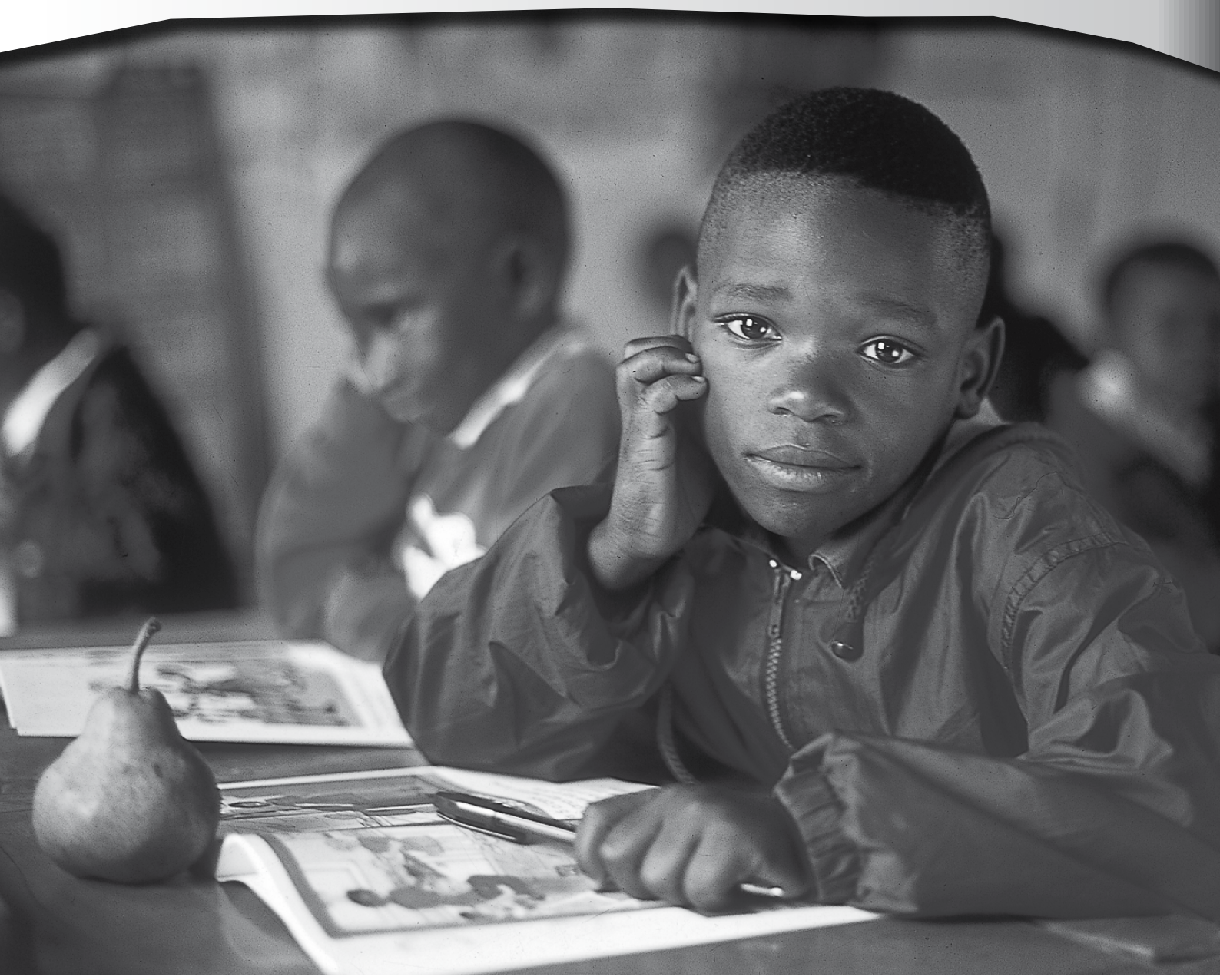
Healthy eating for kids aged 4 to 6 Teaching ideas for South African crèches and preschools



Nutrition week October 2010
Healthy eating for Preschool Children

ADSA association for dietetics in south africa

FORTIFIED FOR BETTER HEALTH

consumer goods council of south africa

rediscover dairy

unicef

Contents

1. Background information about nutrition **3**

2. Display items **3**

3. Discussions for ring time **4**

4. Puzzle for the quiet area **5**

5. Creative activities **5**

6. Music rings **5**

7. Stories **5**

8. Fantasy area (make-believe) **5**

9. Annexes **6**

- Annex A. Reference information about nutrition for teachers **6**
- Annex B. Fortification logo **10**
- Annex C. Songs **11**
- Annex D. Stories **13**

10. Contact details and further information **16**

This teachers' support pack provides information to help teachers plan activities and lessons on nutrition for use during National Nutrition Week in 2010, whose theme is "Healthy Eating for Preschool Children". National Nutrition Week is held annually from 9–13 October. However, this information may be used again at other times to re-enforce the important messages concerning nutrition.



