area

- Small tables
- Tablecloths
- Kid-friendly knives
- Cutting boards
- Large bowls

- Graters
- Large spoons, spatulas
- Bowls and forks for eating
- Compost bucket
- Additional ingredients, as needed

Dishwashing station

- Three large bins filled halfway with water
- Sponges
- Soap
- Amonia