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Dear Teacher,

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has developed these lessons to help you teach children in grades 1 and 2 about *MyPyramid*. The lessons feature a graphic developed specifically for elementary students titled *MyPyramid for Kids*. They are designed to integrate nutrition with science, math, health, and language arts. Physical activity is also emphasized.

The lessons:

- Communicate nutrition concepts through age-appropriate, fun activities
- Contain handouts to be duplicated
- May be taught with minimal preparation
- Include a link with the school lunch program
- Provide an activity to send home to parents.

Also included with these lessons are: a *MyPyramid for Kids* poster, 25 *Tips for Families* flyers to send home to parents, a CD ROM with an interactive computer game, a CD ROM with all the lesson materials and supplemental materials for educators, and the *Fruit and Vegetable Challenge* poster kit. Your students will have fun as they learn to eat well and be physically active.

Here is a snapshot of what the three lessons cover:

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<td>Students learn the food groups that make up MyPyramid for Kids and participate in a physical activity.</td>
<td>Color the MyPyramid for Kids handout using the proper color for the 5 food groups plus oils.</td>
<td>Students play the Moving More physical activity game.</td>
<td>Students categorize lunchroom foods according to the food groups in MyPyramid for Kids.</td>
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<td><strong>Eat Smart with MyPyramid for Kids</strong></td>
<td>Students learn how they can use MyPyramid for Kids to help them make food choices for healthy eating.</td>
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<td>Students visit the cafeteria and learn where to find foods from each food group.</td>
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<td><strong>Vary Your Veggies and Focus on Fruits</strong></td>
<td>Students identify fruits and vegetables they like and expand the variety of fruits and vegetables they eat.</td>
<td>Using the My Fruit and Vegetable Diary handout, students complete a diary of fruits and vegetables they have eaten.</td>
<td>Students complete the Graph It exercise, graphing the number of vegetables and fruits eaten by the class.</td>
<td>Students identify fruits and vegetables eaten at lunch each day and complete the Fruit and Vegetable Challenge poster.</td>
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A Close Look at MyPyramid

*MyPyramid for Kids* reminds you to be physically active every day, or most days, and to make healthy food choices. Every part of the new symbol has a message for you. Can you figure it out?

**Be Physically Active Every Day**
The person climbing the stairs reminds you to do something active every day, like running, walking the dog, playing, swimming, biking, or climbing lots of stairs.

**Choose Healthier Foods From Each Group**
Why are the colored stripes wider at the bottom of the pyramid? Every food group has foods that you should eat more often than others; these foods are at the bottom of the pyramid.

**Eat More From Some Food Groups Than Others**
Did you notice that some of the color stripes are wider than others? The different sizes remind you to choose more foods from the food groups with the widest stripes.

**Every Color Every Day**
The colors orange, green, red, yellow, blue, and purple represent the five different food groups plus oils. Remember to eat foods from all food groups every day.

**Make Choices That Are Right for You**
*MyPyramid.gov* is a Web site that will give everyone in the family personal ideas on how to eat better and exercise more.

**Take One Step at a Time**
You do not need to change overnight what you eat and how you exercise. Just start with one new, good thing, and add a new one every day.
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**Lesson 1:** Exploring *MyPyramid for Kids*

**Lesson 2:** Eat Smart with *MyPyramid for Kids*

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Lesson 1: Exploring MyPyramid for Kids

Getting Started:

Hang the MyPyramid for Kids poster where your students can see it. Ask students to describe what they see – colored stripes, pictures of food, stairs, and so on. Use this discussion to assess your students’ understanding of MyPyramid for Kids.

Activity: What’s On the Poster?

1. Point out that foods on the poster are arranged in groups. Help students use the key to learn which color represents which food group. Which of the colored stripes are the largest? Point out that these are foods that children should choose more often. Which are the smallest? These are foods that children should choose less often.

