

for children ages 4½–5

concept

Promote the importance of and encourage eating a variety of fruits and vegetables every day.

It's Fun to Eat Fruits and Veggies!



MATERIALS NEEDED

- MyPlate poster (see *MyPlate* lesson plan)
- *A Visit to the Market* by Peggy Sissel-Phelan, Ed.D.
- Fruit and vegetable pictures (included)
- Index cards
- Non-toxic school glue or glue sticks
- *Give Me 5 A Day!* music CD (see references)
- Shoebox with lid
- Green construction paper or spray paint
- One pair of adult scissors
- Craft sticks (5 per child)

goals

1. Children will become familiar with a variety of fruits and vegetables.
2. Children will be made aware of where to find fruits and vegetables (grocery store, fruit and vegetable stand, farmers' market, and gardens).
3. Children will be made aware of the importance of eating fruits and vegetables each day.

objectives

1. Children discuss different locations where produce can be purchased.
2. Children identify two sections of MyPlate which represent fruits and vegetables.
3. Children explain the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.

activities

1 Have the children sit in a circle on the floor. Say, "Today we will be learning about fruits and vegetables."

Point to the green section of the MyPlate poster and say, "Do you remember learning about the vegetables group of MyPlate?"

Allow the children time to answer then ask, "What are some foods that you would find in this group?"

Encourage the children as they give examples of vegetables. Point to the red section of MyPlate and say, "Do you remember learning about the fruits group of MyPlate?"

Give the children a chance to answer. Continue by saying, "Can you name some fruits that would be included in this group?"

Allow the children to answer then say, "Very good!"

2 Ask, "Where do you get fruits and vegetables from? Does your mom or dad (or aunt or grandma) buy them at the grocery store?"

Give each child a chance to answer. Continue by saying, "There are a lot of places to get healthy fruits and vegetables. Have you ever picked an orange

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off a tree or picked strawberries off vines on the ground?"

After giving each child a chance to answer, say, "There are a lot of places to get fruits and vegetables. We can buy them at the grocery store, at a fruit or vegetable stand (also called a produce stand), at a farmers' market, or we can pick them from a garden. Has anybody ever gone to a farmers' market?"

3 Read the book *A Visit to the Market*. Say, "Fruits and vegetables are full of important vitamins and minerals and give us energy to help us grow strong. They also keep you healthy so you can play games. Let's play a game about fruits and vegetables called the Garden Game!"

4 How to play the Garden Game:

A. Make copies of the fruit and vegetable pictures (included) and glue them onto index cards. Have all of the children sit in a circle. Give each child a card with a picture of a fruit or a vegetable along with the name of the fruit or vegetable written below the picture. When each child has a card, say, "Everybody look at the fruit or vegetable on the card I gave you. Does everybody know what fruit or vegetable you have? Raise your hand if you need help."

Go over each card to ensure every child understands the name of the fruit or vegetable that was handed to them.

B. After all the children know what they have, explain the game by saying, "I'm going to say the name of two fruits and vegetables. When I say the name of the fruit or vegetable on your card, then you will trade places where you are sitting as quickly as you can! Let's practice. Are you ready?"

Start the game by saying, "Apple and zucchini trade places."

Practice again by saying "Banana and strawberry trade places."

Give lots of praise and encouragement and assistance as needed!

C. After the children understand how the game is played, have fun playing and trading places! Repeat as many times as the children are interested and time allows. After all the children have had a chance to trade "fruit and vegetable" places, say, "Let's make a tossed salad! Everybody stand up and move around to toss the salad!"

SPECIAL NOTE: While playing the Garden Game, consider playing the CD, *Give Me 5 A Day!* on low in the background. Music can motivate and stimulate the senses and add enjoyment to any game.

5 **Make a shoebox garden.** Provide each child with a shoebox garden plot. Cover shoeboxes with green construction paper (or spray paint green). Pre-cut five small slits in each shoebox lid—just big enough for a craft stick to fit. Then make copies of the fruit and vegetable pictures (included) and glue them onto the top portion of the craft sticks. Place the craft sticks with the glued pictures of fruits and vegetables on the center of a table(s). Say, "Each of you may pick five fruits and vegetables for your garden."