1. Background information about nutrition

Teaching nutrition is a challenging activity, and yet nutrition is an ever-growing topic. Therefore, when you teach nutrition, it is important to make sure that your messages are up to date. Scientists do a lot of research to learn about nutrition and to identify the best way for us to eat. To make it easy to teach nutrition to children, the teaching ideas in this teachers' support pack are based on relevant and up-to-date information that is applicable to South Africa. Some detail on guidelines for healthy eating is included in Annex A of this support pack.

2. Display items

2.1 Interest table

Prepare sentence cards that each contain one of the healthy eating guideline statements that are listed below. Also display samples of food or ingredients for each of the sentence cards. Some suggestions for display material are given here.

- **Make starchy food the basis of a child's main meals**
  - Food examples of commonly eaten starchy food, such as maize meal, bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and breakfast cereals.
  - Picture of the fortification logo.
  - Ingredients used to make bread, such as flour, yeast, salt and sugar.

- **Children need plenty of vegetables and fruit every day**
  - Food examples of commonly eaten vegetables and fruit, and some that are not so well known.
  - Some vegetables that are still growing can be included, such as spinach in a tub.

- **Children need to drink milk every day**
  - Food examples (empty containers) of milk and milk products, such as maas, yoghurt and cheese.
  - Pictures of cows.
  - Pictures of healthy children smiling (showing their teeth). Discuss the importance of the nutrients in milk, like protein and calcium, for healthy bones and teeth.

- **Children can eat chicken, fish, meat, eggs, beans, soya or peanut butter every day**
  - Collage of pictures of this food, such as different meat and chicken types, and examples of food like beans, tins of fish and peanut butter.

Note: Food pictures can be cut from advertisements of supermarkets that are found in newspapers or that are handed out at supermarket doors.

2.2 Nature table

Begin to prepare this well in advance. Plant one seed type each week for several weeks in advance so that, during the theme week, a variety of plant sizes are available.

Grow a plant from a seed. Place a seed or bean in a layer of wet cotton wool in a saucer. Keep the cotton wool moist, and place the saucer in a sunny spot. Observe the stages the plant goes through as it grows.

When the roots and some leaves are established, transfer the plant to a pot of soil. Water the plant as needed.

2.3 Cognitive table (done during ring time) – discover your senses

Make a 'touch box'. Get a cardboard box about the size of an apple box. Cut two circles out of the bottom that are big enough for a child to put his or her hands through. Place the box on a table, with the open side facing the teacher and the side with the two holes facing the children. Children take turns to put their hands through the holes and feel an item of

food, and they then try to identify the food. Examples of possible food items include banana, apple, slice of bread, dry beans, egg, samp and rice.

Collect a variety of food that has a strong smell, such as oranges, onions and curry. Blindfold the children and allow them to identify the smell.

Taste session: Have sugar, salt and lemon juice available for tasting under supervision.

3. Discussions for ring time

Cover one or two topics per day.

- **Names of food we often eat**
  Ask the children to tell the group about the kinds of food they eat. Try to steer the discussion to include a variety of food. Choose some of the food items you have a picture of, and lead a discussion about this food.
  - What is it called? What is it called in different languages?
  - What colour is it?
  - What does it taste/smell like?
  - How does it feel in our mouth?
  - Does it fill our tummy?

- **Where does food come from?**
  Build on the discussion of food from the previous day. Use the food examples discussed and relevant food pictures to ask children to name food that grows in gardens (plant food) and food that comes from animals. Some food may be difficult to classify, such as processed food (like jam, bread or mealie meal). Include a few of these examples in the discussion, and explain how food can be processed to make a final product.

  If children are exposed to plant food, lead the discussion further to food that grows above the ground, below the ground and on trees.

- **Food that fills our tummies when we are hungry**
  Some food tastes good and helps fill our tummies so that we are not hungry. Ask the children what food they eat a lot of that fills their tummies. Guide the discussion to starchy food such as mealie meal, bread, rice and potatoes. In South Africa, some of this food has extra goodness added to it, like fortified bread and mealie meal. Look for the fortification logo on the packaging.

