



# THE 3 RING



# FOOD

# CIRCUS



**Easy and Fun Food-Related Activities  
for Preschoolers and Young Children**

## Easy and Fun Food-Related Activities for Preschoolers and Young Children

**Healthy Food! It's essential to life and learning. Everybody eats. Just mention the word "food" and almost everyone's interest is peaked – even young children!**

This resource is divided into three sections: **Activities, Recipes, and Resources.** The activities teach young children the skills listed below, the recipes give you ideas for simple food-tasting experiences that can be done alone or in conjunction with any of the activities, and the resources direct you to children's books with positive food and physical activity messages and other tools you can use to make nutrition fun and interesting.

**Preschoolers and other young children who take part in Three Ring Food Circus activities will...**

- Learn about and become familiar with many different kinds of food;
- Recognize that the MyPlate graphic represents a healthy way to fill your plate;
- Try new foods;
- Have fun being physically active.

**The Three Ring Food Circus activities emphasize social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development and will teach students through food-related experiences ...**

- The names of foods and where they come from;
- How healthy food helps you grow;
- How being active helps you stay healthy;
- Beginning math skills, shapes, colors, letter recognition, and letter sounds;
- Matching, sorting, classifying, labeling, sequencing, and following simple directions;
- Social skills such as listening, patience, and taking turns.

### Supplies and Materials

Most of the activities require basic supplies often found in preschool and kindergarten classrooms such as tape, glue, scissors, construction paper, crayons, and markers.

**Food Pictures:** Identifying foods and discovering their likes and differences using visual representation of food is the focus of many of the activities. You can create food pictures by cutting them out of magazines and laminating them (if needed), or you may order a set of food model cards from the United Dairy Industry of Michigan. Be sure to read the activity before conducting it to make sure you have the food pictures in the format you need.

Ordering information for Food Model Cards is in the Resources section.

### Planning

Read all of the activities ahead of time and decide which ones you want to do. Easier activities are at the front of the book and harder activities are at the back. Invite teachers, educators, parents, and volunteers to a Three Ring Circus planning party. Ask people how they want to help and assign tasks such as helping conduct the activities, creating props or visual aids, or supplying, shopping for, or prepping food for the recipes.

### Create Excitement

A positive, enthusiastic attitude toward learning about and trying new foods is contagious. Be a healthy role model and your students will want to be like you. Most of all enjoy the activities and the recipes and...have fun!



THE **3** RING FOOD CIRCUS

# ACTIVITY



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# ACTIVITIES

## Clown Footprints

### Object of the Game:

To practice identifying the names of foods.

### Materials Needed:

- Colored poster board or 8 ½ X 11 inch pieces of card stock paper
- Pictures of food cut from magazines \*
- Scissors
- Glue or glue sticks
- A laminating machine and laminating paper
- Music (See Resources for ideas.)

### Get Ready:

Draw a footprint on a piece of paper and cut it out. Trace footprints onto poster board or card stock.

You will need one footprint per student in your class or group. Paste a different food picture onto each footprint. Be sure to show a variety of foods from all five food groups and

some combination foods such as tacos, pizza, or macaroni and cheese. Cover both sides with contact paper or laminate.



The five food groups are: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods and dairy. For more information go to: [choosemyplate.gov/kids](http://choosemyplate.gov/kids)



### The Activity:

Place footprints in a circle on the floor. Have the children march from footprint to footprint as you play music. When the music stops, the children stop. Have them identify the name of the food they land on.



### Variations:

- Have children hop or jump from one footprint to the next using one foot or two feet.
- When the music stops, have children who have landed on a designated class of foods, i.e. foods that are red, foods you have tried before, identify their foods.
- Adapt this game to teach other things by gluing different items on the footprints e.g. numbers, shapes, colors, letters, etc.

\* If you have a color copy machine you can make copies of Michigan Dairy Council's food model cards instead of using cut out pictures from magazines. See Resources section for more information.

Tip: Check the Resources section for kid-approved music with a healthy food theme.



## RECIPE

Carousel-Colored Overnight Oatmeal p. 24





## Do Bears Eat Bananas?

### Object of the Game:

To identify familiar foods eaten by animals and/or people while practicing listening and verbal skills.

### Materials Needed:

None

### Get Ready:

Copy this page so you can read the riddles. You can also make up some of your own and write them down or make them up as you go.

### The Activity:

Have children sit comfortably on the floor or at their seats. Describe in riddle form, simple foods that are eaten by animals and people. Have children guess the answers. Talk about whether or not people eat these foods too. Samples listed below:

1. I am green and I grow on trees. The giraffes think I am delicious to eat. What am I? [leaves]
2. I am crunchy and orange. I grow in a garden and rabbits like to eat me. What am I? [carrots]
3. I come in a small hard tan shell. Elephants like to eat me and so do people. What am I? [peanuts]
4. I am a fruit with a long yellow peel. I am soft and white inside. Monkeys like to eat me and so do people. [bananas]. *Monkeys also eat fleas, ticks, and leaves. Ask: Do people eat these foods?*
5. I am white and you drink me. I help baby animals and boys and girls grow up healthy and strong. What am I? [milk]



6. I am red, bumpy and sweet. You can eat me plain or make jam out of me. What am I? [raspberries or strawberries]
7. I am a tender green leaf. You can make a salad with me, eat me cooked, or put me on top of a sandwich. What am I? [fresh spinach]
8. I am cold and creamy. I am made from milk. I help your bones get stronger. I come in lots of different flavors. What am I? [yogurt or ice cream]
9. I am often white, yellow, or orange. I taste great on crackers, on a sandwich, or plain. Some say mice like to eat me. What am I? [cheese]. *Explain that mice eat lots of different things including grains, fruits, seeds, and sometimes other things like paper and plastic.*
10. I come from the ocean or a lake. I can be baked, fried, or made into sticks. Bears like to scoop me out of rivers and streams and eat me. [fish]



### Variations:

- Older children can make up their own riddles.
- Have children pretend "eat" the foods in the riddles.

To emphasize beginning letter sounds tell students the first letter of the answer i.e. "L" for "leaves" or ask students "What letter sound do you hear at the beginning of (example) leaves?"



### RECIPE

Drum Major's Banana  
Baton, p. 29



## Animal Jamboree

### Object of the Game:

Students will have fun being active and moving around the room like animals do.

### Materials Needed:

Music (optional)

### Get Ready:

Tell children everyone needs to move – including people and animals! Explain to them that blood is constantly flowing through the body and how exercise helps move blood to where it needs to go. Discuss how moving and taking breaks to be physically active is healthy for your body.

### The Activity:

Call out the names of the animals below and demonstrate the way they move. Have children mimic the motion standing in place, or walking around the room. Do this to music for extra fun!

- Elephant
- Monkey
- Seal
- Tiger
- Dog
- Bear
- Mouse
- Kangaroo
- Horse
- Rabbit
- Bird
- Snake



### Variations:

- Have students count to ten while doing each movement to practice counting skills.
- Have children make the noise the animal makes. (*This is best to do outside.*)
- Have children practice following directions as they move “slowly”, “fast”, and “faster”.

*More Fun: Read the book Animal Action ABC. See the Resources section for a description of this book.*



### RECIPE

Animal Go Rounds, p. 25  
or Happy Cheese Mice,  
p. 30



## Fruit Basket Switcheroo

### Object of the Game:

To create awareness of many different kinds of fruit.

### Materials Needed:

One picture of fruit, or one food model card with a fruit on it, per child.

### Get Ready:

Talk about how fruit is healthy and that we eat fruit in many different ways, at many different times of the day.

Ask: *What kind of fruit do you like? Who has had a fruit today?*

### The Activity:

Have the children sit in a circle around the leader. Give each child a fruit picture.