It is good to have multiple pictures of the same fruit or vegetable in case children want to pick the same picture. Show children how to push the fruit and vegetable craft sticks through the slits in their shoebox. Instruct the children to look for these different fruits and vegetables the next time they are at the grocery store or farmers' market.

6 Say, "Let's play the *Give Me 5 A Day!* CD! This time let's move our bodies the way the singer tells us to."

All the children should stand in an open area with you and follow the instructions on how to dance to each song. You can choose to play only one song or the entire CD. Allow the children to dance freely as a form of expression.

Remember to make copies of the parent letter with the take-home activity sheet printed on the reverse side to send home with each child. The community fact sheet is also included for you to copy and display at your center or distribute as appropriate.

additional activities for either age group

Garden in a Glove

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Clear plastic gloves (1 for each child)—avoid latex gloves due to potential allergies
- Non-toxic markers for writing names on plastic gloves
- Cotton balls (5 for each glove)
- Small bowl of water
- Unsharpened pencils
- Various types of seeds (preferably lima beans, green beans, peas, pumpkin, watermelon since they germinate within a few days)

Provide each child with a clear plastic glove (found at grocery stores) with their name on it, five cotton balls, and a small bowl of water (children may share bowls of water). Give each child several (three to five) of the same seed type for each finger (a total of 15–25 seeds total). Lima beans, green beans, peas, pumpkin, watermelon are good choices due to a quick germination period (keep seed package directions for future planting needs).

- Have the children wet the cotton balls in a small bowl of water and squeeze out the excess water. Then have children drop a few seeds on top of each dampened cotton ball. Insert one cotton ball into each finger of their glove. You may need to use the end of a pencil to push the cotton ball to the very tip. Each finger should have the same seed type.
- It may help to label each glove finger with the name of a certain seed type (for example, thumbs will be labeled green beans). Tape the gloves to a window or a wall that is close to a window. Seeds will germinate in three to five days. Transplant seedlings after one and half to two weeks.
- To transplant cut off each finger of the glove just above seedling and remove cotton ball with seedling from plastic. Plant each cotton ball with seedlings in a small pot with potting soil. Follow seed package instructions for watering and sunlight. If possible plant outdoors for a small garden. Observe the plants and discuss every couple of weeks.

Grow a Sweet Potato!

MATERIALS NEEDED

- 1 sweet potato per classroom
- 4 to 8 toothpicks per classroom
- 1 clear container per classroom

Take a sweet potato and stick toothpicks around the center of the potato. Put the potato in a clear container so that the toothpicks keep the potato from sliding all the way down the container. Fill the container with water so that the bottom half of the potato is in the water. Put the container and potato in a dark room or closet until it begins to sprout. Make sure the bottom half of the potato remains submerged in the water. After the potato begins to sprout, move it to a sunny place. Continue watering it and you'll have a sweet potato vine!

Interview with Mr. or Ms. Broccoli

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *An Interview with Mr. or Ms. Broccoli* script (included)
- *Broccoli Crown* (template included)
- Green shirt (optional)

Read the *Interview with Mr. or Ms. Broccoli* script to the children. This demonstration will need two adults. Have Mr. or Ms. Broccoli wear the broccoli crown and, if possible, some type of green clothing like a shirt. You may wish to make a broccoli crown for each child.

