

# CAN'T BEAT HOW I EAT

*A Fruit & Vegetable  
Challenge*

Elementary or Middle School

## OBJECTIVE

Students become more aware of their current eating habits through self-monitoring and are encouraged to set goals for sustained healthy eating.

## THE EVENT

Students team up by class and record the fruits and vegetables they eat over the course of 2 weeks. Classrooms challenge one another to see which class eats the most or the widest variety of fruits and vegetables. Students in each class brainstorm ways to achieve the class goal. For example, how can they eat more fruit at breakfast? Also, the activity can be adapted to have children track what they consume from the dairy or grain groups (with an emphasis on whole grains). Students can reflect upon their experience in the competition through a journaling activity. At the end of the first week, students can examine how their eating habits changed and share tips with one another about how to make even more healthy food choices during the second week of the competition. At the end of the competition, all classes can attend a celebration. The top teams can receive nonfood prizes and all students can share their experiences with unfamiliar fruits and vegetables during the event.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/team-nutrition-popular-events-idea-booklet>

# FROM EAST TO WEST

*Pen Pal Program*

Elementary or Middle School

## OBJECTIVE

Students from different schools share stories about nutrient-rich foods grown and eaten in their area. Students gain favorable attitudes toward novel fruits, vegetables, or whole grains.

## THE EVENT

School Nutrition connects the school with another school in a different part of the United States, pairing individual students as pen pals. Through letters, students introduce themselves and share information about their favorite fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, as well as foods that are native to their region. Students can be given a list of questions to ask their pen pals, using materials such as Dig In!: Lesson 6, Handout 2: Garden Pen Pals (see appendix, page 95). If the school maintains a garden, students can also share updates about the garden with their pen pals. As letters are received back, students can read them aloud to the class and discuss how their pen pals' eating habits differ from their own.

Note: Please give notice of interest in advance, as it may take time to partner with another district.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/team-nutrition-popular-events-idea-booklet>

# DRINK SMART, PLAY HARD

*Water Wins*

Elementary or Middle School

## OBJECTIVE

Kids will guess the amount of added sugars in familiar drinks, and then play a sweet game.

## STEPS

1. ASK: "Does anyone know what added sugars are? Added sugars are put into a food or drink when it is made. For example, when sugar is added to iced tea. Can you guess how much added sugar is in these drinks? Use these sugar packets to show me. Each sugar packet contains about 1 teaspoon of sugar."
2. DO: After kids guess, show them the answer by counting out the correct amount for each drink. Put the packets in front of each drink after counting. For example, with a 12-oz can of cola, have the kids count out eight sugar packets.
3. Talk about added sugar and its negative effects on the body.
4. PLAY: Make six teams and line up behind the starting line. Have the first person in each team draw a slip of paper and take the correct number of sugar packets. The first kid in each line must walk or run with a sugar packet in his or her spoon to the finish line, drop the packet, and run back to pass the spoon to the next person. If the sugar packet is dropped before the finish line, the kid must go back to the starting line and start again with the same packet. The goal is to get all of the sugar packets to the finish line first.
5. WRAP UP: "Did you notice that you had to run a lot more for the drinks with lots of sugar added? That shows that if you drink a sugary beverage, you have to exercise a lot more to burn off the calories from the added sugar. To be healthy, you have to balance your food and play. Every day you make choices about what to eat and drink. As you can see, sweet drinks have a lot of added sugar. Remember to choose water instead of regular soda, fruit drinks, sweet tea, sports drinks, and lemonade."

[http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/sfsm\\_t6famguide.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/sfsm_t6famguide.pdf)

# GUESS THAT FOOD

## OBJECTIVE

Students must guess the food that is attached to their headband by asking descriptive questions that can be answered by a Yes or No response. Students will be split into teams and will receive points. Before starting the game, students will receive a lesson on the 5 food groups, so they can use the information during the game.

## EXAMPLE

Johnny W. has a picture of spaghetti attached to his head band. He may start by asking...

Johnny: Am I a fruit?

Team: No!

Johnny: Am I a protein?

Team: No!

Johnny: Am I a grain?

Team: Yes!

Johnny: Do you make a sandwich with me?

Team: No!

Johnny: Do you eat me with Chinese food?

Team: No!

Johnny: Do I come from Italy?

Team: Yes!

Johnny: Am I Spaghetti?!

Team: Yes!!

# FOOD GROUP BINGO

*Self Explanatory, Right?*

Elementary and Middle

## DESCRIPTION

Food Group Bingo is a fun way to learn which foods belong to each food group. The game can be tailored to meet the needs of each age group.

## FARM TO SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

## EXAMPLES

- **Farmer's Market**  
School Nutrition can set up a stand in the school to allow the students to purchase from the Market. The activity will also include a lesson on farmer's markets and the benefits of buying local.
- **Gardening**  
Students will have the opportunity to grow produce or herbs. Activity will include a lesson on the parts of a plant.
- **Farmer Trade Cards**  
Local produce will be brought in for the students and they will receive trading cards with a bio on the farmer who grew their food. This activity can be ongoing, so that students can collect trading cards throughout the year.

# NUTRITION IN THE CLASSROOM

All Ages

## LESSON PLAN IDEAS

- The 5 Food Groups and their Benefits
- Sodium and Salt
- Good Fat vs. Bad Fat
- Exploring Vitamins and Minerals
- Portion Control
- Food Safety
- Great Grains
- Food Allergies & Intolerances
- Fast Food
- Hydration & Drinks
- Energy Balance & the Importance of Physical Activity
- Mindfulness

# CELEBRATIONS, FUNDRAISER & REWARDING STUDENTS

All Ages

## CELEBRATE & FUNDRAISE THE HEALTHY WAY

As part of the Norfolk Public Schools' School Wellness Policy all foods and beverages available to children during the school day must meet the USDA nutrition standards. This includes food and beverages offered during celebrations, parties, and snacks brought by parents or teachers for any occasion. To keep children safe, healthy, and included in any celebration, we encourage non-food celebrations. Here are some fun, non-food celebrations and fundraising ideas:

- Goodie-Bags with party favors like notepads, balloons, pencils, stickers, keychains, and small toys.
- Buy something for the classroom (books, games, music, class pet, etc)
- Extra recess time in your child's honor or purchase tickets to add 1 extra min of recess
- A game or other indoor activity for recess given in your child's honor or purchase tickets to add 1 extra min of recess
- A birthday dance party in class or purchase tickets to earn a dance party in your classroom
- Play music during class
- Send supplies for a craft project
- Send an item your child's classmates can sign for their birthday, like a shirt, hat, or picture frame

## REWARDS

As per the School Wellness Policy, foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as performance or behavior. Food rewards contradict classroom lessons on nutrition, add empty calories to kids' diets and teach kids to eat when they're not hungry — setting the stage for unhealthy habits that can last a lifetime and contributing to the childhood obesity epidemic. Check out these fun ideas for non-food rewards to use with students.

Check out these fun ideas for non-food rewards to use with students.

# Resources

*For more activities and lesson plans, visit...*

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/kids-parents-educators>

<http://www.superkidsnutrition.com/kidsactivities/>

<http://www.nourishinteractive.com/nutrition-education-printables/category/72-kids-home-classroom-arts-crafts-nutrition-activities-games>

<https://www.nutrition.gov/life-stages/children/kids-corner>

