School Resource Kit

Information for School Food Service

Greetings! We know how busy you are and want to thank you for taking the time to help your students develop healthy eating and physical activity habits. Here you will find a host of fun-filled activities to follow up the FOODPLAY program.

On the day of the FOODPLAY assembly, you may wish to create a special "FOODPLAY PYRAMID POWER LUNCH" and use the menu and lunch labels provided in this section. There is also a fun Pyramid Power Activity Sheet that can be reproduced and distributed to children during the special lunch.

Additional activities in this section and in the Teachers' Section can be used throughout the year to help you link cafeteria with classroom learning, celebrate your school lunch and breakfast programs, and generate interest in creating healthy schools and effective school wellness policies.

Please visit us at www.foodplay.com for more fun-filled nutrition activities, resources, and programs! We look forward to coming back to your school again soon!

- **Fun FOODPLAY Activities**
- **Pyramid Power Lunch Menu**
- **Lunch Labels**
- **Pyramid Power Activity**
- **How to Build a Healthy School Environment**

Back to Main Menu

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Turning kids on to healthy habits!

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Fun FOODPLAY Activities for School Food Service Staff

By Barbara Storper, MS, RD

To help make the most of FOODPLAY, here are some fun activities you can do which will help link cafeteria with classroom learning, celebrate your school lunch and breakfast programs, and generate interest in creating Wellness Committees to improve the nutrition and health envrionments at your school.

How to Make the Most of FOODPLAY: Top 10 Activities

1) FOODPLAY gets children excited about eating more fresh fruits and vegetables. If at all possible, plan to serve fresh fruit (cut-up in a salad or accompanied with a yogurt dip) or fresh vegetables (in a salad, at a salad bar, or cut-up with a dip) as part of lunch on the day FOODPLAY comes to your school. Or, plan a special FOODPLAY lunch on the day of the performance.

   We've provided you with a special "FOODPLAY Menu" as well as fun labels you can copy, cut out, and display with the lunch offerings. We've also provided a fun "Pyramid Power" activity you can copy and distribute to students. (See next page.)

2) Make arrangements to visit each classroom following the performance to answer students' questions about the show or about food and nutrition. Discuss the day's lunch menu, draw a pyramid on the board and have kids divide up the lunch menu into the corresponding food groups. Discuss your school's lunch and breakfast programs. Get feedback from students. What do they like most about school lunch and breakfast? What needs improving?

3) Make a HUGE fruit salad with (or without) the help of all your kids! Serve the salad as a dessert at lunchtime, or as a special school-wide snack promoting fruits and veggies! You can even try a yogurt sundae bar where kids get a scoop of fruit salad on which they can put their favorite flavor of yogurt and toppings such as nuts, wheat germ, coconut, raisins, etc.

4) Have kids write JJ or Coach a letter about what they learned from FOODPLAY. Have them create a healthy menu they would like to make for the Coach and JJ if the characters were to be their lunch or breakfast guests. Or, have them write a list of the things they learned from FOODPLAY.

5) Encourage your art teacher to use FOODPLAY as a theme for posters or murals. Have students paint pictures about what they learned from FOODPLAY or their favorite parts of the show. Adorn the cafeteria walls with these new masterpieces.

6) Give a tour of the cafeteria to classes and as a special treat, have kids prepare a tasty healthy snack together. Make "snack stations" where children can visit and learn how to make a series of healthy tasty snacks. Or, throughout the year, throw "tasting parties" to encourage kids to try new nutritious foods and let kids vote on new foods to be added to the school lunch menu.

7) Reproduce FOODPLAY's "Breakfast Rap" and sing it together with younger students when you make your follow-up FOODPLAY class visits. Or, see if groups of children can sing it over the loudspeaker as part of the school's daily announcements.

FOODPLAY Breakfast Rap:

"School's not just the place to feed your mind.
Feed your body here, too, at breakfast time.
Cereal, milk, fruit, and toast,
that's the kind of breakfast that will give you the most.

Don't start your day hungry,
You need your stomach full.
If you don't get breakfast home,
you can get it at school.

School breakfast, way to go!
School breakfast, way to go!"

© 2000 FoodPlay Productions

8) Make a Nutrition Resource Cart filled with your favorite nutrition education materials to share with teachers. Serve as your school's nutrition resource specialist. Make the materials teacher-friendly and available on loan. Include USDA's TEAM Nutrition materials along with videos, curricula, puppets, books, posters, and recommended references. Check out FoodPlay's Emmy Award-winning "Janey Junkfood's Fresh Adventure!" DVD Kit, and our children's book of the same name. Both extend the themes of the FOODPLAY show and both come with teacher guides. All our materials are available at www.foodplay.com.