The leader calls out the name of two different fruits, i.e. "banana and apple", and the children with those two pictures jump up and exchange seats. Play until everyone has had a turn to switch places or until the group tires of the game. Between switcheroos ask all the children to:

1. *Raise both your hands out in front of you and wave your fingers if you have eaten [apples, bananas] before.*
2. *Raise both hands high up in the air if you like [apples, bananas].*



### Variations:

- Play the game with two sets of food model cards. The children who jump up have the same card e.g. two apples.
- Older children can be the leader and call out the fruits.
- The leader can try to get one of the seats, and the person without a seat becomes the caller/leader.
- Call out a different movement for students to do before they exchange seats. Example: Apple and orange jump up and clap their hands over their heads. Banana and grapes jump on two feet.
- Do this with other foods groups using food model cards.
- Call out different characteristics of fruits and have all the children who have those fruits complete a move such as: If your fruit is red, stand up and turn around, If your fruit has to be peeled to be eaten put both arms in the air, and so on.
- Practice letter recognition. Example: If your fruit begins with the letters "A" or "B" exchange seats. [apple and banana]

*Food Model card sets can be ordered from the United Dairy Industry of Michigan. For pricing or to order call 800-241-6455.*



### RECIPE

Berry Go Rounds, p. 23,  
or Juice Pop Variety Act, p. 30





## Food Acrobats



### Object of the Game:

To teach children that it's healthy to eat many different kinds and colors of food.

### Materials Needed:

Food model cards or food pictures

### Get Ready:

Talk with students about how food comes in many different colors and that it's healthy to eat lots of different kinds and colors of food. Ask: *Who has had a red [blue, orange, white, yellow] food today?*

### The Activity:

Have children stand facing the leader. The leader makes a statement about a food, e.g. Strawberries are red. If the statement is true the children remain standing. To reinforce correctness show students a picture of the food or the appropriate food model card. If the statement is false, such as "oranges are square" the children should sit down. Once children practice and understand the game, or if children are older, change the motor responses such as: "If what I say is true, clap your hands. If it's false stomp your feet," and so on.

### Variations:

- Use this same activity to practice listening and letter recognition skills. Example: "If banana starts with a B clap your hands. If banana does not start with a B stomp your feet."
- You can also do this with number recognition or with older students, e.g. beginning math problems such as "If  $3 + 6 = 9$  clap your hands, If it does not equal 9 stomp your feet."
- Other movements include wave your arms, balance on one/two feet, raise your left/right arm over your head, stand on tip toes, etc.
- Red light, green light option: "If what I say is true, move toward me until I turn around. Then you stop. If you move when what I say is false then you'll go back to the starting line."



### RECIPE

Under the Big Top Egg Burritos, p. 25





## The Popcorn Hop and Pop

### Object of the Game:

To practice listening skills and to learn that popcorn is a healthy whole grain snack.

### Materials Needed:

The Popcorn Hop and Pop poem (see below)



### The Activity:

Have each child stand at arms distance from one another. Have a short discussion with them about how popcorn is a healthy snack. Tell them you are going to read them a poem and they are to hop (one foot or two) every time they hear the word "pop", but not when they hear the word "popcorn". Read the poem.

### Do The Popcorn Hop

Poppity pop. Poppity pop.  
Goes the popcorn in the pot.  
Poppity pop. Poppity pop. Poppity pop.  
Do the popcorn hop.

Measure the popcorn. Put it in the pot.  
Be careful so it doesn't drop.  
Poppity pop. Poppity pop.  
Poppity. Poppity. Poppity. Pop.

A little oil, just a drizzle.  
Turn up the heat and watch it sizzle.  
Poppity pop. Poppity pop.  
Poppity. Poppity. Poppity. Pop.

Once the popcorn starts to pop.  
Shake the pot and do not stop.  
Poppity pop. Poppity pop.  
Poppity. Poppity. Poppity. Pop.

Make sure you have a lid on top.  
Listen to that popcorn pop!  
Poppity pop. Poppity pop.  
Poppity. Pop. Pop. Pop. Pop. Pop!

Once you hear the final pop,  
Dump the popcorn from the pot.  
Poppity pop. Poppity pop.  
Poppity. Poppity. Poppity. Pop.

Some add salt and some add cheese.  
Pass the popcorn if you please!  
Poppity pop. Poppity pop.  
Poppity pop. Do the Popcorn Hop.

### Variations:

- Read the poem very slowly at first, then gradually read it faster and faster.
- After listening to the poem, let children fill in the last word of each sentence.



*Tip: Popcorn can be difficult for young children to chew and swallow. Carefully observe young children when eating popcorn.*



### RECIPE

Silly Dilly Cheese Popcorn,  
p. 30



## Going on a MyPlate Picnic

### Object of the Game:

To help children practice memory and recall skills while becoming familiar with the need to eat a variety of foods.

### Materials Needed:

- MyPlate Poster
- Large tablecloth and picnic basket (optional)

### Get Ready:

Have students sit in a circle on the floor. In the middle of the circle, if using, lay a large tablecloth on the floor and put a picnic basket on it. Discuss with children why it's important for good health to eat lots of different kinds and colors of food.

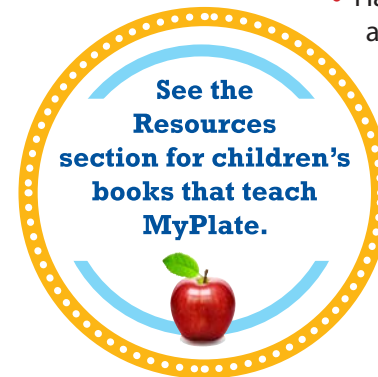
### The Activity:

Explain to children that you are going to plan a picnic together and that you want to pack many different kinds and colors of foods for the picnic. Start the game by saying, "I'm going on a picnic and I'm going to bring carrots (or another nutritious food)." Proceed to the next child who repeats your sentence and adds another food. Continue on with each child repeating the list in correct sequence until the children cannot remember the sequence. After each round review "the picnic menu" and, using a MyPlate poster as a guide, talk about which food groups are represented, which are not, and how you could change it to make it a MyPlate picnic lunch that includes all of the food groups.



### Variations:

- Change the game by planning a trip to the grocery store or park.
- Invite children when they name their food, to pretend to put their food in the basket or on the tablecloth.
- Older children can add a color to the food they name such as orange carrots, blue blueberries, red tomatoes, etc.
- Have the children think of foods in alphabetical order such as **A**vocado, **B**anana, **C**herries, etc.



*Tip: The first time they play this game, young children will be able to correctly sequence 3-4 foods. With experience and age, their recall skills will improve.*



### RECIPE

Caramel Apple Wraps, p. 23



## Fantastic Food Jugglers

### Object of the Game:

To become familiar with “juggling” food into food groups.

### Materials Needed:

- 5 grocery bags
- Food model cards or food pictures of foods from all the food groups
- Lively music

### Get Ready:

Have each paper grocery bag represent a food group. Write the name of the group on the bag and paste an appropriate food picture on it, i.e. grains = picture of bread. Place the bags around the room.

### The Activity:

Explain that juggling means to skillfully handle something. Give each child a handful of food pictures. Play some lively music. Have students march around the perimeter of the room, placing the food pictures in the appropriate bags. Follow up by removing the pictures in each bag and discussing why the pictures does or does not fit the food group.

### Variations:

- Hold a school or classroom food drive. Have children sort the food that was donated into MyPlate food groups.
- Collect an assortment of clean, empty food containers such as a cereal box, a soup can, a peanut butter jar, etc. Have children sort them into the appropriate bag. Discuss with students how many foods contain more than one food group.
- When you pull foods out of the bag, discuss how some foods are foods that we should eat often, such as fruit, vegetables, and milk, while other foods are foods we should eat only once in awhile, such as cookies or candy. These are called “sometimes” foods, not everyday foods.



### RECIPE

Power Lifters, p. 31



## Feed the Clown

### Object of the Game:

To become familiar with nutritious foods by feeding the clown.

### Materials Needed:

- Large paper grocery bag
- Pictures of foods
- Construction paper in different colors
- Paste or glue
- Markers
- Scissors



### Get Ready:

Make a clown face on a paper bag using construction paper and markers. Cut a four to five inch long hole in the clown's mouth.