Fruits and Vegetables



corn



grapes



avocado



strawberry



lettuce



cantaloupe



string beans

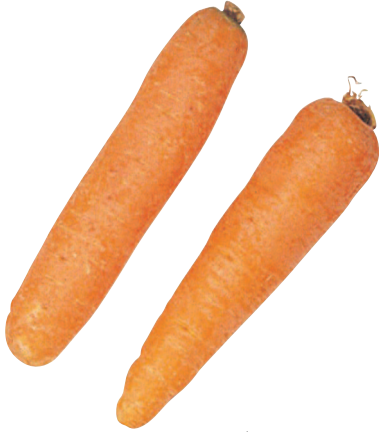


egg plant



apple

Fruits and Vegetables



carrots



mangoes



zucchini



banana



lime



mushrooms



blueberries

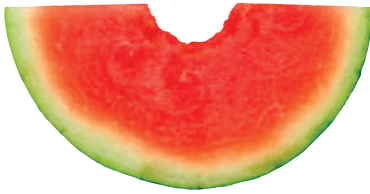


broccoli

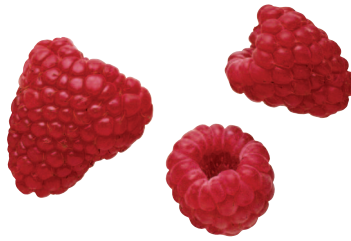


peaches

Fruits and Vegetables



watermelon



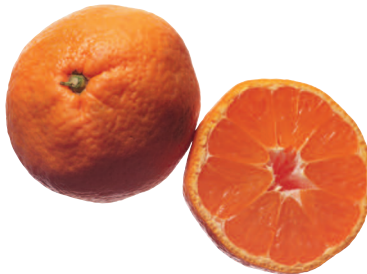
raspberries



potato



red pepper



orange



asparagus



kiwi



tomatoes



cauliflower

Script: An Interview with Mr. or Ms. Broccoli

INTERVIEWER: Boys and girls we have a special visitor with us today—Mr./Ms. Broccoli. (Introduce Mr./Ms. Broccoli to each of the children—maybe shake hands!)

INTERVIEWER: Mr./Ms. Broccoli, we understand that you are very healthy.

MR./MS. BROCCOLI: (Looking very proud) Oh, yes—that is true, I am very healthy!

INTERVIEWER: What makes you so healthy?

MR./MS. BROCCOLI: I have lots of vitamin A and vitamin C. Did you know that vitamin A helps me to have healthy eyes (point to eyes) and skin (rub arms)? Did you know that vitamin C helps me not get colds (pretend to sneeze)?

INTERVIEWER: Mr./Ms. Broccoli, please forgive me, but I've heard that some people (look worried and lower voice) don't like you.

MR./MS. BROCCOLI: (Dab eyes with a tissue. Sniffle and look tearful.) Yes, I know there are people who don't like me, and it really hurts my feelings. They could at least give broccoli a little try every now and then until they do like me.

INTERVIEWER: (Pat Mr./Ms. Broccoli on the back) Now, now Mr./Ms. Broccoli, it's OK! (try to cheer Mr./Ms. Broccoli up) Hey—how many wonderful ways are there to eat broccoli?

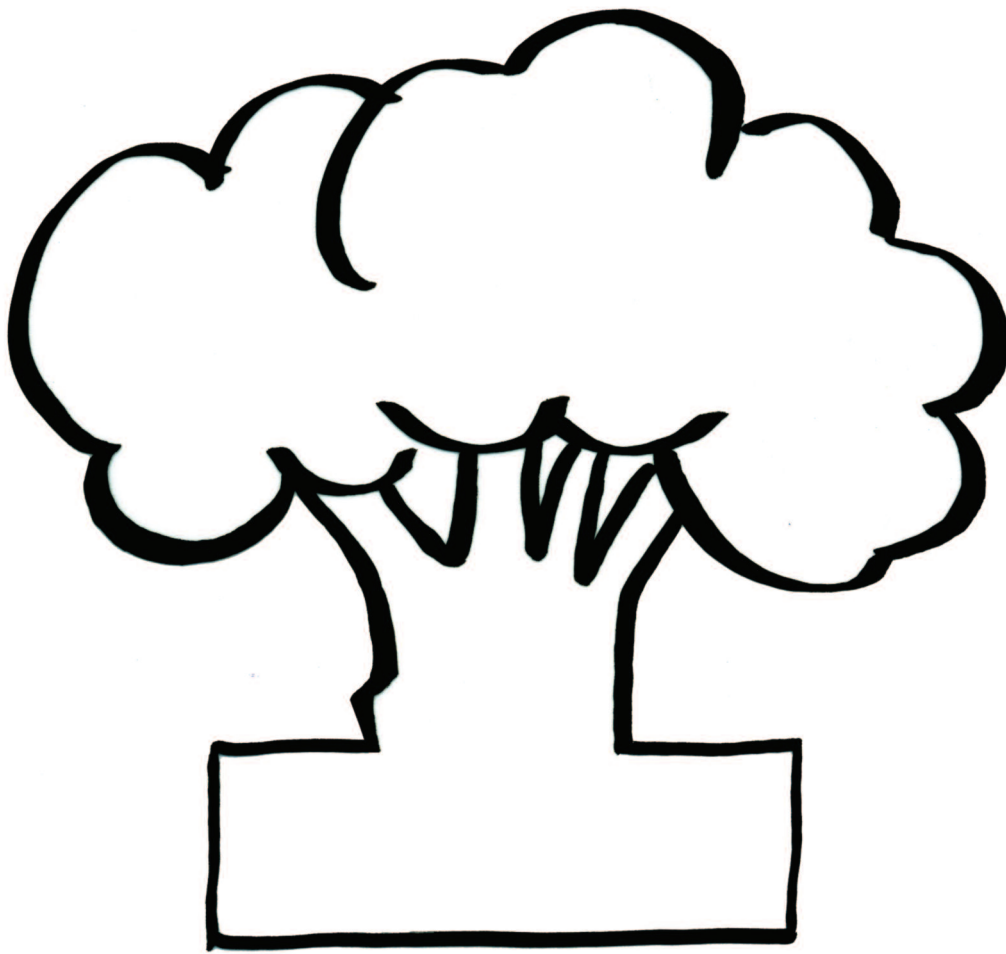
MR./MS. BROCCOLI: (Starting to feel better and cheering up) Oh, broccoli can be eaten raw with dip, or steamed with shredded cheese on top, or even cooked in a casserole with chicken. Mmmm—broccoli is very yummy!!!