9) Keep a bulletin board of food-related topics of interest for teachers and a list of great class projects to help teachers link cafeteria with classroom learning.

10) Invite parents to come to the FOODPLAY show and have them stay for lunch (or come for breakfast). Feature a special Parent's Day lunch (or breakfast) where parents can sit and eat a healthy meal with their children.

Visit us at **www.foodplay.com** and check out **www.mypyramid.gov** for more fun food and nutrition ideas.

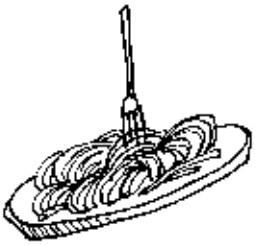
Thanks for all your efforts helping to make nutrition come alive at your school.

FOODPLAY'S Pyramid Power Lunch Menu

Appetizer

Carrot and Celery Sticks with Dip

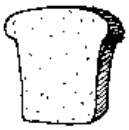
Lunch



JJ's Favorite Spaghetti and Meatballs

Olympic Juggler's Tossed Salad

Whole Grain Bread



Beverage

Got Milk? I Do!

Dessert

FOODPLAY's
Fresh Adventure Fruit Salad

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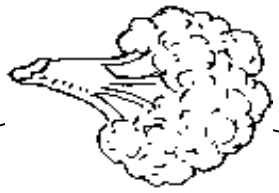
Lunch Labels

Photocopy these labels on colored paper, cut out and label the menu items served!

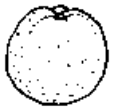
THE OLYMPIC JUGGLER'S TOSSED SALAD!

Vegetables! Vegetables! Raw! Raw! Raw!

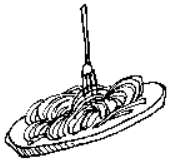


Go Green! Go Orange! That's where the nutrients are!

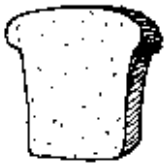
FOODPLAY'S FRESH ADVENTURE FRUIT SALAD!



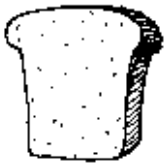
JJ'S FAVORITE SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALLS



KIDS WITH BRAINS EAT WHOLE GRAINS!



BREAD



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FOODPLAY's Pyramid Power Activity

Kids: Draw a line from each menu item to its place on MyPyramid, and draw pictures of your favorite foods!

