Literature Lesson Idea

Fruits and Vegetables

Objective

- Recognize that eating a variety of healthful foods is fun, helps you feel good and is good for your heart.

Prepare

- Have children write a note asking their parents’ permission to bring a piece of fruit to school.
- Download and print the Fruits and Vegetables Activity Sheet for class distribution.

Materials

- 30 small slips of paper, chart paper and easel, markers in five colors (red, yellow, orange, blue and green), construction paper in various colors, large bowl, paper plates, napkins and plastic forks or spoons; Fruits and Vegetables Activity Sheet

Explore

1. Have each child name what fruit or vegetable they brought. As children name fruits and vegetables, explain that orange juice and other fruit juices are considered servings of fruit; and while potatoes, peas and corn are vegetables, they are starchy vegetables, and other green, yellow and orange vegetables are more appropriate vegetable choices. What do fruits and vegetables contain that help keep us healthy? (Vitamins, minerals, fiber and carbohydrates)

   Hold a discussion about fruits and vegetables. What is your favorite fruit? Allow as many children as possible to respond. Why do you like it? Encourage children to use specific adjectives, such as juicy, sweet, sour, or refreshing, to describe their fruit choices. What is your favorite vegetable? Are there any fruits or vegetables that you don’t like to eat? Allow children to express their likes and dislikes. Point out that because of the wide variety of fruits and vegetables, each person doesn’t have to eat every kind of these foods. Encourage children to try new fruits and vegetables and to eat a variety of the ones they like.

2. Have children complete the Fruits and Vegetables Activity Sheet. Tell them to look at the top half of the page and decide which of the foods pictured are fruits. Encourage them to recall what each fruit looks like and color it realistically. Have them repeat the activity with vegetables on the bottom half of the page.

   Point out that there is a wide variety of fruits and vegetables that we can eat. Play an alphabet game with the names of fruits and vegetables. Have children sit in a circle. Start the game by saying, “A is for asparagus.” Have the child beside you continue the game by naming a fruit or vegetable that starts with b, and continue around the circle through the alphabet. Encourage the rest of the group to help children who have difficulty thinking of a fruit or vegetable for a particular letter.

   Write each food that children name on a slip of paper, putting fruit names in one group and vegetable names in another. Modify the game by assigning letters to children and having them list as many names of fruits and vegetables that begin with their particular letter as they can.

3. Have the class make a "fruit salad" bulletin board. Have each child draw a slip of paper from the names of fruits listed previously. Then have the child choose a sheet of construction paper and outline on it the fruit he or she has chosen. After cutting out their drawings, children can display them in a construction-paper fruit bowl on the bulletin board. A "vegetable salad" bulletin board can also be developed.
4. Have the class create a real fruit salad for a nourishing class snack. Have each child write a note home for permission to bring one piece of fruit to school. Encourage children to bring an apple, orange, or banana, or, if possible, a more unusual fruit, such as kiwi, berries, or grapes. In class, have children display their fruits. Discuss how each fruit must be prepared for a salad (washing, peeling and cutting), and allow children to participate as much as possible in the fruit's preparation. Then combine all the fruits into a salad and serve some to each child. (If available, help from other adults, such as food-service personnel, will be useful in preparing the fruit salad.)