Community Garden Lesson Plans

Growing Healthy Children with Canada’s Food Guide

Growing Healthy Children with Canada’s Food Guide will teach students that both children and plants need healthy foods (nutrients) to grow strong and healthy.

There are two parts to Growing Healthy Children with Canada’s Food Guide:

- Icebreaker game Simon Says Grow, Grow, Grow – Students will 'grow' from a seed to a healthy plant by answering questions correctly.
- Lesson on Canada’s Food Guide – trivia questions and food models will be used to help children learn about healthy eating.

Purpose:

- To learn what plants and humans need for healthy growth.
- To learn about Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide (Canada’s Food Guide).

Time required: 30–40 minutes

Target audience: Children ages 6–10

Supplies:

- Copies of Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide for all members.
- Supplies to represent food serving sizes:
  - baseball
  - tennis ball
  - hockey puck
  - golf ball
  - 2 erasers (the white plastic type)
- Handout to take home – Eat More Vegetables and Fruit
  www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-boost-your-vegetable.pdf
Icebreaker Game: Simon Says Grow, Grow, Grow

**Directions:**
Tell the students that you will be playing a game similar to **Simon Says** and the purpose of the game is to identify healthy foods and activities:

“Simon is not sure what he needs to grow. You can help him by knowing what statements are true or false. If Simon says a statement that is **true**, then you will grow (gradually get higher from the ground). If Simon says a statement that is **false**, then you will not grow (remain in current position). Remember! If you try to grow during a false statement you will have to start growing all over again from your starting position.”

For every **false** statement, pause and explain why this will not help the students grow healthy.

To begin the game, have students start seated on the ground with their legs crossed. For every **true** statement Simon says, growth will progress following the steps below:

1. Students will slowly grow from sitting cross legged on the ground, to sitting with uncrossed legs, with their feet on the ground.
2. From seated with uncrossed legs to their knees.
3. From their knees to a squat.
4. From a squat to standing.
5. From standing, to standing with their hands in the air above their heads.

The goal is to get all the students to grow. Show students “the growing process” before you start.

*Simon Says Grow, Grow, Grow* phrases are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simon Says (True)</th>
<th>Simon Says (False)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simon says plants and people need water for healthy growth.</td>
<td>Simon says chocolate is an important nutrient for healthy growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon says potatoes are a vegetable.</td>
<td>Simon says potato chips are a vegetable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protein helps to build strong muscles. Simon says kidney beans are a good source of protein.</td>
<td>Simon says watching TV for 5 hours each day will help you grow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon says eating orange vegetables like carrots everyday is good for your eyesight.</td>
<td>Simon says we do not need vegetables and fruits to grow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon says activities like bike riding 30-60 minutes a day will help you grow.</td>
<td>Simon says French fries are healthier than a baked potato.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon says vegetables and fruit grow from seeds.</td>
<td>Simon says sport drinks are healthier than water after soccer practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon says whole grain bread has more nutrients than white bread.</td>
<td>Simon says breakfast is not an important meal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon says drinking milk gives you calcium and vitamin D to build strong bones.</td>
<td>Simon says 100% orange juice is healthier than eating a whole orange.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon says peanut butter is a meat alternative.</td>
<td>Simon says growing vegetables and fruit at home is impossible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon says pop and fruit flavoured juices have a lot of added sugar and are not good for your health.</td>
<td>Simon says butter is in the Milk and Alternatives food group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon says making meals with your family is fun and healthy.</td>
<td>Simon says you don’t need milk for strong bones.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simon Says Script: Answers to Explain the False Statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Simon says chocolate is an important nutrient for healthy growth.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chocolate is high in fat and sugar. Eating too much fat and sugar may leave less room for the healthy foods that children need to grow well.</td>
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| *Simon says potato chips are a vegetable.* |
| Canada’s Food Guide shows us that healthy foods are those that have many nutrients and are low in fat, sugar, and salt. Potatoes are vegetables but potato chips are not because they are higher in fat and salt. Filling up on chips may not leave room in your stomach for healthy foods. |