INTERVIEWER: Mr./ Ms.Broccoli, we want to thank you for visiting with us today. Let's show Mr./Ms. Broccoli how much we like him/her by clapping! How else can we show him/her we like him/her? (Encourage the children to say "by tasting and eating more broccoli!!!")



Make a Broccoli Crown

Fold a piece of green construction paper into thirds (accordion or fan style). Cut out the broccoli pattern below. Trace the pattern onto the top of the accordion-folded green paper and cut it out so when it is opened it has a row of three broccoli heads. Repeat this process with another piece of green paper. Now you have two rows of three broccoli heads. Tape the two rows together to make a broccoli crown.



Dear Parent:

Your child has been learning about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables every day from our lesson, *It's Fun to Eat Fruits and Veggies!*

We have learned about a variety of fruits and vegetables and the children have been made aware of the different places to find them (grocery stores, farmers' markets). Your child has also been learning about the two sections of MyPlate, which represent fruits and vegetables.

One great way to enjoy many of Florida's vegetables and fruits is to grow them as a family. While you're together, you have a chance to explain the life cycle of a seed or discuss the types of bugs you find. Let kids take the lead while you supply the background information. It's in the storytelling that kids learn about gardening and the world. Don't know all the answers? No one does. Library trips are part of the journey or visit Kids Gardening at the National Gardening Association's website at <http://www.garden.org/home>.

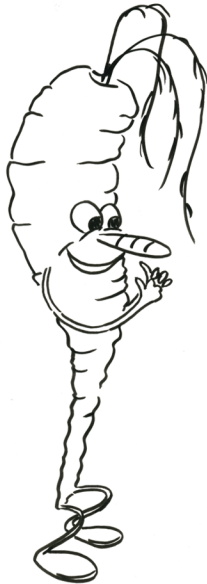
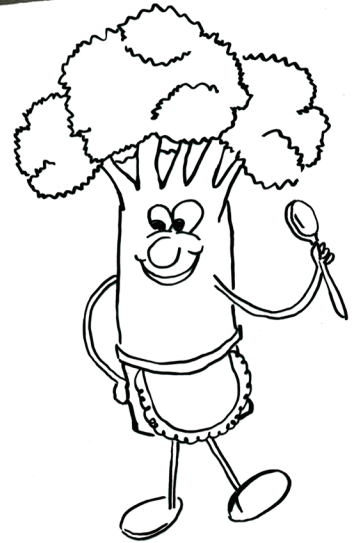
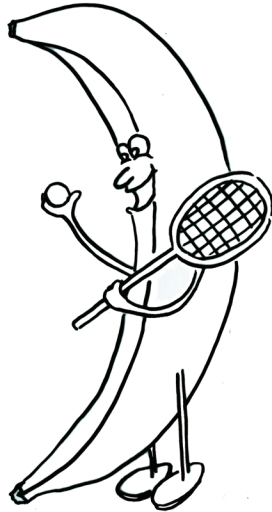
Not into gardening? Don't have the room? That's OK too; you don't need to plant your own garden to enjoy fresh vegetables and fruits all year long. We are fortunate here in Florida to have so many great varieties and choices to eat all the time. Let your kids be "produce pickers." Let them help pick fruits and veggies at the store. Tip: buy in season to save money! During the warmer months buy foods such as beans, peppers, cantaloupe, or watermelon. During the cooler months buy foods like broccoli, carrots, or cabbage.