### The Activity:

Spread the food model cards or pictures out on a table. Have the children take turns choosing food model cards and feeding it to the clown. Ask children questions about the foods they choose such as:

- What color and shape is your food?
- Have you ever tried it before?
- Are you willing to try it?



### Variations:

- Provide children with pictures of edible and non-edible items. Have them feed the clown only edible items.
- Have the children feed the clown...
  - Only fruits, only grains, only foods made from milk, etc.
  - Combination foods
  - Foods you like to eat. (Have a discussion about how everyone has different tastes and likes different foods. Explain that it's important to try different kinds of foods so you can find out what foods you like best.)



Mini Clown Faces, p. 26



## I Spy a ...

### Object of the Game:

To practice identifying foods by listening to a description of their characteristics.

### Materials Needed:

- Pictures of food or food model cards
- One pair of plastic glasses

### Get Ready:

Have students sit in a circle on the floor. Place food pictures or food model cards randomly inside the circle.



### The Activity:

Begin the activity by giving a simple clue such as “I see something yellow.” If a child guesses what you are “spying” incorrectly, give another clue such as “I see something yellow that has to be peeled before you eat it.” If the food is not guessed after three clues give the answer and remove that food from the circle; then begin again. If someone guesses correctly, he/she becomes the clue giver and gets the spy glasses. To make things easier, tell children they must give the color of the food as a clue. Prompt them to think of other clues to give such as shape, how it feels, what you eat it with, etc.



### Variations:

- For very young children, the leader calls out the name of a food and the children try to find it, i.e. “I spy a pear.”
- Number paper markers 1-20 (or however many food pictures you are using). When a child identifies the first food, he/she puts a number 1 on it. Number 2 goes on the second food and so on. This teaches beginning counting and number recognition skills.

Very young children might have trouble giving clues. If that’s the case the leader can give verbal prompts such as:

- What color is it?
- What shape is it?
- Is it sweet?
- What does it taste like?
- How does it feel? Lumpy or smooth? Hard or soft?

*Tip: Young children love putting on the silly glasses with the plastic noses attached. Or, you can use pretend glasses by making two circles with your thumbs and index fingers and putting them up to your eyes.*



### RECIPE

Veggie Taco Pinwheels,  
p. 27



## Edible Fish Pond

### Object of the Game:

To practice identifying foods and food characteristics.

### Materials Needed:

- Food pictures or food model cards
- Paper clips
- Small fishing pole (yardsticks, tree branch, dowel)
- String
- Magnets
- A fishing hat (optional)
- 60 inch round, disposable blue plastic tablecloth (optional)

### Get Ready:

Attach one small paperclip to each food picture or food model card. Make fishing poles: Attach string and magnet to yardstick, branch or dowel. You will need 2-3 poles depending on the size of your group. Place food pictures or food model cards on top of the tablecloth. This is your pond. If you don't have a tablecloth set up the pond without it. Make sure all pictures are face up.

### The Activity:

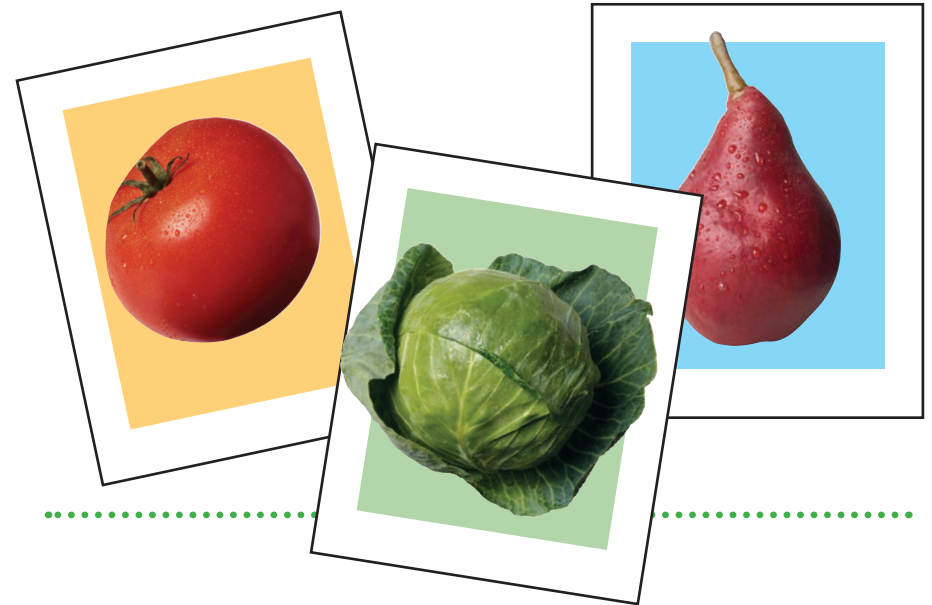
Have students sit in a circle on the floor. Begin the activity by choosing 2-3 students to "fish" first. Hand out the poles. Tell children to fish for:

- A specific kind or color of food.
- A food you like to eat.
- A food you have not tasted before but are willing to try.
- Any food. Have children name what they caught.
- A food from a specific food group e.g. a vegetable.

When the fishermen "catch" something, invite them to talk about what they caught. Take turns and play as long as time and interest permits.

### Variations:

- Students can try to spell or name the beginning or ending letter sound of the food they "caught."
- Play this outside on the playground or sidewalk and use chalk to make your pond.



### RECIPE

Zoo Food, p. 32



## The Incredible Milk Making Machine

### Object of the Game:

To teach students that milk comes from a cow, and that there are many different foods that are made with milk.

### Materials Needed:

- Poster Board
- Markers and or crayons
- Glue or paste
- Hand drawn or cut out of a cow to fit the size of the poster board
- At least 20 food model cards or food pictures of many different kinds of foods. Be sure to include as many dairy foods as you can: milk, chocolate milk, yogurt, pudding, ice cream, cottage cheese, cheddar cheese, etc.
- Two baskets to hold food pictures



### Get Ready:

Draw a cow or glue a picture of a cow on a poster board. Gather 20 food model cards.

### The Activity

- Explain that a cow is a mammal and that female mammals make milk for their young. Explain that milk comes from cows and that many different foods and drinks are made from or with milk. Tell students that foods made with milk are called dairy foods and that dairy foods help build strong bones and teeth.

- Have each child take a picture of a food from the basket. If it's made from milk, they should put it in the basket in front of the cow. If it's not made from or with milk they should put it in the other basket. Go through the basket of foods made from milk and discuss different ways we enjoy eating dairy foods.

### Variations:

- Place a dot on the back of the food pictures that are made from milk so players can self check.
- Make a similar game for foods that grow in the ground (vegetables, fruits, grains).



### RECIPE

Good Morning Yogurt Parfait, p. 24  
Tiger Tail Parfait, p. 31



## Fruit and Vegetable Shape Shake

### Object of the Game:

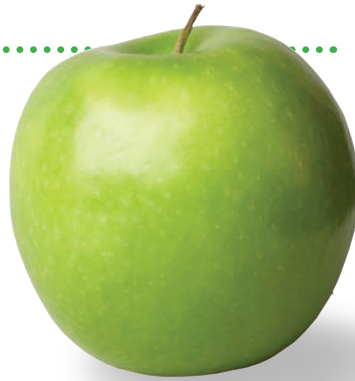
To help children develop their listening and motor skills.

### Materials Needed:

- Cardstock or poster board, different colors
- Scissors
- String

### Get Ready:

Cut large (5-6 inches in diameter) fruit or vegetable shapes out of cardstock. You need one shape per two students. Repeats are OK. Punch a small hole in the center of each shape. Cut one long length (4-5 feet) of heavy string per two students. Thread a shape onto each string. Tie a handle on each end.



### The Activity:

Have two students stand facing each other. Each student should hold one end of the string by the handle. One student will hold their end of the string still, while the other shakes his/her string to move the fruit or vegetable shape to the other end. Then, have students switch roles. Have students switch strings with another pair of students who have a different shape. Continue switching as long as time permits.