Carrot and Celery Sticks with Dip

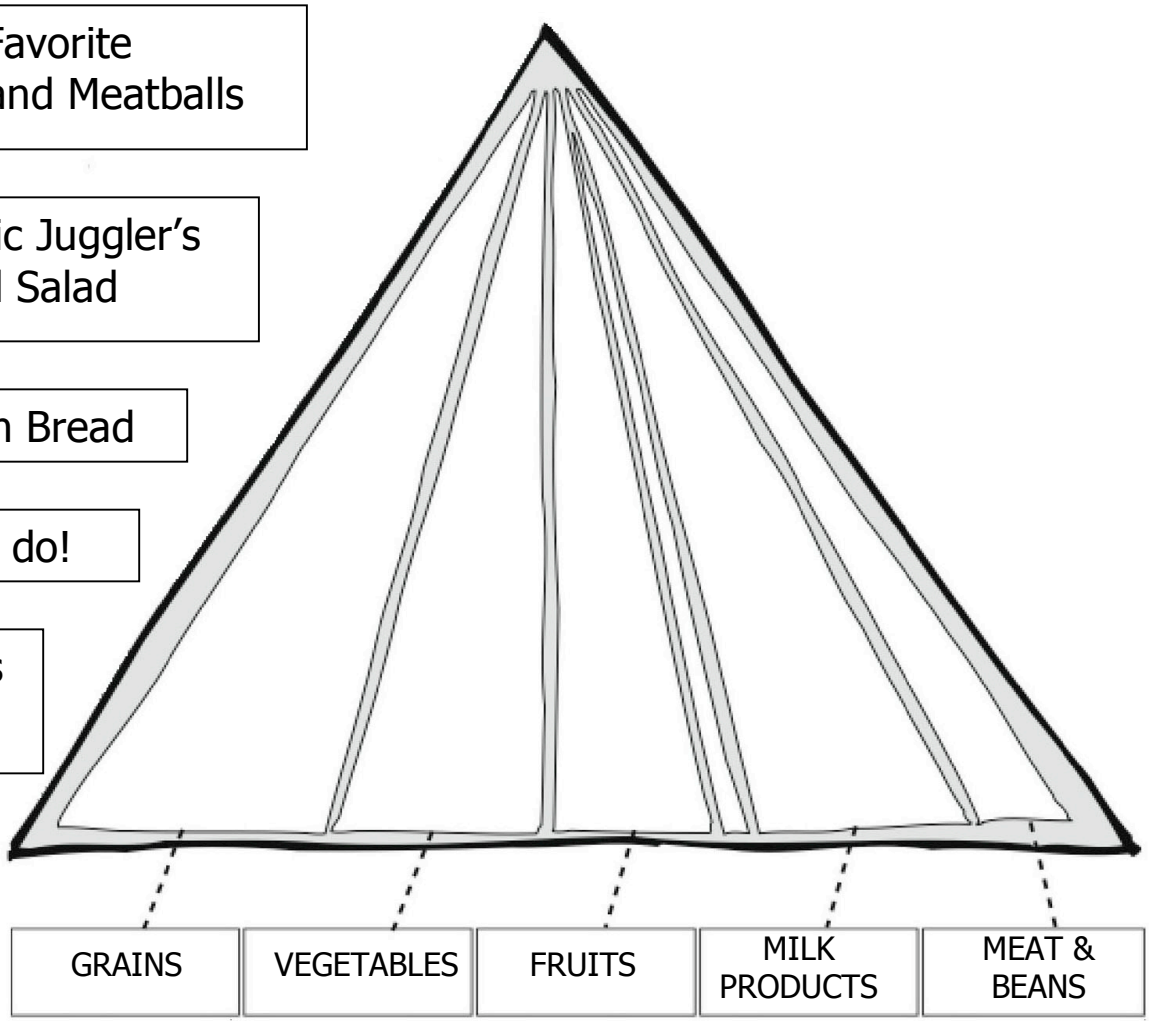
JJ's Favorite Spaghetti and Meatballs

The Olympic Juggler's Tossed Salad

Whole Grain Bread

Got Milk? I do!

FOODPLAY's Fruit Salad



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How to Build a Healthy School Environment!

We, at FoodPlay Productions, have had the opportunity to visit thousands of schools each year bringing our live nutrition theater shows and fun-filled resources to enthusiastic audiences. We've learned a great deal in the process, and have seen wonderful examples of whole school communities—students, parents, teachers, food service, nurses, and administrators—working together to create a healthy school environment and an innovative and effective wellness policy.

We hope this primer will be of help to you. We've listed 30 fun, low-budget ideas schools can use to create happy and healthy places in which to learn. It does take a healthy village to raise a healthy child, and we look forward to working with you. Thanks for your dedicated efforts!

—Barbara Storper, MS, RD

Think Outside the Lunchbox!
FoodPlay's Top 30 Fun Ways to Create a Healthy School Environment!

1. At the beginning of the year, create a fun way to introduce your school food service staff to students and teachers in order to give staff proud ownership of the meals they turn out and to encourage a positive relationship between all groups. Little things mean a lot—holding a special "silly hat day" or "holiday theme" in which food service staff can shine, can do a lot in creating a successful school year.

2. Take a survey or set up student groups of "Taste Testers!" to determine what students like to eat. Encourage weekly or monthly "taste tests" where students can rate different meal options or try new foods. Incorporating their favorites increases participation in breakfast and lunch programs

3. Excite teachers about nutrition and health by providing information that is of special concern to them. Keep an up-to-date bulletin board in the teachers' room and post articles about nutrition discoveries and innovative actions other schools have tried. The more teachers find the articles relevant to their needs, the more motivated they'll be to include them in their lesson plans.

4. Advertise menus in advance, highlighting weekly health specials. Or, create a healthy food labeling system to make it easier to recognize the best available options—perfect for a class project!

5. Try new innovative fundraising activities instead of candy sales, such as talent shows, family bingo night, auctions, tag sales, or healthy bake sales. Other options include selling class cookbooks, flowers, and calendars.

6. Provide "grab n' go" breakfasts or a breakfast cart filled with healthy favorites such as yogurt, granola, and fresh fruit. On test days, offer special breakfasts and lunches (with financial support from the school or PTO funds!).