2. Point out that everyone needs food to live and grow. But if people eat too much of some foods high in sugar and fat, they don’t have enough room to eat other foods that are good for them. Ask students to name healthy choices from each of the food groups.

3. Discuss each food group in turn. Ask students to identify the foods they know that are shown on the poster. What are some other foods from each group that they like or know about?

4. At this age, some students may not know what a “grain” is. Grains come from plants like wheat, corn, and oats. They are used to make foods like bread, cereal, tortillas, and corn muffins. Popcorn is a grain-group food, too.

5. What’s the thin yellow stripe? It represents oils, which can be found in foods like nuts or fish or added to foods as soft margarine or salad oil. Note how thin the stripe is. Most people need to limit the amount of oils they eat.

6. Why are there stairs? They represent physical activity. Look at the variety of activities shown on the poster. How many do you see? Part of being healthy is keeping physically active. Ask students to describe some of the ways they stay active. (Remind them that walking the dog, doing household chores and other daily activities count, as well as sports activities.)

7. Give each student a copy of the MyPyramid for Kids handout. Using the wall poster as a reference, have students color the stripes to match the colors on the poster. In the space provided have students draw or paste a picture of a smart food choice from each group and write in the name of the food group. You may want to have students bring in pictures of their own food choices for healthy eating from each group and make their own pyramid.

Lesson Highlights

Objective

Students will:

- Learn that foods are divided into food groups.
- Learn the colors that represent the food groups.
- Participate in physical activity while learning about the importance of daily physical activity as a part of good health.

Curriculum Connections:
Science, Health, Physical education, Language arts

Student Skills Developed:

- Thinking skills – categorization
- Thinking skills – analyzing information presented in a chart
- Understanding symbols
- Conceptualizing complex things as whole, and as simplified parts

Materials:

- MyPyramid for Kids classroom poster
- MyPyramid for Kids black-and-white handout for each student
- 3 x 5 cards
Group Activity: Moving More Game

Physical activity is important for good health. Children need to eat enough food to support growth and should be physically active at least 60 minutes every day, or most days. This game helps kids think about the many ways to be physically active while playing a movement game.

Ask students to brainstorm about active things they like to do. These could be sports moves like dunking a basketball and kicking a soccer ball, dance moves like hip hop or ballet, or just everyday activities like raking leaves or climbing stairs. As students make suggestions, write each on a 3 x 5 card.

Now have students go to the front of the room. Draw a card and read what’s on it. Have students act out that movement for 15 to 30 seconds. Then draw another card. If your students are readers, they can also take turns drawing and reading cards. To keep the tempo up, add some music in the background. (Power Panther™ songs are included on the enclosed CD ROM.)

Lunchroom Link:

Look at the lunch menu for today. Ask students into which food groups each of the items on the menu would fit. You may need to explain mixed foods like pizza and hamburgers, which fit in several groups. (Pizza = grain, milk, vegetable, meat)

Home Connection:

Have students take their copy of the MyPyramid for Kids handout home to their parents. Encourage them to talk with parents about what they have learned. Also ask students to identify foods from each food group at home.
Lesson 2: Eat Smart with MyPyramid for Kids

Activity: Eat Smart with MyPyramid for Kids

1. Tell students that they are going to learn about many examples of foods from each of the food groups shown on MyPyramid for Kids. Hand out a copy of Eat Smart with MyPyramid for Kids to each student.

2. Have students complete the worksheet.

3. Review the worksheets with the students and talk to them about each food group. Some points to cover are:

   • **Grains** – Point out foods students might not think of as grains – oatmeal, corn meal, or rice and popcorn. Tell students that some grains are whole grains. At least half the grains they eat should be whole grain. Some names for whole grains are whole wheat, whole-grain corn, and oatmeal. Show them the words “whole grain” on the ingredients label or the front of a cereal box and ask them to look for it on a cereal box at home.

   • **Vegetables** – Do your students eat fresh vegetables? Frozen? Canned? Dark green and orange vegetables are especially important. (Examples include spinach, broccoli, carrots, and sweet potatoes.) Ask students to name dark green and orange vegetables they’d like to try.