- **Food that is colourful**
  Ask the children to name different types of food that have different colours. Highlight those that are vegetables and fruit. Some examples are:
  - Orange – carrot, butternut, orange and naartjie
  - Green – spinach, apple and cabbage
  - Purple – beetroot
  - White – onion and potato
  - Red – tomato

  Discuss vegetables and fruit that are eaten by the children, and how they taste and feel in the mouth. Emphasise that vegetables and fruit provide goodness that helps the body in many ways. They help to keep us from getting sick, and to get better if we do get sick. They help to keep our bodies healthy, and help us see in the dark.

- **Food that we can drink (milk)**
  Start a discussion on drinks that children have. Finish by discussing milk, and explain that milk has goodness for our bodies, just like food does. Milk is food we can drink. Milk is especially important for children, to help them grow taller, as it helps bones to grow. Milk also helps to build good, strong teeth for a healthy smile, and builds strong bodies.



- **Other food we like to eat**
  Discuss food that is not core to healthy eating. Children should learn that this food may taste good and be fun to eat, but it does not supply goodness for healthy bodies. Children who want to grow and be healthy should only eat this food on special occasions. Examples are cakes, biscuits, sweets, chips, cold drinks and ice lollies. This food should be seen as a treat.

4. Puzzle for the quiet area

Make a set of cards, with a pair of cards for each type of food. Children work in pairs. They turn the cards face-down and take turns to turn two cards face-up. They must try to build pairs of cards with the same kind of food. If the cards that they have turned over do not make a pair, they must turn them face-down again and try to remember where they are.

5. Creative activities

a. Colour in the fortification logo (template attached in Annex B).
b. Creating food posters: When all the food groups (starchy food; vegetables and fruit; milk, maas and cheese; and chicken, fish, meat, eggs, dried beans, soya and peanut butter) have been discussed, the class can make posters of the food groups. Use the relevant guidelines in Annex A, and label the poster with the guideline statements.
c. Children can colour in and cut out pictures, and stick them onto a poster with a drawing of a basket. These posters can be used for a discussion on "I go to the shops to buy..." or "I go to the garden to pick ..."
d. Finger puppets: Children can make their own finger puppets and be encouraged to tell their own creative stories using the puppet characters. For example, one puppet can be a person (dressed in the same coloured clothes as the child that day) and the other puppets can be food characters such as Betty Bread, Aunty Apple and Cousin Carrot. See the suggested templates in Annex C.

6. Music rings

Ideas for songs with nutrition and food messages are included in Annex D.

7. Stories

Some story ideas that fit with the nutrition theme are included in Annex E. The message that can be learnt from these stories is also listed as a discussion point.

8. Fantasy area (make-believe)

Collect empty food packets and make picture cards of different types of food. Set up a 'shop' in the fantasy area. The items in the shop should be marked with dots to indicate their price. Children go to the shop to buy food from the shopkeeper, and they talk about the food. Children then pay for the food with the correct number of beans, which are used as money.

9. Annexes

Annex A. Reference information about nutrition for teachers

Introduction: Linking nutrition, health and education

Scientific studies show that many people in South Africa do not eat the variety and amount of food needed for the best health. Some of these people are able to afford most types of food, but they are not interested in changing the way they eat. They may not be aware of what they are doing wrong, and they will benefit from learning about good nutrition. Some may have good knowledge, but their attitude prevents them from putting this knowledge into practice.

Other barriers may prevent healthy habits, such as the non-availability of the best food choices, a shortage of money, or other more pressing health concerns.

The information in this teachers' support pack provides the facts and gives ideas on ways to incorporate information on healthy eating in a nutrition theme.

Learning about good nutrition at school helps to encourage children to participate in school feeding programmes, and to eat the nutritious food that they are served. They learn the importance of making healthy food choices and of eating regular meals.

Some of the benefits of healthy eating are the following:
- Children who are better nourished are able to learn better.
- Healthy eating helps young people grow and develop.
- Learning about practices for good nutrition helps prevent childhood and adolescent health problems such as obesity, eating disorders, and vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Some of the consequences of unhealthy eating are the following:
- Children who are undernourished for long periods are more likely to become sick.
- Children who do not eat in the mornings may have difficulty learning during the day.
- In South Africa, more than half of children under the age of 9 have a vitamin A deficiency. The body's immune system cannot function well without adequate levels of vitamin A. Vitamin A helps to prevent infections by keeping all the cells on the surface of the body healthy. This includes the surface of the eyes, inside the mouth, the cells that line the gut, and the cells that line the respiratory tract. Vitamin A and iron help the body function and grow properly. Ways to include enough vitamin A in the diet are found later in this support pack. Children in South Africa who are under the age of 5 should be taken to a clinic every six months to receive vitamin A drops. This is to ensure that they get enough of this important vitamin.