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7. Turn the cafeteria into a learning laboratory! Display posters you collect or encourage the art teacher to have students paint posters promoting healthy foods and fun physical activities that you can hang as a special "Student Art Gallery" throughout your lunchroom.

8. Celebrate diversity by serving up healthy ethnic meals from the variety of cultures represented by your student body. Put a map of the world on your cafeteria wall. Work together with social studies and language teachers to inspire students to learn where foods come from.

9. Fill vending machines with healthy foods such as water, 100% fruit and vegetable juices, low-fat milk, popcorn, pretzels, baked chips, fresh and dried fruit, yogurt, trail mix, low-fat crackers and cookies such as fig bars, gingersnaps, or graham crackers. Have students get involved.

10. Invite students, teachers, and parents to help plan the menus for school lunches, and, with community support, try to incorporate locally grown produce from nearby farms, if possible.

11. Use holidays to promote and celebrate healthy foods from different cultures. Invite parents to conduct food demonstrations with classes, sharing some family favorites. Or, invite parents to create a multi-cultural pot luck feast and talent show as a special event or fundraiser.

12. Teach students about healthy foods in the classroom before introducing them to kids in the lunchroom. Studies show that students who learn about foods in class, eat from two to nine times as many of the new healthy foods as schoolmates who do not learn about them first.

13. Encourage classes to visit the new MyPyramid website, mypyramid.gov, where students can analyze their diets, discover their nutrient needs and make healthy changes.

14. Create a fun nutrition resource cart or display filled with videos, DVDs, curricula, magazine articles, and books from which parents, teachers, and students can borrow recommended resources.

15. If there is a convenience store nearby where students buy snacks after school, have teachers incorporate a lesson to educate students about which snacks would be healthiest. Create a "Make a Snack Counter-Attack Game" where kids are asked to select the top ten healthiest snacks for less than one dollar each. Encourage them to write letters to the store managers to request that more healthy snacks are sold.

16. If possible, take a field trip to a local farm or farmers' market to teach students where food comes from. You may even be able to offer a weekly farmers' market at your school that teachers, kids, and parents can buy fresh produce from!

17. Start a school garden (or window sill garden!) and involve students in all aspects. Vegetables planted can then be served at mealtime. Work together with teachers to foster in class lessons about gardening and nutrition.

18. Make the teachers' and nurse's rooms healthy, stress-free environments—with water that is drinkable, working refrigerators, healthy snack machines, hot water machines, and space to enjoy a healthy lunch or time-out period. PTO members may be interested in setting helping create these.

19. Encourage teachers to praise students' successes verbally or with fun rewards, such as stickers, extra recesses, walks, or parties instead of with sweets or candy.

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And Now, Promoting Physical Activity:

20. Enlist the help of the principal to be your school's health leader. See if she/he will hold special lunches where kids can eat at his/her table and ask questions. Or, he/she can lead regular walks outside with classes. Or, make announcements over the loudspeaker offering inspiring healthy quotations or promoting "take-an-active-break" throughout the week.

21. Create "walking buses" or biking clubs where students can walk or bike to school together instead of taking the bus.

22. Develop interesting walking maps that classes can use to take interesting walks around the school or neighborhood while learning how to follow maps. Or create a fitness track around the school for students to use before and after school.

23. Provide students and teachers with ideas, materials, and classes to help reduce stress including yoga, meditation, tai chi, activity breaks, and reading time.

24. Invite the art teacher to lead students in mural making, where students' favorite physical activities are painted along hallways, in stairwells, or in the gym.

25. Encourage students to meet together and come up with their own ideas for cool after-school activities. Favorites include: hip-hop or swing dancing, martial arts, juggling, yoga, or cooking.

26. Incorporate physical activity into school fundraising activities such as walk-a-thons, car washes, dance contests, or competitive sports games.

27. Encourage teachers to start class or take breaks with stretching or jumping jacks to help reduce stress and energize students.

28. Sponsor a "Health and Fitness Day", during which students can learn about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and have the opportunity to try new activities and healthy snacks.

29. Encourage students, teachers, and parents to participate in school-wide sports events, emphasizing the benefits of school pride, teamwork, and physical activity.

30. Last, but not least, trigger school-wide excitement and get everyone on board to create a healthy school environment by bringing innovative programs to your school. At FoodPlay Productions, we offer Emmy Award-winning nutrition education theater shows featuring amazing feats of juggling, colorful characters, music, magic, and audience participation to turn kids on to healthy habits. According to USDA, sponsored evaluations show FoodPlay's shows dramatically improve students' eating and exercise habits! And, FoodPlay's research-based programs come complete with comprehensive, standards-based nutrition education materials for everyone involved—students, teachers, parents, food service, and health staff—to help schools integrate nutrition education into core curricula and keep the health messages alive all year long!

