

## Nutrition Activities for Preschoolers

### *Nutrition Activities in the Art Center*

**Apple Colors Paintings**—Bring in red, yellow, and green apples for the children to look at and taste. Talk about the different colors, textures, and taste. Place apple-colored paints in the art area for children to use in their own creative way.

**Making Play Dough Foods**—Display pictures of healthful foods where children can easily see them while they work. Then let the children create in their own ways.

**Making Favorite Foods Collage**—Put out lots of pictures of healthful foods for children to cut and glue onto a blank sheet of paper to make a collage. Talk with the children about the foods as they work.

**Placemat Art**—Explain what a placemat is and show examples to give children the idea. Then provide drawing materials such as crayons, watercolor markers, or paints and plain sheets of white or construction paper. Cover with contact paper and use for snacks and parties.

### *Nutrition Activities for the Block Center*

**Feeding Toy Animals**—As children are building with blocks, see if anyone wants to build homes for the toy animals that are in the center. As they place the animals in the homes they have built, talk about the things the animals eat. Pretend to feed the animals if you wish and see if the children join in the pretend play.

**Pretend Foods in the Block Center**—Place a container of pretend fruits or vegetables on the block shelf and see how the children use them in their block play. Watch to see what the children do with the foods as they play. *Wow, Haley! That tomato fills up the whole dump truck! Where is the truck taking the tomato?*

**Building Roads for Delivering Foods**—When you see children building roads and using cars and trucks in their block play, talk with them a little about how people move foods from farms to supermarkets, homes, and schools by traveling on roads.

### ***Blocks continued.....***

**Grocery Store Block Play**—Let children work together to set up a pretend supermarket using all kinds of blocks. Ask the children what the different shapes are. For example, they might decide that the big rectangle blocks are cereal boxes and the medium columns are soup cans.

### ***Nutrition Activities for the Book Center***

**The Three Bears Table-Setting Game**—Read a picture book about *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* to a few children. Talk about how big each bear is. Then provide flannel-board cutouts of a small, medium, and large table setting, each with a bowl, spoon, napkin, and cup. You can trace the real objects and then cut them out to make the flannel-board cutouts you need. See if the children can make a place setting for each bear that is the right size, arranging the cutouts on the flannel-board.

**Mealtime Photo Album**—Take photographs of children at mealtimes as they do the things that make meals pleasant. Show children being competent and doing things for themselves. Put the photos into an album and place it on a shelf in the book corner. As children look at the photos, talk about what each child is doing.

**Cookbooks in the Book Center**—Place some children’s cookbooks on the bookshelf in the book center. Be sure that they have clear pictures that children will enjoy. Talk about the recipes the children look at.

**Blueberries for Sal**—Read *Blueberries for Sal* to a small group. As you read about how Sal picks the blueberries, make the hand motions of picking the berries and either dropping them into the pail or into your mouth. Encourage the children to make the hand motions. Have blueberries for the children to taste.

### ***Nutrition Activities for the Pretend Play Center***

**Feeding Baby Pretend Play**—Include lots of things in the pretend play center that are used for baby feeding. Include empty containers from baby foods, such as baby cereal boxes. When children play with dolls, talk about the foods that are usually fed to babies.

### ***Pretend Play continued.....***

**Pretending with Cooking and Eating Utensils from Many Cultures**—Add cooking and eating utensils from many cultures to the pretend play center. For example, provide various types of chopsticks and bowls, a small wok, and baskets for steaming vegetables from Asian cultures; baked clay dishes and pots, a tortilla press, and baskets for carrying food from Mexico; and bowls and cups made from wood or gourds from African cultures.

**Pretend Play about Foods That Do Not Come from the Grocery Store**—Put up pictures in the pretend play center of people who are fishing, gardening to grow fruits and vegetables, picking wild berries or nuts, or getting foods in other ways that are different from supermarket shopping. Talk with the children how these are ways that some people can get foods without going to the grocery store. Provide props in the pretend play area so children can act out fishing, gardening, berry picking, and other ways to get foods.

**Going on a Pretend Picnic**—Explain what a picnic is. Gather props that are needed for picnic pretend play such as plastic forks, knives and spoons, a thermos, a blanket to sit on, and a big picnic basket. See if the children pretend to go on a picnic as they use these things.