  More than one in 10 children under the age of 9 has an iron deficiency. The body uses iron to make haemoglobin, which is a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen around the body. Children who are iron deficient may have impaired learning and development, lower height, feel tired and have a weakened defence against infections.

  Iron is a difficult nutrient to get from food, as most types of food only have a small amount of iron. A deficiency may be because the child gets too little iron from the food he or she eats, the iron is poorly absorbed, or there is a loss of iron through a loss of blood (e.g. from worms). Food that is rich in iron includes meat, liver, eggs, dark-green leafy vegetables and beans. Some types of food are enriched with iron, like some breakfast cereals. The absorption of iron is increased by eating food that is rich in vitamin C during the same meal, e.g. vegetables and citrus fruit. The absorption of iron is decreased by consuming food with tannin (tea) or too much whole-grain cereals during the same meal.



Information about undernutrition, overnutrition and optimal nutrition

Undernutrition and overnutrition

There are many reasons why a child or adult becomes undernourished. The causes vary from place to place and from person to person. An important factor to remember is that undernutrition is caused by many factors, not just food availability. It also depends on the availability of clean, safe water, access to health care and a clean environment.

Overnutrition is usually a factor when people are overweight or obese. Overnutrition is caused by people eating more food than they need (and getting more energy from this food) over a long period of time. These people may also have a lifestyle that is not very active. For example, they may not take part in activities like sport.

Weight gain and obesity affect people of all ages and socioeconomic groups. The increasing number of obese children is a cause for concern. People who are overweight or obese have a higher risk of developing long-term problems with their breathing, joint pains and infertility. They are also at higher risk for conditions such as heart disease, hypertension, strokes, Type-2 diabetes, certain types of cancers and gall bladder disease.

Optimal nutrition

Optimal nutrition is the best nutrition for a person. A person can achieve optimal nutrition if he or she follows a healthy eating plan most of the time. This must include a variety of food, eaten in the correct amounts. It must not include more food than is needed.

People who follow healthy eating plans most of the time are influenced by much more than just knowledge about nutrition. They have the desire to eat well. They have the means to be able to eat well, they have access to the correct information to meet their needs, the food is available, and their lifestyle is adapted to eating routines and regular exercise. They are able to filter messages received via marketing and the media.

Planning good mixed meals using the guidelines for healthy eating

Eating is an important part of everyone's life. Food is chosen for many reasons – not just for nutrients, but also for enjoyment and pleasure. Eating may be a chance to sit down with friends and family, or it can be a rushed event just because you are hungry.

Following a healthy eating plan does not mean missing out on the enjoyment of food. All food can be enjoyed in a healthy eating plan; some food should be eaten often, and other food may be enjoyed occasionally in smaller amounts.

Different types of food have different nutrients. No single nutrient is the most important, and no single food is the most important. No food can be called 'bad' food. What is important is learning how to plan food choices so that all nutrients are included, and so that the right amount of food is eaten.

When food is scarce because of poverty or in emergency situations, it is important to make the best food choices from the food that is available. Locally produced food and food that is traditionally eaten can contribute to the total food intake.

A healthy eating plan has a number of good mixed meals a day. Each good mixed meal should be planned using the guidelines for healthy eating. Mixed meals usually include food from different food groups, so that a variety of nutrients are provided.

Some people need to eat snacks between meals to provide more nutrients, especially energy. These people should choose snack food that contributes to the nutrients needed by the body. Some people eat snack food that has little nutrients, but is still expensive or contains too much energy. Snack food with little nutrients and a lot of energy should never be eaten instead of good mixed meals. This food can be enjoyed as a treat or on special occasions. Examples of food with a lot of energy but little goodness are chips, cheese-flavoured chips, biscuits, cold drinks and sweets.



The amount of energy you get from the food you eat during meals and as a snack should be the amount needed for growth or to maintain a healthy body weight. It is not healthy to be too heavy or to weigh too little.

Make starchy food the basis of a child's main meals

Starchy food like maize meal, bread, rice, samp, pasta, potatoes, sweet potatoes, porridge and breakfast cereals is an important part of a healthy eating plan. The best choices are food that is minimally processed, such as whole grains (wholewheat, barley, brown rice, cut corn, mealie on the cob, oats, whole-grain breakfast cereal and popcorn), and fortified starchy food.