   • **Fruits** – Explain that fruit can be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried. Ask children about their favorite fruits. What type or form do they eat?

   • **Milk** – Ask students to name some foods in the milk group (milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream). Where does milk come from? Do they drink milk every day? For children who are lactose intolerant, there are lactose-free products.

   • **Meat and Beans** – Ask students to name foods from the meat and beans group (meat, fish, chicken, turkey, eggs, dry beans, and peas, nuts, and seeds). Do they ever eat beans at home for dinner?
Group Activity: Play Pyramid Go Fish

Students play Pyramid Go Fish with food cards. This activity will give students additional practice in sorting foods into groups.

Getting Started:

- **Duplicate food illustrations from CD ROM and cut into cards.**
- **Put students into groups of four and distribute 30 cards to each group.**
- **Now play Pyramid Go Fish.** The dealer deals out four cards to each student, and places the rest in the middle. The first student (let’s call him Michael) asks the student sitting to his left, “Kayla, do you have a fruit?” If Kayla has a fruit she says, “Yes, I do,” and hands her card to Michael, who then places his pair of cards on the table. Michael is then able to ask the next student a question.
- **If Kayla doesn’t have a fruit, she replies, “No I don’t have a fruit. Go fish,”** and Michael can take a card from the pile in the middle. It is then Kayla’s turn to ask the student on her left for a card. The students continue to ask questions and find cards until all the pairs are found. The student with the most pairs wins.

Lunchroom Link:

Plan a visit to the cafeteria. Ask the staff to show students where to find foods from each food group on the serving line. (Perhaps the foodservice staff could put the appropriate color dot sticker by the food on the serving line, i.e., green = vegetable, red = fruit, etc.)

Home Connection:

Send the *Dear Parents Grocery Store Treasure Hunt* letter home with your students. This is a nutrition activity they can do with their families.
Lesson 3: Vary Your Veggies and Focus on Fruits

Getting Started:
Challenge students to name as many fruits and vegetables as they can in 1 minute. Write these on the board by food group.

Activity: Fruit and Veggie Diary

1. Point out that fruits and vegetables are foods children need to grow and be healthy.

2. Ask children to look at the list they just developed. Are there any fruits or vegetables they have never tried? Introduce additional foods they may not have identified.

3. Distribute the My Fruit and Vegetable Diary reproducible to each student. Have students cut out the pages and put them in the correct order. Punch a hole through the upper-left-hand corner and have children tie the diary with yarn or string. Every day for a week have students write (or draw a picture of) all the fruits and vegetables they ate that day.

4. At the end of the week, ask students to name the foods they ate. Talk about the variety of fruits and vegetables.

Lesson Highlights

Objective

Students will:
• Identify fruits and vegetables in their diet.
• Learn to graph the number of fruits and vegetables they eat.

Curriculum Connections:
Math, Science, Health, Language arts

Student Skills Developed:
• Graphing
• Recording data in a chart
• Making predictions

Materials:
• My Fruit and Vegetable Diary reproducible for each student
• Holepunch
• Scissors for each student
• Yarn or string
• Fruit and Vegetable Challenge Kit
**Group Activity: Graph It**

You can turn the information from the Fruit and Vegetable Diaries into a graphing activity. Ask students to total the number of fruits and vegetables the class ate the day before. Help the class present this information in the form of a graph for your classroom wall. (You might use green squares to represent vegetables and red squares to represent fruits, just like the stripes on *MyPyramid for Kids.* Each day, they can graph the class totals or their personal totals. (Add an individual graph option. Talk about how children can increase the number of fruits and vegetables on their graph.)

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**Lunchroom Link:**

Have students identify the fruits and vegetables they ate for lunch today. Include those who ate the school lunch and those who brought a lunch from home. Work with the Cafeteria Manager to introduce new foods to students. Use the enclosed *Fruit and Vegetable Challenge Kit;* follow the instructions in the folder.

