



Healthy Meals with the Real Food Pyramid



Preschoolers need foods from all food groups to grow and be healthy. The food groups on the Real Food Pyramid are: protein foods, dairy, healthy fats, vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.

Planning meals and snacks that include foods and drinks from all of the food groups is important. This helps your child get the nutrients he or she needs for good health. It's best to offer whole, nutrient-dense foods that help kids grow strong and healthy. Try to avoid highly processed foods that are high in sodium and added sugars, like chips, cookies, and candy. For drinks, offer water instead of soda or fruit drinks.

Help Your Child Learn About The Real Food Pyramid

In child care, we use the Real Food Pyramid to help children learn about healthy eating. Here are some easy and fun ways you can use it at home:

- Find free nutrition education activities at fna.usda.gov/teamnutrition.
- Be a healthy role model. Show your child how you eat fruits and vegetables throughout the day.
- At meal time, talk with your child about the foods you are eating. Name the food groups represented on your plate.

Help Your Child Enjoy Real Foods

Serve foods in appropriate sizes, shapes, and textures to reduce the risk of choking. Supervise your child during meals and snacks.

Protein Foods

Serve a variety of protein foods during the week, including eggs, poultry, beef, seafood, beans, and peas. Some tasty ways to include these proteins include: hummus, bean soup, beef stir-fry, quiche, fish tacos, or salmon patties.

Dairy

Offer dairy foods such as milk, yogurt, and cheese at meals or snacks.

Healthy Fats

Offer healthy fats found in salmon, sardines, nuts, seeds, avocados, eggs, dairy, meat, poultry, and olive oil.

Vegetables

Help your child discover a variety of vegetables. Introduce him or her to dark-green, red, and orange vegetables, beans, peas, lentils, and legumes, and other vegetables.

Fruits

Offer a variety of colorful fruits such as apples, berries, and peaches.

Whole Grains

Focus on providing whole grains to your child. Choose a variety of whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, whole grain tortillas, and brown rice.



The Real Food Pyramid Coloring Activity

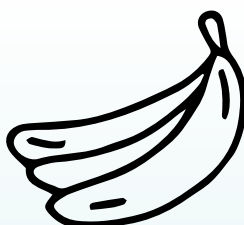
Talk to your child about the Real Food Pyramid. Then, have your child color the foods below.



Chicken



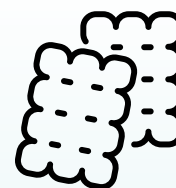
Whole milk



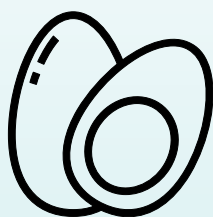
Bananas



Broccoli



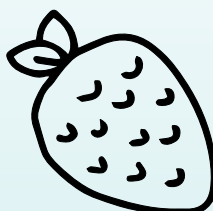
Whole-grain crackers



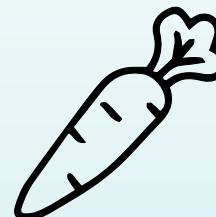
Eggs



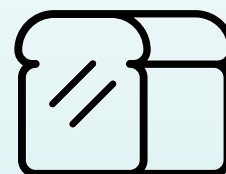
Yogurt



Strawberries



Carrots



Whole-wheat bread