Starchy food is usually eaten at most meals, and is often the food that fills you up. Starchy food should form the central part of the meal, and may be eaten in larger amounts than other types of food. People with high energy needs (like active sports people) can eat more of the starchy food to meet their higher energy needs. Other food should be added to the starchy food to provide a variety of nutrients. Different types of food can be added at different meals.

Starchy food contributes many different nutrients to the body. Because this food is often eaten in large quantities, this contribution is important. Starch is a kind of carbohydrate, and starchy food supplies most of the energy in a healthy eating plan. Starchy food also supplies protein to the body, and many starchy food has fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Some types of starchy food have extra vitamins and minerals added to them. In South Africa, all maize meal and bread flour (and so bread) must have certain vitamins and minerals added. These are nutrients that were shown to be in short supply in the diets of many people. This type of food is called fortified food, and these are good food choices. Some other types of food may also have vitamins and mineral added, but not by law. This food is called enriched food. An example of a food category that is often enriched is breakfast cereal.

Children need plenty of vegetables and fruit every day

Cabbage, pumpkin, spinach, wild leafy plants, tomatoes, onions, beetroot, avocado pears and green beans are examples of vegetables that are commonly eaten in South Africa. Oranges, apples, bananas, pineapples, paw-paw, mangoes and grapes are examples of fruit that is commonly eaten in South Africa. It is best to have a variety of vegetables and fruit to ensure that many different nutrients are obtained. Fresh and frozen varieties are usually the most nutritious. Sometimes canned vegetables are convenient (e.g. tomatoes), or sometimes canned fruit is used for a treat (e.g. canned peaches).

Vegetables and fruit provide a wide variety of vitamins. Some kinds also supply a lot of fibre, especially those kinds where the skin is also eaten.

Most people do not eat nearly enough vegetables and fruit. The minimum amount needed is five portions a day, with one portion being one small piece of fruit or half a cup of vegetables. This is achievable, especially when some kind of vegetable or fruit is eaten at each meal. Larger servings of some vegetables can be eaten, so that two portions are eaten at once. If fruit is expensive, more vegetables can be eaten. Food gardens can be established at home and in communities to grow more vegetables and fruit.

Dark-green vegetables and dark-orange vegetables are good sources of beta-carotene. This is a substance that is converted into vitamin A in the body. Many people in South Africa, especially children and pregnant women, do not get all the vitamin A they need each day. They should try to eat at least one serving of this type of food each day. Examples of this type of food are spinach, imfino, pumpkin, carrots, butternut, paw-paw and mangoes. Fat is needed in the same meal to help the body use the beta-carotene.

Children need to drink milk every day

Everyone should try to have some milk each day. Children should aim to drink one to three cups of milk a day, because their needs for calcium are high (for growing bones and teeth). Unfortunately, many people do not drink enough milk, especially children and pregnant women. Coffee and tea creamers and condensed milk do not provide the nutrients of milk and are not a replacement for milk.

When children are growing, their bones are getting longer and stronger. Calcium is needed for this. The calcium that is deposited



in bones during childhood and adolescence is used by the body right through adulthood.

Children can eat chicken, fish, meat, eggs, beans, soya or peanut butter every day

This type of food is a good source of proteins, which are used for building and repairing body tissues. This food also contains important vitamins and minerals, e.g. iron is found in meat.

When this type of food is included in processed food (such as meat pies), there is less meat and more filler. This is not a good food choice. Fast food that is cooked in oil (such as fried chicken) is also not a good food choice for regular eating.

Most people like to eat meat and chicken, and some people eat too much of this type of food. This food should be eaten in smaller portions. A piece of meat the size of your palm is an example of a portion of meat. The rest of the plate can be filled with vegetables and starchy food.

Annex B. Fortification logo



Annex C. Songs

We keep healthy (to the tune of "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush")

These are things that we must do,
we must do, we must do.
These are things that we must do
to keep our bodies healthy.

We must all eat starchy food,
starchy food, starchy food.
We must all eat starchy food
every single day.

We must all eat veg and fruit,
veg and fruit, veg and fruit.
We must all eat veg and fruit,
plenty every day.

Drinking milk will help us grow,
help us grow, help us grow.
Drinking milk will help us grow.
Drink it every day.

Chicken, fish and beans and eggs,
beans and eggs, beans and eggs.
Chicken, fish and beans and eggs
are foods we can enjoy.

Enjoy a variety of food (to the tune of "Frère Jacques")

Food is special.
Food is special.

Good for me.
Good for me.

Eat it to stay healthy.
Eat it to stay healthy.