Ask: Which shapes were easier or harder to shake to the other side? Why?

### Variations:

- Do the same activity using cut out shapes, e.g. triangle, square, circle oval, etc., instead of food shapes.

*Tip: Don't make the hole too large or the shape will easily slide to the other end. The hole should be big enough so the shapes move when shaken, but not so big that it slides immediately to the other end.*



### RECIPE

Fro Yo Confetti Cookies, p 29





## Bean Bag Toss

### Object of the Game:

To learn different ways to classify foods.

### Materials Needed:

One bean bag or fruit and veggie bean bag toy

### Get Ready:

Prepare the children for this activity by talking about and giving examples of foods in the five main food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein foods.

### The Activity:

Have the children sit in a circle surrounding the leader. The leader calls out a food group, e.g. fruits, and tosses the bean bag to a student who must name a food in that food group.

Example: banana.

That student then tosses it to another student who must think

of another fruit and so on until

the leader asks for the bean bag back and changes the food group to something else, e.g. dairy foods.

Continue playing until all have had a few chances to catch the bean bag.

### Variations:

- Play the game the same way but instead of food groups ask students to name something else, such as foods that are red (green, blue, white), foods we eat for breakfast, healthy snack foods you like to eat, etc.
- Instead of identifying foods children can...
  - Say the alphabet letter that comes next, i.e. the leader says "A", the student who catches the bag says "B".
  - Older children can follow simple math sequences such as counting by twos or fives, or spelling simple words.



### RECIPE

Magic Fruit Salad, p. 31



## Food Grows!

### Object of the Game:

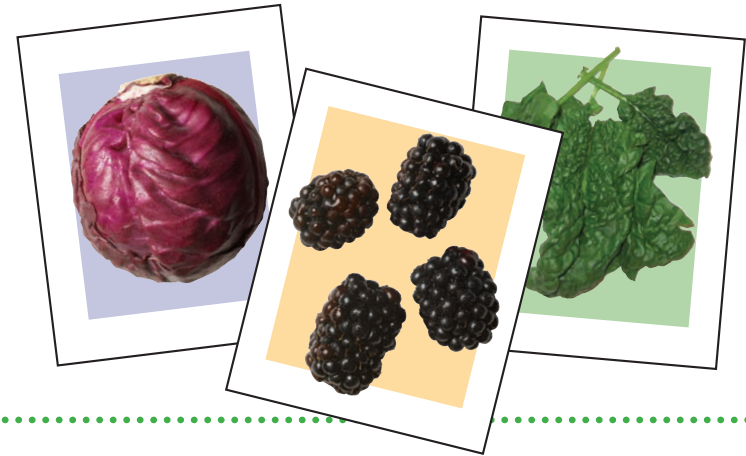
To learn more about how food grows and where different kinds of food come from.

### Materials Needed:

- Poster board, several pieces
- Crayons or markers
- Food pictures or food model cards
- Poster putty

### Get Ready:

On pieces of poster board, draw simple pictures of places food comes from such as a garden, a field, the water, a tree, a cow, a chicken. Post the boards on the wall, chalkboard, or whiteboard where students can see.



### The Activity:

Hand out food picture or food models, one per child. Have a short discussion with children about the many places food comes from. Show them the posters and explain what they are. One by one, have the children identify where they think the food they are holding comes from. Using poster putty, let them stick their food model or picture on the appropriate chart.

### Variations:

- Without using the posters, have students classify their food pictures by beginning letters, number of syllables by what they are: leaf, stem, seed, root, flower, or other.



### RECIPE

Cheese Flowers, p 28



## Tight Rope Balancing Act

### Object of the Game:

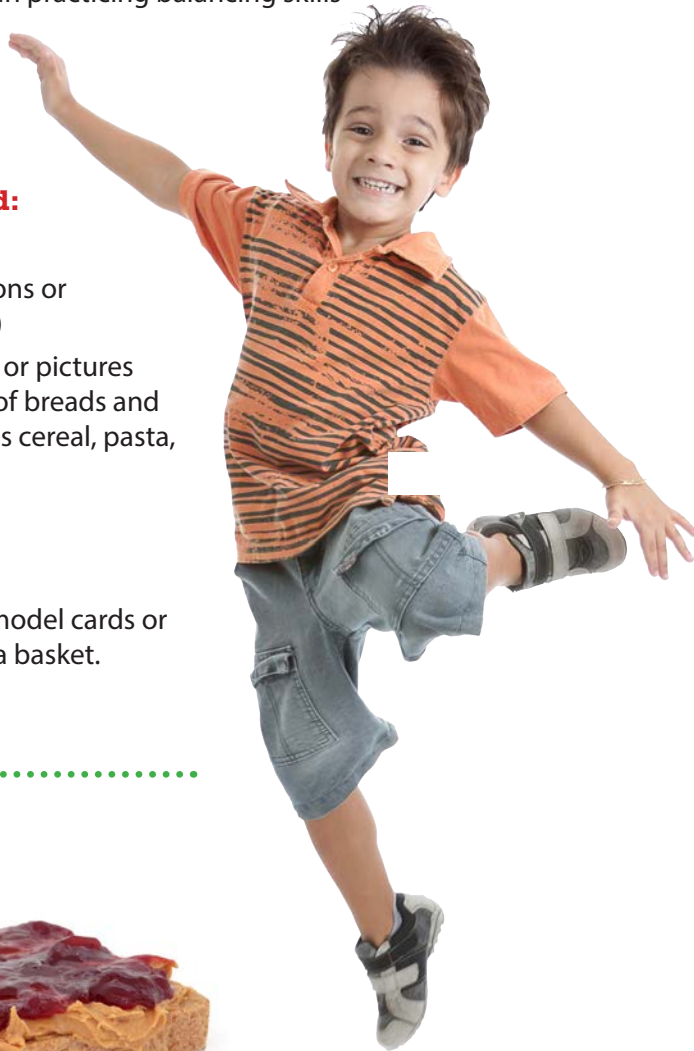
Students will have fun practicing balancing skills while they learn about different types of breads and grains.

### Materials Needed:

- Music
- Paper plates, crayons or markers (optional)
- Food model cards or pictures of different kinds of breads and grain foods such as cereal, pasta, rice, tortillas, etc.
- Basket

### Get Ready:

Put the bread food model cards or pictures of bread in a basket.



### The Activity:

Have students choose one picture or food model card from the basket. Ask students: *What kind of bread or grain do you have? What color or shape is it? Have you ever tried this food before? How would you eat it? Alone? With something on it like peanut butter, cheese, or jelly? For breakfast?* Tell children that bread, and other foods in the grain group give us energy and that we need energy to learn and play.

Put on some fun music and tell students to balance their breads:

- on one hand with an arm stretched out
- on one hand over the head
- on one hand to the side
- on one knee
- on one foot
- on their heads while walking, gliding, marching, etc.
- on their heads while standing on one foot

### Variations:

- Have students draw their favorite kind of bread or grain on a paper plate and color it using markers or crayons. They can use this for the balancing activity instead of a food picture or food model card.

*Tip: Bring in several different kinds, colors and shapes of bread. Cut them up and let children taste them.*



### RECIPE

Strawberries & Cream  
Sandwiches, p. 27



## The Incredible Mystery Sock

### Object of the Game:

To help children use their senses as aids for learning about food.

### Materials Needed:

- Brightly colored construction paper
- 1 extra large man's sock (the crazier the sock the better)
- 1 strong plastic cup or glass
- 3-5 different fruits and vegetables

### Get Ready:

Stretch the sock and put the cup inside. This is your mystery sock. When students are not looking you will put the mystery foods, one at a time, inside the cup.

### The Activity:

Have a discussion with students about the different fruits and vegetables you brought to class. Talk about their physical attributes e.g. color, shape, size, smell, texture, etc. Tell students to cover their eyes. No peeking! Put one food in the sock, e.g. an apple, and put a blanket or other covering over the remaining foods. Pass around the sock and let each student reach in, touch it, and try to guess which food it is. Repeat with the remaining foods you have.