For more fun ways to make nutrition come alive, visit our website: www.foodplay.com

or contact us:

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School Wellness Resource List

United States Department of Agriculture
www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html

Massachusetts Public Health Association
www.mphaweb.org/documents/CommunityActiontoChangeSchoolFoodPolicy.pdf

New England Food and Dairy Council
www.newenglanddairycouncil.org/wellness/flyers.html

School Nutrition Association
www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org

California Project LEAN
www.californiaprojectlean.org

Alliance for a Healthier Generation
www.healthiergeneration.org

FoodPlay Productions
www.foodplay.com

Action for Healthy Kids

- "Wellness Policy Tool"
  www.actionforhealthykids.org/wellnesstool/
- "Resources to Improve Schools"
  www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources.php

Center for Science in the Public Interest

- "School Foods Tool Kit"
  www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/policy_options.html
- "Constructive Classroom Rewards"
  www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/constructive_rewards.pdf

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School Wellness Checklist

In the cafeteria…

____ Are lunch schedules set at reasonable times? Some schools find that recess periods before lunch help students quiet down during lunch and reduce plate waste.

____ Does your cafeteria serve wholesome, nutritious meals and fresh fruits and vegetables in an attractive way?

____ Are there choices available in the form of salad bars, baked potato bars, pasta bars, deli bars, fresh fruit bars, or yogurt parfait stations allowing students more freedom in what they select?

____ Do students have adequate time to buy and eat their breakfasts and lunches?

____ Are lunchroom monitors present to help keep the noise level down, but not so rigid that students can't enjoy eating?

In the classroom…

____ Do students receive regular health and nutrition classes?

____ Are nutrition education efforts in the classroom tied to the foods being served in the cafeteria?

____ Do teachers celebrate with healthy foods as well as sweets for class parties and holidays?

____ Are any physical activities incorporated into the classroom to increase concentration and mental alertness—such as stretching, jumping jacks, juggling, yoga, tai chi, or karate?

____ Are the nurse, food service staff, or health educator available to help with nutrition education in the classroom?

____ Does your school have up-to-date nutrition and health videos, curricula, and references available?

At recess and break time…

____ Do students have the opportunity to participate in active games or have ways to be physically active during recess such as walking, jogging, running, jumping, skipping, dancing, or stretching?

____ Are there walking trails around the school that classes can use for an exercise break?

In the hallways…

____ Do the water fountains work and are they accessible?

____ Are the vending machines in the hallways and teachers lounge stocked with healthy choices?

____ Are hallways, cafeteria, gym, and classrooms free of advertisements and posters promoting candy, soda, and fast food?

____ Are teachers and staff practicing what they preach with healthy eating and exercise habits?

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In the gym…

____ Do all children have regularly scheduled gym classes?

____ Do gym classes offer a wide variety of activities including cooperative learning games and activities that work for students of different temperaments?

____ Are there posters or artwork in the gym celebrating students of all shapes and sizes being physically active?

In before-school and after-school programs…

____ Do special programs exist to encourage students to walk or ride bikes to and from school?

____ Does the school have a variety of sports teams, such as basketball, soccer, or field hockey, for students to join?

____ Is there well-maintained equipment available for students to use before and after school, such as basketballs, soccer balls, or jump ropes?

____ Are there free exercise classes, such as Pilates, acrobatics, or weightlifting available for students to participate in?

____ Is there transportation available, such as a late bus, for students who wish to participate in after-school programs?

____ Are school facilities available for after-school programs and on weekends for recreational use by the community?

In other areas throughout the school…

____ Are healthy and tasty food choices served at conferences and parent and staff meetings?

____ Do concession stands at school sports events serve healthy foods?

____ Does the PTO or PTA raise funds by selling something other than candy?

____ If there are bake sales, is there an effort made to promote the use of whole grains, fruits, and lower fat/sugar recipes? If so, can the recipes for the foods be distributed as well?

____ If it is essential that students are weighed and measured, can they be screened with utmost sensitivity, and not in front of one another, and with the understanding that "every body is different and different is a good thing!"

____ If student weights are sent home to parents, are there materials offering healthy nutrition and activity tips provided as well?

____ Does the school sponsor multi-cultural days or health fairs so that foods from different cultures and healthy activities can be celebrated?

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