Enjoy it too.
Enjoy it too.

Many kinds of food (to the tune of "Three Blind Mice")

Many kinds of food.
Many kinds of food.

Many times a day.
Many times a day.

To give us all the goodness we need,
and fill our tummies with tasty treats.

Many kinds of food.

Many kinds of food.

My body is strong and it's healthy (to the tune of "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean")

My body is strong and it's healthy.
My body has energy.
I eat lots of food and I love it.
I'm as happy as can be.

Eat up, oh eat up, oh eat up all your food.
Eat up, oh eat up, oh eat up all your food.



Annex D. Stories

The sunflower (adapted from "The Valley Trust Grade R", story by Beryl Lourens)

There once was a little brown sunflower seed that fell off the truck that was taking all the sunflowers to the market to be sold. The little sunflower seed felt very sad, all alone on the side of a busy road. There was such a lot of noise from all the traffic going by, and in the daytime it was very hot in the sun. The little sunflower seed tried to hide in the sand to get away from the noise and the heat.

One day she woke up to hear a different type of noise [make the sound of rain with a shaker]. What was it? It was wet. It was rain! Now the little sunflower seed was worried – after being too hot for so long, now it was really cold. Luckily, after a while, the sun came out shining brightly again and warmed her up.

Later that day, the little sunflower seed felt her shell cracking, and she realised that she had started to grow. Each day, as the sun shone and the rain fell [shake the shaker], her roots went deeper and deeper into the soil, getting goodness from the soil to help her grow. Soon she pushed green shoots out of the soil, like little green hands. She found that she was growing next to a wall; first she was as tall as one brick, and then two. The top of the wall looked a long way off. The sun said to the little sunflower, "I will help you to get taller. I will warm you each day and help you to make food." The rain said, "I will make sure you have enough water to drink." The soil said, "I have lots of goodness in me. You can take what you need. I will feed you."

So, helped by the sun and the rain and the good soil, the sunflower grew taller and taller. At last she could see over the wall. She now had a big flat flower on top, with pretty yellow petals. She looked over the wall and into a garden. Children were playing with a ball in the garden, and they looked very happy. One of the children threw the ball to another, but she missed, and the ball bounced right next to the flower. The children stopped playing to look at the pretty flower. They went to call their parents to come and have a look. "Isn't the sunflower beautiful?" they said. "She is taller than our wall, and even taller than us."

Each day the children came to look at the beautiful flower, and they waved goodbye when they went to school.

When autumn came, the weather started to get colder and the rain stopped falling. The sunflower's petals began to fade, and her leaves withered. The flower was frightened. What was happening to her? When the children came home from school, they were also worried and they called their mother. "What can we do? It looks like our flower is dying."

The children's mother came to look at the sunflower. She explained to the children what was happening, and the sunflower was very glad to hear what she had to say. "Don't worry," she told her children, "there are many kinds of plants that only live for one year. We are lucky that we can collect all these seeds from the sunflower, and save them until next spring. We will plant them in good, rich soil, in a place where they get sun and rain, and then we will have a whole lot of sunflower plants to enjoy."

The sunflower was glad to hear that the seeds from her flower would grow into many more sunflower plants, just as pretty as she had been in the summer. She sighed with pleasure. "I am ready for a rest after my busy summer. It has been good."

Discussion points:

= Plants are able to make food when they are in the sun, and when they have water and good, rich soil. People cannot make their own food; this is why we have to eat many different types of food to get all the goodness we need.

= Although the sunflower might look like just a pretty flower, the seeds in the middle of the sunflower are a useful type of food. We do not find many people who eat sunflower seeds, but the seeds can be taken to a special factory, and the oil from inside the seeds is squeezed out to make sunflower oil. We use this oil for cooking food.

The little red hen (traditional story)

Once upon a time, there was a little red hen who lived on a farm. She was friends with a lazy dog, a sleepy cat, and a noisy yellow duck.

One day the little red hen found some seeds on the ground. The little red hen had an idea.

She would plant the seeds.

The little red hen asked her friends, “Who will help me plant the seeds?”

“Not I,” barked the lazy dog.
“Not I,” purred the sleepy cat.
“Not I,” quacked the noisy yellow duck.

“Then I will,” said the little red hen. So the little red hen planted the seeds all by herself. She kept a close eye on them and gave them water when they needed it. She also took out the weeds from around the seeds.

When the seeds had grown, the little red hen asked her friends, “Who will help me cut the wheat?”

“Not I,” barked the lazy dog.
“Not I,” purred the sleepy cat.
“Not I,” quacked the noisy yellow duck.