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**Home Connection:**

Have students share their fruit and vegetable diary with their parents.
Reproducibles

Lesson 1  MyPyramid for Kids
Black-and-white handout

Lesson 2  Eat Smart with
MyPyramid for Kids

Lesson 2  Dear Parents
Grocery Store Treasure Hunt

Lesson 3  My Fruit and Vegetable Diary
Eat Smart with *MyPyramid for Kids*

**Draw a circle around the foods that are in the Grain Group.**
- Slice of bread
- Baked potato
- Popcorn
- Pasta (bowtie)
- Cereal
- Candy bar

**Draw a rectangle around the foods that are in the Vegetable Group.**
- Carrots
- Spinach
- Grapes
- Pasta (macaroni)
- Broccoli
- Swiss cheese

**Draw a square around the foods that are in the Fruit Group.**
- Corn
- Orange juice
- Apple
- Banana
- Strawberries
- Muffin

**Draw a triangle around the foods that are in the Milk Group.**
- 1% Milk
- Yogurt
- Egg
- American cheese
- Cookies
- Orange juice

**Draw an oval around the foods that are in the Meat and Beans Group.**
- Peanut butter
- Egg
- Beans
- Chicken
- Pork chop
- Fish
Eat Smart with *MyPyramid for Kids*

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- Slice of bread
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- Egg
- American cheese
- Cookies
- Orange juice

**Draw an oval around the foods that are in the Meat and Beans Group.**

- Peanut butter
- Egg
- Beans
- Chicken
- Pork chop
- Fish
Dear Parents:

We have been learning about nutrition and MyPyramid for Kids in our class. You can help your child learn more about the foods your family enjoys. Take this sheet along with you the next time you go to the supermarket and have your child look for foods in each food group.

If you have access to the Internet, you can learn more about MyPyramid at MyPyramid.gov.

Make this a fun treasure hunt and a memorable activity for your child.

Signed,

Your Child’s Teacher

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### Grains

Most people need to eat more whole-grain foods. Breakfast cereals are an easy way to add whole grains to your diet. Look for some cereals that have one of these words as the first ingredient: oatmeal, whole-grain corn, whole oats, whole wheat.

The color of the bread does not mean it is whole-grain. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Read the label to see if it’s made with a whole grain. Foods labeled with the words “multi-grain,” “stone-ground,” “100% wheat,” “cracked wheat,” “seven-grain,” or “bran” are usually **not** whole-grain products.

### Vegetables

Look for some dark green or orange vegetables such as broccoli, spinach, romaine lettuce, carrots, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin. Most kids (and adults) don’t get enough of these.

### Milk

Kids need the calcium from milk and milk products every day to build strong bones. Help your child choose a calcium-rich food to eat for a snack such as fat-free yogurt, lowfat cheese and cottage cheese, or 1% or fat-free milk.

### Fruits

Choose one fruit you’ve never tried but would like to try. When buying fruit drinks, find one that is 100% fruit juice. It’s a good idea to offer your child whole fruits more often than 100% fruit juice.

### Meat and Beans

Look at all the kinds of foods in the meat and beans group. Then find some different types of dry beans. These are good sources of protein.
Make a Fruit and Vegetable Diary

1. Cut out the pages on the dotted lines.
2. Put them in the correct order.
3. Have your teacher make a hole through the circle.
4. Tie the pages together.
5. Draw or write the fruits and vegetables you eat.
6. How many fruits and vegetables did you eat each day?

My Fruit and Vegetable Diary

Name: ____________________________

MONDAY
Fruits ____________________________
Vegetables _________________________

TUESDAY
Fruits ____________________________
Vegetables _________________________

WEDNESDAY
Fruits ____________________________
Vegetables _________________________

THURSDAY
Fruits ____________________________
Vegetables _________________________

FRIDAY
Fruits ____________________________
Vegetables _________________________

Name:

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