### Rules for the Mystery Sock

**Don't look inside the sock.**

**You can smell inside the sock.**

**Reach in carefully. Don't squeeze or handle the food roughly.**

**Feel the food for a few seconds then pass it to your neighbor.**



### Variations:

- If you have a large group of students let only a few students reach in the sock (choosing different students each time) per fruit or vegetable. The others can listen to what the "feeler" says and help guess which food is inside.
- Add foods from different food groups to the sock, such as dry beans, popcorn, or pasta.

*Tip: Have a Fruit and Vegetable Tasting Party using other (not previously handled) fruits and vegetables that are the same kind that students handled. Talk about how they taste: sweet, salty, bitter, etc.*



### RECIPE

Vanishing Veggies and Creamy Guacamole Dip , p. 32





## Simon Senses

### Object of the Game:

To practice identifying which of our body parts are responsible for the five senses, and to talk about how we use these senses to enjoy food.

### Materials Needed:

- 1 kiwi fruit - touch
- 1 banana - sight
- 1-3 oranges - taste
- 1 onion - smell
- 1 stalk of celery or 1 carrot - hearing



### Get Ready:

Prepare the Tasting Party foods if having ahead of time.

### The Activity:

Have children sit in a large circle. Using the fruits and veggies as props, pass them around the circle and talk about how you use your senses to help you decide what you are going to eat.

*Ask: What other fruits and vegetables do you like to touch? Which ones do you like to smell or eat? How do they taste? Name some foods that are loud when you eat them? What are some foods that are quiet when you eat them?*

Discuss and explain the rules of Simon Says if students don't already know how to play. Explain that they will be playing Simon Senses, a game where they will have to use what they know about their senses to play the game. Review the five senses, using the fruits and vegetables to provide examples, e.g. onion - sense of smell; kiwi - sense of touch.

**Play the Game:** Example: "Simon says put your hands over what you hear with [ears]. Simon says wave two things you can touch with [hands] Cover the things you see with [eyes]." Play the game as long as time permits.



After the activity and if time allows, have a Tasting Party. Taste a few different foods that children can enjoy with their senses.

*Ask: Which senses are you using?* Fun choices are: pretzels, yogurt, oranges, apples, fresh spinach, banana, lemon, kiwi, and grapefruit.

### Variations:

If playing with very young children you may need to tell them directly (instead of giving clues) which body part to engage, e.g. "cover your eyes, put your hands over your ears, open your mouth," etc.



### RECIPE

All American Circus Cones, p. 28



# RECIPES

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# RECIPES

## INCREDIBLE BREAKFASTS!

The recipes in The 3 Ring Food Circus do not contain crediting information for the Child and Adult Care Food program (CACFP). When using the recipes to credit for the CACFP, please refer to the current CACFP meal pattern guidelines. The meal pattern guidelines can be found at the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) CACFP website: [www.michigan.gov/CACFP](http://www.michigan.gov/CACFP). If you have any questions regarding CACFP, please contact MDE at 517/373-7391.

### Berry Go Rounds

Serves 6, 4 waffles each

- 24 mini toaster waffles
- Flavored spreadable cream cheese such as strawberry, cinnamon and brown sugar, chocolate, blueberry, pineapple, or whipped mixed berry
- Cut or sliced fruit, a variety such as grapes, blueberries, strawberries, drained pineapple tidbits, mandarin oranges, etc.



Toast waffles. Spread cream cheese on top of each waffle and top with fruit of choice.

*Quick Tip: Change it up by using full size waffles, one each.*

### Caramel Apple Wraps

Serves 8

- 1 cup fat-free vanilla Greek yogurt
- ½ cup creamy peanut butter
- 8 small tortillas
- 3 large apples, any kind
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- Fat-free caramel sundae syrup



Wash and dice apples. In a small bowl, mix together sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over cut apples and toss to coat. In another small bowl stir together yogurt and peanut butter until smooth. Spread about 2 tablespoons yogurt mixture onto tortillas. Sprinkle apple/cinnamon mixture on top. Drizzle lightly with caramel topping. Roll and eat.

*Quick Tip: You can also make the spread with Sunbutter or almond butter instead of peanut butter.*





## Carousel-Colored Overnight Oatmeal

Serves 1

- 1 (4-6 oz.) container fat-free yogurt, any flavor
- ¼ cup oatmeal (old-fashioned or quick cooking)
- ¼ cup fruit such as raspberries, strawberries, canned or fresh pineapple, kiwi, mandarin oranges, etc.

In a container with a tight-fitting lid, mix together yogurt, oats, and fruit. Cover and refrigerate at least 8 hours. Top with additional fruit before serving if desired.

*Quick Tip:* Any kind of fruit can be used in this recipe. Choose fruits that match or complement the yogurt flavor. If you are making this for a large group, use plastic cups and cover the cups with plastic wrap or lids.



## Good Morning Yogurt Parfait

Serves 6

- 24 oz. low-fat or fat-free vanilla yogurt
- 2 cups cut-up fruit, any kind
- 1 cup granola or other cereal (optional)



Layer in a small bowl or cup in this order: fruit, yogurt, fruit, yogurt. Top with cereal or granola if desired.

*Tip:* You can also make this recipe using low-fat or non-fat cottage cheese sweetened with a little honey and cinnamon.

## Lion Tamer Smoothie

Serves 12



- 1 can (15 oz.) pumpkin pie filling
- 3 cups fat-free milk
- 1 cup low-fat or fat-free vanilla Greek yogurt
- Dash cinnamon (optional)
- 3 whole cinnamon graham crackers, crushed
- Whipped cream (optional)

Ahead of time, freeze pumpkin pie filling in a freezer safe container until frozen solid. Combine the milk, yogurt, and frozen pumpkin in a blender and blend until smooth. Taste and add a dash of cinnamon if desired. Pour into cups and top with whipped cream (optional). Sprinkle with graham cracker crumbs and serve immediately.





## Under the Big Top Egg Burritos

Serves 12

- 12 eggs
- Non-stick spray
- ½-1 pound turkey sausage, cooked and drained
- ¼ cup chunky salsa
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar or Pepper Jack cheese
- 12 small flour tortillas

Spray a large skillet with non-stick spray. Beat eggs in large bowl and add to skillet. Cook the eggs until scrambled and set. Add cooked sausage and salsa to egg mixture and mix gently. Warm tortillas as directed on package. Place about ½ cup egg and sausage mixture onto each tortilla and sprinkle with some cheese. Roll up each tortilla to make burritos, folding in the ends and rolling up. When cool to the touch, wrap burritos in paper towel, then in foil. Pack burritos into large zip-top freezer bags. When ready to eat, take out burritos, remove foil, and microwave in paper towel until hot (about 1-2 minutes), or until warm and cheese is melted. Times will vary depending on microwave.



*Quick Tip: Change it up by using precooked hash browns instead of sausage, and/or add any veggies you like while cooking the sausage such as peppers, onions, or mushrooms.*



## MAIN ATTRACTIONS

### Animal Go-Rounds

Serves 12

- 12 full-size rice cakes, plain or whole grain English muffin
- 8 oz. low-fat whipped or softened cream cheese, plain or flavored
- Animal crackers, any kind, about 5 each
- Decorations: thinly sliced low-fat deli ham or turkey pepperoni, shredded low-fat cheese, and veggies such as broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, and shredded carrot



Spread low-fat cream cheese or peanut butter onto full size rice cake. Stand up animal crackers in the spread, and decorate.





## Disappearing Lettuce Wraps

Serves 12

- 12 washed and dried lettuce leaves (leaf lettuce works best)
- About a cup of peanut butter or 8 oz. whipped plain or flavored cream cheese
- Shredded carrot
- Chopped celery
- Raisins

Spread lettuce leaf with peanut butter or softened cream cheese. Add carrots, celery, and raisins. Roll up and eat. Watch them “disappear.”