“Then I will,” said the little red hen. So the little red hen cut the wheat all by herself.

When all the wheat was cut, the little red hen asked her friends, “Who will help me take the wheat to the mill to be ground into flour?”

“Not I,” barked the lazy dog.
“Not I,” purred the sleepy cat.
“Not I,” quacked the noisy yellow duck.

“Then I will,” said the little red hen. So the little red hen took the wheat to the mill all by herself, ground the wheat into flour, and carried the heavy sack of flour back to the farm.

The tired little red hen asked her friends, “Who will help me bake the bread?”

“Not I,” barked the lazy dog.’

“Not I,” purred the sleepy cat.
“Not I,” quacked the noisy yellow duck.
“Then I will,” said the little red hen. So the little red hen baked the bread all by herself.

When the bread was finished, the tired little red hen asked her friends, “Who will help me eat the bread?”

“I will,” barked the lazy dog.
“I will,” purred the sleepy cat.
“I will,” quacked the noisy yellow duck.

“No!” said the little red hen. “I will.” And the little red hen called her chicks and shared the bread with them.

Discussion point:

= We should all help our families by doing some of the work in our homes. Discuss examples of household tasks that children can do to help at home.



Fantasy story (with puppets)

Do you know what happens in the supermarket at the end of each day? The manager goes around and checks that everything is locked up for the night, the workers say goodbye and go home, the manager switches off most of the lights, locks the front door and also goes home.

When it is very quiet, the different foods have a chance to chat to one another. On the day our story takes place, three characters are continuing a discussion they have had for a long time. Some of the foods call it an argument, because they do sound very cross at times. The foods are Carol Carrot, Benny Bread and Mike Milk.

As soon as it was quiet and the foods were sure that all the people had left the shop, Carol Carrot said, "I know I am a good food for people to eat. If children do not eat enough carrots and other yellow and green vegetables, they can get sick easily and they cannot see in the dark. Do you want the children who live in [insert name of place where you live] to be sick?"

"No, Carol Carrot," said Benny Bread, "that is not what I want. I also want children to be healthy and strong, and to be able to play and grow and learn. Bread is very important. Children love to eat bread. In South Africa, bread is extra special because we have extra vitamins and minerals added to us in the factory. That is why we can have this special logo on our packet, which says 'Fortified for Better Health'."

"I come straight from nature. I do not need to be made in a factory. In fact, children can grow me in their gardens, and I am easily available," said Carol Carrot.

Mike Milk realised that this discussion was getting confusing, "Okay," he said, "let me give you my opinion. Carol Carrot, you say that you are important because you help children to be healthy. But how are they going to eat you if their teeth are not strong? They need to drink milk to have strong teeth. They need strong muscles and bones to work in the garden to grow you. How can they do that if they do not drink milk?"

There was silence in the shop. Mike Milk had given some very good information.

"Mmm," said Carol Carrot. "What you say is true. I had not thought of that."

"Mmm," said Benny Bread. "So that makes me the most important food. I have my own logo, and even children with very few teeth can eat bread."

"Yes," said Mike Milk, "but think about the food that children like to have with bread! Cheese is made from milk, and cheese sandwiches are favourites. So the children like both of us."

"Oh, be quiet, all of you!" said the beans.

"Yes, we are tired of your constant arguing," said the soap.

"Think about what you are saying," added the beans. "You are all important food. Children should eat many different kinds of food to get all the goodness they need. We cannot decide which food is the most important because we are all important."

"And what about me?" asked the soap. "Am I important?"

"Yes, of course," they all replied. "Children must wash their hands with soap before they eat us."

And with that help from the beans and the soap, the foods settled down for the night. "We are glad we have solved this discussion," they said. "We don't like it when we are having an argument. Now we can all sleep well. Goodnight."

Discussion point:

= Can food really talk? Discuss how we can use our imagination when telling stories. Ask the children to talk about the types of food they think are the most important. Help them realise that food that provides goodness is the type of food they should want to eat most of the time.