Making sure your children enjoy different types of vegetables and fruits every day is vital to building strong bodies and encouraging healthy eating habits. Remember, children look to you as a role model, so it's important for you to eat these healthy foods as well! Check out the back of this letter to see what fruits and veggies your child has eaten this week!

Sincerely,



Circle the fruits and veggies
you have eaten **this week!**



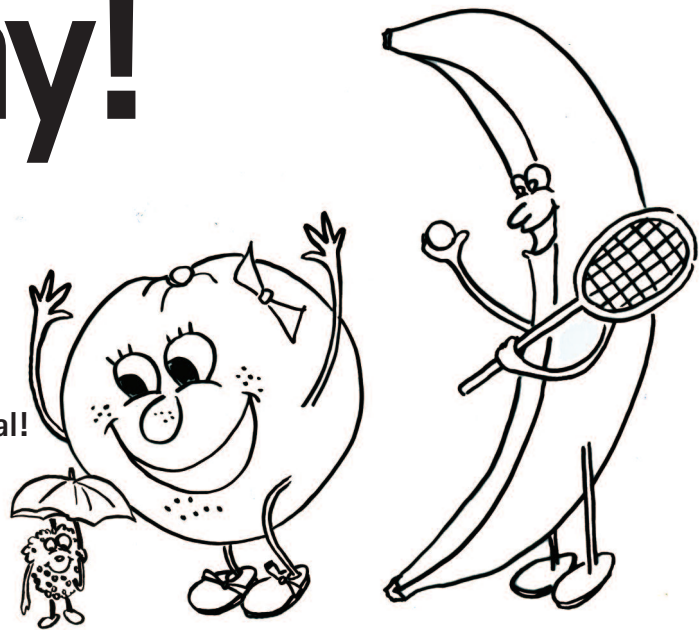
Eat a colorful variety of fruits and veggies every day!

Apples come in all shades of **red**, **green**, and **yellow**.

Juicy **red** watermelons are a tasty summer treat.

Yellow bananas are the fruit with appeal!

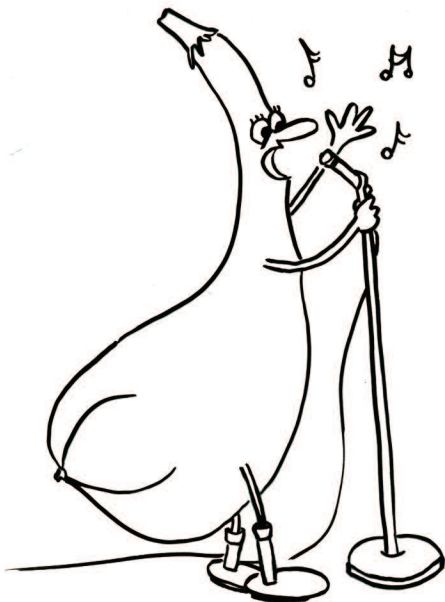
Orange sweet potatoes are a great source of vitamins A and C.



All forms count: fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% juice.

Save Time! Pick fruits or veggies that require little preparation such as bananas, orange wedges, cucumber, or celery sticks. Prepare extra vegetables and freeze leftovers for quick sides. Plan meals ahead and create a shopping list.

Save Money! Keep it simple, take advantage of local farmer's markets. Choose recipes that use in-season, canned, frozen, or dried fruits and veggies. Buy in bulk and prepare larger meals and freeze them. Prevent your produce from spoiling by storing in smaller bags or containers.



It's Fun to Eat Fruits and Veggies!

references and resources

1. Fruits & Veggies—More Matters™. Website: www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org and www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/
2. Sissel-Phelan, Peggy, Ed. D. *A Visit to the Farmers' Market*. Arkansas: Brain Child Books, 2006.
3. Music CD *Give Me 5 A Day!* Florida Department of Health. Website: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/wic/nutrition-materials/5-a-day-cd/index.html>
4. Kids Gardening. Website: www.kidsgardening.com