## Mini Clown Faces

Serves 12

- 6 whole grain English muffins
- 1 cup pizza sauce or spaghetti sauce
- 2 cups low-fat shredded mozzarella or Italian style cheese
- Sliced olives, green onions, shredded carrot, colored peppers, etc.

Slice English muffins in half. Top with pizza sauce or spaghetti sauce. Sprinkle with cheese and decorate with toppings. Heat in the microwave or oven just until cheese melts.





## Strawberries & Cream Sandwich

Serves 12, ½ sandwich each

- 2 8-oz. containers, plain or flavored, low-fat softened cream cheese
- 12 slices of whole wheat bread
- 12-15 large fresh strawberries, sliced
- 2 teaspoons honey

Spread cream cheese on whole wheat bread and place strawberries on top. Drizzle with a little honey. Cut in half and serve. Younger children may prefer ¼ sandwich.

*Quick tip: For a variation, use cinnamon bread or try the bread toasted.*



## Veggie Taco Pinwheels

Serves 16, ½ wrap each

- 1 can (16 oz.) refried beans
- ½ cup salsa (any variety)
- 1 package whole grain flour tortillas for burritos (8 tortillas; 8 inch)
- 1 cup shredded lettuce
- ½-1 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese

Stir together beans and ¼ cup salsa in a medium-size microwave safe bowl. Heat in the microwave until warm. Spread about 2-3 tablespoons of the bean mixture onto each tortilla; leaving about ¼ inch without beans around the edges. Top with lettuce and cheese. Roll tortilla, folding over the sides after the first roll. Cut into ½ inch wide, pinwheels and place on a microwave safe plate. Microwave just until cheese begins to melt. Serve immediately with additional salsa if desired.



## SNACKS AND SIDESHOWS!

### All American Circus Cones

Serves 12

- 12 ice cream cones
- 3 cups ready to eat cereal, any kind
- 3 cups cut up fresh fruit, any kind
- 32 oz. low-fat or fat-free vanilla yogurt

Place the ingredients in three separate bowls: cereal, fruit, and yogurt. Instruct the children to spoon the ingredients into their cones in the following order: cereal (on the bottom to keep the cone dry), fruit, yogurt, and fruit. Eat right away.



### Cheese Critters

Serves 12



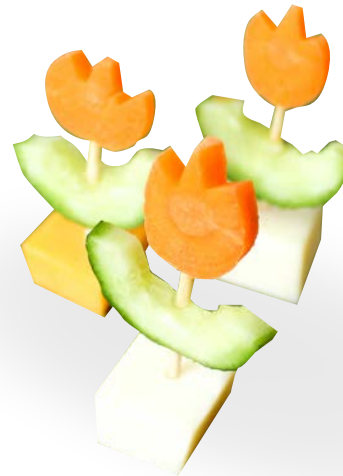
- Cheese sticks, one per child, any kind
- Pretzels and/or chow mein noodles
- Raisins or mini chocolate chips (optional)

Stick pretzels into cheese to create crafty, edible critters! You can break the pretzels into different lengths to make legs, tails, antennae, and tongues. Use raisins or chocolate chips for eyes.

### Cheese Flowers

Serves 12, 2 flowers each

- 12 oz. of cheese (Cheddar, Mozzarella, and/or Monterey Jack), cubed
- 2 cucumbers, sliced and halved
- 2 medium carrot, sliced into 24 circles
- Toothpicks



Cut two small triangles out of the top of the carrot slices to form a tulip shape. For the leaves, scoop out the seeds of the cucumber to create a half-moon shape. Put the toothpick through the cucumber with the carrot on top, and use cheese as the base.



## Drum Major's Banana Batons

Serves 12

- 6 large bananas
- 1-1 ½ cups vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup crisp rice cereal with strawberries
- Popsicle sticks



Peel and cut the bananas in half (not lengthwise). Spread the container of yogurt out on a plate. Pour the cereal onto another plate. Push a popsicle stick through the bottom of each banana half. Roll the banana in the yogurt. You may need to help apply the yogurt with a spoon. Carefully roll or press the banana into the cereal so it sticks on all sides. Place the finished batons on a cookie sheet lined with wax or parchment paper. Freeze the bananas for 1-2 hours or until frozen. Store in the freezer in an airtight container until ready to eat.

## Easy Cheesecake Snackers

Serves 12

- 12 whole wheat graham crackers
- 1 cup low-fat ricotta cheese
- 1 (15.5 oz. jar), low sugar jam, any flavor

Spread whole wheat graham crackers with Ricotta cheese and top with your favorite jam.



*Quick tip: Use a variety of different kinds of jam.*



## Fro Yo Confetti Cookies

Serves 12, 1 sandwich each

- About 2 cups frozen yogurt, any flavor
- 24 chocolate or vanilla wafer-style cookies or 24 mini waffles, toasted
- Confetti style sprinkles

Scoop about 1 tablespoon of yogurt on bottom of 1 cookie. Top with second cookie, and squeeze gently. Roll each cookie sandwich, on its side, in confetti sprinkles. Carefully wrap confetti cookies in plastic wrap and freeze, about 15 minutes to set.

*Change it: You can also make these cookies using frozen pudding instead of frozen yogurt.*



## Happy Cheese Mice

- 100% whole wheat or whole grain crackers
- Cheese wedges
- Baby carrots
- Black olives
- Chives

Place a wedge of cheese onto a whole wheat cracker. Assemble ears with slices of baby carrots, and use olive pieces to make a nose and eyes. Finish it up with a chive for the tail!



## Juice Pop Variety Act



- 100% juice concentrate (several kinds)
- Fat free plain or vanilla Greek yogurt

In a small paper cup have each child mix together two tablespoons slightly thawed 100% juice concentrate with two tablespoons plain yogurt. Insert popsicle sticks, plastic spoons, or cut straws, in the middle and freeze. Allow to thaw slightly to remove from cups.

*\*1 fluid ounce of juice concentrate roughly equals two tablespoons. One 11.5 oz. can of juice concentrate, together with the yogurt, will make about 10 juice pops.*

## Silly Dilly Cheese Popcorn

Serves 12

*Popcorn may be a choking hazard for young children.*

- 12 cups popped popcorn
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Non-stick cooking spray
- 1-1 ½ tablespoons dried dill weed

Place popcorn in a large bowl. Spray the popcorn lightly with non-stick spray. Sprinkle half the cheese and half the dill onto the popcorn. Toss well. Spray the popcorn lightly again, then toss with the remaining cheese and dill weed.



## Magic Fruit Salad

Serves 12

- 1 20-oz can pineapple chunks in natural juice, drained
- 2 diced apples or ½ pound seedless grapes cut in half
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 1 ¾ cups fat free milk
- 1 (5.1 oz.) box vanilla pudding mix

Combine pineapple, apples or grapes, sliced banana, and milk in a bowl. Stirring very slowly, sprinkle pudding (while stirring) over fruit. Let stand five minutes to set.

*Note: Any combination of fresh, frozen or canned fruits may be used in this recipe. Do not use fresh pineapple or kiwi fruit because the pudding will not set.*



## Power Lifters

Serves 12, 2 Power Lifters each

- 1 cup peanut butter
- ½-1 cup non-fat dry milk powder
- ½ cup raisins or other dried fruit cut into small pieces
- 2-3 tablespoons mini chocolate chips
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs

Mix together in a bowl, all ingredients except the graham cracker crumbs. Shape mixture into 1-inch balls. Roll in crumbs and refrigerate or freeze balls before eating.



## Tiger Tail Parfaits

Serves 4

- 3 containers (5.3 oz.) orange cream yogurt
- 16 oz. prepared low-fat chocolate pudding
- Orange food coloring (optional)
- 1 cup crushed chocolate wheat squares, chocolate rice cereal, or chocolate graham crackers



If desired, add a little food coloring to the yogurt to achieve a brighter orange color. (If you do not have orange, mix yellow and red together.) Layer yogurt and pudding in a bowl ending with yogurt layer. Sprinkle crushed cereal on top.