10. Contact details and further information

NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Ms Maudé de Hoop
Tel: 012 - 395 8770
Fax: 012 - 395 8802
dehoom@health.gov.za

PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF HEALTH

Western Cape

Ms Hilary Goeiman
Tel: 021 – 483 5663
021 – 483 2275
Fax: 021 – 483 2682
hgoeiman@pgwc.gov.za

Eastern Cape

Ms Nomawonga Kama
Tel: 040 - 608 1705
040 – 609 4260
Fax: 086 558 0543
nomawonga.kama@impilo.ecprov.gov.za

Northern Cape

Ms Maretha le Roux
Tel: 053 - 830 0551
Fax: 053 830 0690
mlerouxn@ncpg.gov.za

KwaZulu-Natal

Ms Lenore Spies
Tel: 033 - 395 2726
Fax: 086 619 3855
lenore.spies@kznhealth.gov.za

Free State

Ms Kgantsho Ranyane
Tel: 051 – 408 1851
Fax**:** 086 657 3019
ranyaneka@health.gov.za



Gauteng

Ms Z Mtshali
Tel: 011 - 355 3319
Fax: 011- 355 3557
zama.ntombela@gauteng.gov.za

North West

Ms T Kgengwenyane
Tel: 018 - 397 2364
Fax: 018 – 397 2353
tkgengwenyane@nwpg.gov.za

Limpopo

Mr D Matthews
Tel: 015 – 293 6198
Fax: 086 663 8460
matthewsd2@dhw.norprov.gov.za

Mpumalanga

Ms M van der Merwe
Tel: 013 – 766 3413
Fax: 086 529 7987
mariaV@social.mpu.gov.za

Acknowledgement: Ideas on theme teaching to prepare this teachers' support pack were taken from the publication "Teaching Around a Theme", Training and Resources for Early Education (TREE), Durban, 1991.



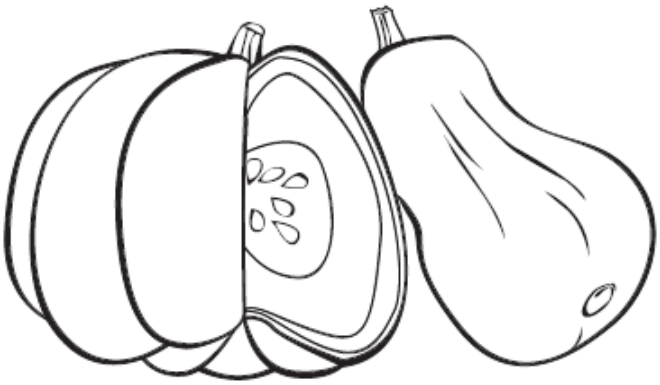
Make starchy food the basis of a child's main meals

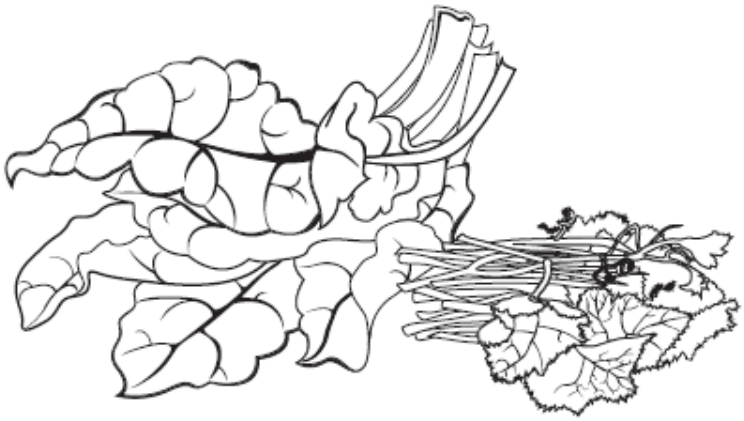






Children need plenty of vegetables and fruit every day



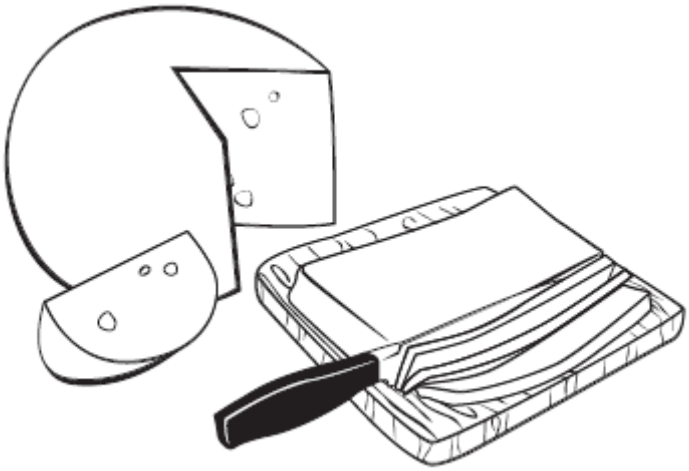






Children need to drink milk every day







Children can eat chicken, fish, meat, eggs, beans, soya or peanut butter every day