*Quick tip: Instead of orange-flavored yogurt you can use vanilla yogurt colored with food coloring. Greek yogurt works best because it is more firm.*





## Vanishing Veggies and Creamy Guacamole Dip

Serves 12

- 1 package (8 oz.) low-fat cream cheese, **softened**
- 2 cups 100% fat free, plain Greek yogurt
- 4 whole ripe medium avocados peeled, seeded, and mashed
- 1 cup salsa verde (green chile salsa)
- 2-3 teaspoons lemon or lime juice
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Cut fresh veggies for dipping

In a food processor or a medium mixing bowl using an electric mixer, mix cream cheese and yogurt until smooth. Add mashed avocados, salsa, and 2 teaspoons juice to cream cheese mixture and combine well. Season to taste with salt and additional lemon or lime juice. Serve with veggies for dipping.

Source: [www.realcaliforniamilk.com](http://www.realcaliforniamilk.com)

## Zoo Food

20 - 24 small servings



- 1 cup raisins or yogurt covered raisins
- 1 cup tiny pretzel twists
- 1 cup bear-shaped graham crackers
- 1 cup animal crackers
- 1 cup oat cereal
- 1 cup fish-shaped crackers
- 1 cup chocolate covered candies

Combine all together in a large bowl and mix well.  
Store in an airtight container.







# RESOURCES

## FOOD PICTURES, MODELS AND CARDS

Several of the activities in Three Ring Food Circus require pictures of food. Make your own from cut out laminated magazine pictures or purchase or download any of the following:

- **Food Model Cards**

A set of over 300 pictures of real foods. Each card represents a single food item. The whole set includes cards from all of the food groups as well as many “combination foods” such as macaroni and cheese, tacos, and spaghetti. The cards also have nutrition information labels on the back. Purchase from the United Dairy Industry of Michigan at 800-241-6455.

- **Food Cards**

Download, print, and laminate 40 colorful food cards that feature foods from all the food groups from the USDA kindergarten curriculum, Discover MyPlate. Find them here:  
[http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dmp\\_foodcards.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/dmp_foodcards.pdf)

- **Fruit and Vegetable Flash Cards**

A boxed set of 44 fruit and vegetable flash cards. These cards teach identification skills and vocabulary while reinforcing their knowledge of colors and categories. This bilingual set comes with instructions for a variety of uses with groups or individuals. The cards are heavy card stock and laminated — perfect for frequent use in the classroom. Sold by Brain Child Press.



## MUSIC

Many of the Three Ring Food Circus activities can be enhanced with music and movement. Little ones love to move! Here are some suggestions:

- **The Amazing Body by Music, Movement & Magination**

Learning about the body has never been so fun. Lively music helps children learn about health, food, exercise, brushing teeth, taking care of themselves, and more. Twenty songs to listen and move to including The Food Groups are Rockin' Tonight.

- **Veggie Power by Erna Walker**

Twelve powerful songs for kids that focus on different ways to keep their bodies strong. Ideal for teachers, caregivers, and parents as an aid to teach good nutrition through upbeat music, with lyrics that encourage kids to be and stay healthy.

- **Nutrition and Fitness Can Be Fun by The Learning Station**

Fifteen catchy tunes that many children recognize with new and different words that focus on eating healthy and being active. Songs are packed full of interaction and physical activity.

- **Eat Like a Rainbow by Jay Mankita**

This award-winning 10 song children's album about healthy fruits and vegetables is for children and families of all ages. Download all the songs for free here: <http://eat-like-a-rainbow.bandcamp.com/>, or pay for the CD if you are able.

- **Choose MyPlate Songs; United States Department of Agriculture**

Three free upbeat, health-focused songs you can play for students straight from your computer: **Alive with Five**, **Do Your Body Right**, and **Do and Be**. Available at the MyPlate Kids' Place web site.

- **Goin' on a Journey: Songs for Every Body by Jill Jayne**

A wildly popular rock and roll style CD that teaches young children about healthy eating, being active, and staying clean.



## NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Below are a few Web sites where you can view, download, or order additional resources for young children and their parents, teachers, or caregivers. This is not an all-inclusive list.

### MyPlate Kids Place - [www.choosemyplate.gov/kids/](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids/)

Learn more about MyPlate, our Food Guidance System. Find information on how to build a healthy plate, appropriate serving sizes for young children, ideas to encourage trying new foods, and physical activity recommendations. Download or access games, activity sheets, videos, songs and more. Age-appropriate songs with positive health messages that you can play for kids during any of the Three Ring Food Circus activities that suggest music are: *Five Food Groups*, *Do Your Body Right*, and *Do and Be*.



### USDA Team Nutrition: [www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition)

No cost resources including curricula, storybooks, healthy recipes, and parent/caregiver fact sheets for schools and childcare centers. All resource available for download; print copies may also be available.

- **Discover MyPlate for Kindergarten**

Fun and inquiry-based nutrition education that fosters the development of healthy food choices and physically active lifestyles during a critical developmental and learning period for children — kindergarten. Program teaches core content for kindergarten and includes four downloadable, emergent reader mini books.

- **Five Food Groups Poster for Children**

Download a poster that features USDA's MyPlate, with pictures of food in each food group section for non-readers. This poster is included with the Discover MyPlate curriculum.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/discover-myplate-nutrition-education-kindergarten>



- **Launch Your Day with Breakfast and Make Today a Try Day stickers**

Order these at no cost when in stock from Team Nutrition. Use them to encourage students to eat a healthy breakfast or to reward them for trying a new food.

- **Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Childcare Centers and Schools**

Recipes feature foods both children and adults should eat more of: dark green and orange vegetables, dry beans and peas, and whole grains. All of the recipes are low in total fat, saturated fat, sugar and sodium. With fun names like Porcupine Sliders, Smokin' Powerhouse Chili, and Squish Squash Lasagna, these kid-tested, kid-approved recipes are sure to please children and be an instant hit.

- **Nibbles for Health Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children**

Reproducible newsletters that staff can give to parents and caregivers to address many of the challenges they face when trying to feed and nurture healthy, active children.

- **The Two Bite Club**

This story book, available in English and in Spanish, was developed to introduce MyPlate to young children. The book encourages children to take just two bites, like the characters in the story. The back of the book contains a MyPlate coloring page, a blank certificate for the Two Bite Club, fun activity pages for kids, and Tips for Growing Healthy Eaters.

- **Grow It, Try It, Like It!**

A garden-themed nutrition education kit for childcare center staff that introduces children to: three fruits — peaches, strawberries, and cantaloupe, and three vegetables — spinach, sweet potatoes, and crookneck squash.

### United Dairy Industry of Michigan – [www.MilkMeansMore.org](http://www.MilkMeansMore.org)

Fact sheets, handouts, coloring books, food model cards, kid-approved recipes, and more. Check back often to see what's available. Some resources available at no charge. Find them here: [www.MilkMeansMore.org](http://www.MilkMeansMore.org)

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS WITH FOOD AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THEMES

Below are short annotations for several good books about food and health that preschoolers and young children will enjoy. The books listed here are not meant to be used with any one particular activity in Three Ring Food Circus. They can be used together with an activity to extend and broaden its focus or alone to teach and reinforce basic food, nutrition, and health concepts.

Many of these books can be found in your school, program, or local library, or may be purchased new or used from local or online booksellers. Use these books with young children to:

- Create enthusiasm for tasting new foods;
- Teach them about food, where it comes from, what it looks like, and how it grows;
- Get them up and moving while learning and/or motivate them to be active every day; and
- Teach basic nutrition concepts and beginning literacy skills.



### MyPlate and the Food Groups

- **Jack and the Hungry Giant Eat Right with MyPlate, by Loreen Leedy**  
An interesting twist on the original story, where the giant prepares Jack a complete meal with all of the MyPlate food groups, before he goes home again.
- **MyPlate and You, by Gillia M. Olson**  
Colorful photos and simple text describe the MyPlate plan for healthy eating.
- **What's on MyPlate? (series), by Mari Schuh**  
Learn about how MyPlate helps kids make good food choices every day. There are eight books in this series, one book for each of the five food groups, and one book each on drinking water, healthy snacking, and sugars and fats.
- **On Your Plate (series), by Honor Head**  
Large-print, easy readers introduce children to the topic of fruits, vegetables, beans and nuts, milk cheese and eggs, and salad! Vibrant photos and playful graphics of healthy foods.

### Try New Foods

- **Carla's Sandwich, by Debbie Herman**  
Carla likes different types of sandwiches; some might even call them weird. When Buster forgets his sandwich, Carla finds a way to change everyone's mind about her creative sandwich choices. The amazing sandwich illustrations and the expressions on the children's faces are what makes this book one kids request again and again.
- **Food is Fun, by Marcia Leonard**  
Food is fun. It comes in all colors, shapes, flavors, and sizes. This lively rhyme about food — from finger-licky jelly to bumpy sour pickles — is just right for very young children or beginning preschoolers.
- **I Will Never, Not Ever Eat a Tomato, by Lauren Child**  
Charlie is supposed to give his little sister, Lola, her dinner, but Lola is a very fussy eater. How Charlie uses his imagination to get Lola to eat makes this a funny and delightful book.
- **Lunch, by Denise Fleming**  
Mouse was sooo hungry. He ate many fruits and vegetables on the kitchen table. Large, brightly colored illustrations and simple text engage young children in learning about fruits and vegetables. Young children can guess the names of the foods from the word and picture clues.
- **Yoko, by Rosemary Wells**  
Yoko's mother has made her favorite sushi to bring to school for lunch. When the other students make fun of her and no one will accept Yoko and her favorite food, her teacher decides to have an international food day where everyone must try different things. An excellent tale for children on accepting differences and trying new things.
- **Rabbit Food, by Susanna Gretz**  
Vegetables — John's brother and sister love them, but he won't touch that rabbit food no matter what! How can John's parents get him to eat his vegetables? With the help of Uncle Bunny, who sets a humorous but realistic example, as he eats his veggies but hides his carrots under his napkin.
- **Sylvia's Spinach, by Katherine Pryor**  
"No spinach! Ever!" declares Sylvia. But, when she is given a packet of spinach seeds to grow for a class project, she slowly comes around as the seedlings sprout into the green, leafy vegetable she once despised. A few nibbles later, Sylvia decides that spinach isn't so bad after all.

## How Food Grows

- **Apple Farmer Annie, by Monica Wellington**

This simple story about Annie, an apple farmer, provides young children with basic information about where apples come from and ways they are eaten, from cider to apple muffins. It concludes with two pages of apple recipes.

- **Farming, by Gail Gibbons**

This book provides an introduction to farms and the work done on them throughout the seasons. Simple text and folk art illustrations combine to make this an engaging picture book.

- **From the Garden: A Counting Book About Growing Food, by Michael Dahl**

The book begins with mama pulling one juicy tomato from the garden and ends with 12 plates of salad, all with ingredients the family has grown and gathered.

- **Growing Colors, by Bruce McMillan**

This picture book uses color photographs and one-word captions to introduce 14 fruits and vegetables, their colors, and how they grow.

- **It's Harvest Time, by Jean McElroy**

In this creative fold out book, children can watch seeds grow right before their eyes! With a lift of each flap, kids can watch the seeds take root in the soil, sprout from the ground, and finally, make the colorful fruits and veggies we love to eat! A perfect springboard to an "eat your colors" tasting party.

- **Out and About at the Dairy Farm, by Andy Murphy**

This simple yet engaging book describes in simple terms the activities of a dairy farm, the machines used on the farm, and the process used to get the milk to our table.

## Cultures and Customs

- **Dim Sum for Everyone, by Grace Lin**

A little girl and her family visit a dim sum restaurant. Using bright illustrations and simple text, this picture book shows the family enjoying many different kinds of dim sum. A good read aloud before sampling foods from different cultures.

- **Feast for 10, by Cathryn Falwell**

This simple counting book tells about an African-American family engaged in shopping and preparing for a meal. The brightly colored illustrations and brief text lead children in counting from 1 to 10 twice; first, as they shop and, second, as they prepare for dinner.

- **Bread, Bread, Bread, by Ann Morris**

Photographs from around the world show types of bread that people eat and enjoy. Using simple text, it introduces children to different eating customs. A good read before a tasting party that features different types of bread.

- **Too Many Tamales, by Gary Soto**

Maria tries on her mother's wedding ring while helping make tamales for a Christmas family get-together. Panic ensues when, hours later, she realizes the ring is missing but where it is?

- **Our Community Garden, by Barbara Pollak**

This heartfelt story captures the excitement of children getting their hands dirty and learning to nurture living things in the garden for the first time. This book celebrates different cultures and a gentle reminder of the value of people working together toward a common good.

## Healthy Body

- **I'm Growing!, By Alike**

In this delightful picture book, a young boy describes how his body is changing and growing and how others, both young and old, change, also. The importance of eating healthy food and playing outdoors are also part of his story.

- **Germs are Not for Sharing, by Elizabeth Verdick**

It's never too soon to teach little ones about germs and ways to stay clean and healthy. This book is a short course for kids on what germs are, what they do, and why it's so important to cover them up, block them from spreading, and wash them down the drain.

- **Healthy Habits - Health and Your Body, by Rebecca Weber**

Practicing healthy habits today keeps us healthy tomorrow! Starting with a nutritious breakfast and good hygiene, young readers learn several small steps that add up to big health benefits.

- **My Amazing Body, by Pat Thomas**

This colorful picture book informs and celebrates children and their amazing bodies. Written in a clear and lively manner, it explores many aspects of health and fitness and encourages children to eat healthy, try new foods, be active, and take good care of themselves.





## Physical Activity and Read and Move

- **Animal Action ABC, by Karen Pandell**

Photographs of both animals and children enhance this lively read and move ABC book. Each letter of the alphabet introduces an action such as “howl,” “kick,” and “yawn” accompanied by a short rhyming verse.

- **Bearobics, by Vic Parker**

Push back the chairs and get ready to Bearobicize! Children will shake and strut their stuff just like the animals in this colorful book. After the workout use this book as a springboard to invite children to create their own rhymes.

- **Clap Your Hands, by Lorinda Bryan Cauley**

Little ones will jump at the chance to join this menagerie of zany animals and children as they stomp, wiggle, roar, and spin their way through the day, as the rhyming text reinforces important concepts.

- **Dinosaurumpus, by Tony Mitton**

Whimsical dinosaurs romp, stomp, shake, and roar in this colorful picture book. Children are invited to join in the dinosaur romp that leads them through a lively workout ending when the dinosaurs finally fall asleep and the only sounds that can be heard are dinosaurs snoring.

- **From Head to Toe, by Eric Carle**

Watching giraffes bend their necks or monkeys wave their arms is fun, but nothing could be better than joining in! From their heads down to their toes, kids will be wriggling, giggling, and giggling as they try to keep up with the animals in this read and move book.

- **Get Up and Go!, by Nancy Carlson**

We all come in different shapes and sizes, and it doesn't matter if you are tall, short, skinny, or round. Your body is your own, and you need to take care of it. Vibrant, fun-filled illustrations and encouraging text explain the many reasons to exercise, from making new friends to going to new places, or just because it's good for your body.

- **I Can Skip, Hop, Jump, by My Carry-Around Action Books**

This small and sturdy book focuses on simple physical activities that young preschoolers are learning to do. Each page shows a child performing an action accompanied by a simple sentence stating what the child can do.

- **Stretch, by Doreen Cronin**

Can you stretch to the ceiling? Can you stretch to the floor? Can you stretch with a whisper? Can you stretch with a roar? This interactive, energetic rhyming text will engage young children and also help educators and caregivers stretch out story hour, while getting the wiggles out at the same time!





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