| *Simon says watching TV for 5 hours each day will help you grow.* |
| Eating healthy foods and being active will help you grow. Running, walking, and playing helps kids grow strong, healthy and happy. Try dancing, sports, or growing a garden in your free time. |

| *Simon says we do not need vegetables and fruits to grow.* |
| Vegetables and fruit give you many important nutrients (like vitamins, minerals and healthy plant compounds) that are good for your bodies to grow and be healthy. |

| *Simon says French fries are healthier than a baked potato.* |
| Like potato chips, French fries are higher in fat and salt than the healthy foods on Canada’s Food Guide. The healthy choice to get lots of important nutrients is a baked potato. |

| *Simon says sport drinks are healthier than water after soccer practice.* |
| Water is the healthiest drink after soccer practice. Sports drinks are high in sugar and often have nutrients added, like sodium and potassium, that usually aren’t needed. |

| *Simon says breakfast is not an important meal.* |
| Breakfast is important because it gives you energy to start your day and to help you think, listen and learn better. |

<p>| <em>Simon says 100% orange juice is healthier than eating a whole orange.</em> |
| A whole orange is healthier because it has all of the goodness of the fruit including fibre, while 100% juice has no fibre. Fibre is important to keep your bodies and gut healthy. |</p>
<table>
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<th>Simon Says Script: Answers to Explain the False Statements (Continued)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Simon says growing vegetables and fruit at home is impossible.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Growing some of your own food at home is easy and fun! All you need is soil, seeds, water, sun, and love!</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Simon says butter is in the Milk and Alternatives food group.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Butter is mostly fat so it is not a <em>Milk and Alternative</em> even though it is made from the cream off milk. It does not have the protein and calcium you find in milk which is important for healthy growth. Butter is part of the <em>Oil and Fats</em> section you can find at the bottom of Canada’s Food Guide.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Simon says you don’t need milk for strong bones.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Milk is very important because it is very high in calcium and vitamin D. Your body needs calcium and vitamin D to build strong bones and teeth. Gymnastics, climbing, or hopscotch makes the calcium move into your bones to help make them grow strong.</td>
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Lesson on *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide*

Ask the students the following questions:

1. **What do plants need to grow?**
   - Sunlight
   - Soil with nutrients/fertilizer
   - Water
   - Environment: favourable climate (not too cold or too hot)

2. **Like plants, children also need certain things to grow. Can you name them?**
   - Exercise/physical activity
   - Healthy foods – balanced meals from all 4 food groups from *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide*
   - Water
   - Healthy environment: example: having healthy foods available at home and other places we go, like grocery stores, schools, restaurants, etc.

3. **Show students a copy of *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide* (Canada’s Food Guide) and ask who has seen it.**

4. **What healthy foods do children need to grow?**
   We need to eat a variety of foods that are found on *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide.*

5. **What are the 4 food groups from *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide***?
   Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives, Meat and Alternatives
   After students answer this question, hand out copies of the food guide to each student.

6. **What foods from *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide* do you grow in a garden in Alberta? Why is it good to grow a garden?**
   Many different vegetables and fruit (children can provide examples if they like). Growing a garden helps us to have more vegetables and fruit in our home so that we eat more vegetables and fruits that are fresh and tasty.

7. **Why should we eat *Vegetables and Fruit*?**
   To give our body energy; to provide vitamins and minerals that keep us healthy; to provide us with fibre to help keep our heart healthy; fibre also helps keep us full longer and keeps our digestive system (in our stomach area) healthy.

8. **How many servings of *Vegetables and Fruits* do you need each day?**
   - 6 servings (For children ages 9–13)
   - 5 servings (For children ages 4–8)

9. **What is an example of 1 serving of *Vegetables and Fruit***?
   - Leafy vegetables = 1 cup (250 mL) = about the size of a baseball
   - Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruit = ½ cup (125 mL) = about the size of a hockey puck
   - 1 medium fresh fruit = about the size of a tennis ball
   (Show the students the sports equipment to help them visualize the serving size.)
10. What two colours of vegetables should you eat every day?
Orange and green. Orange and green vegetables have plenty of nutrients, which help keep us healthy. Examples include carrots, pumpkin, squash, orange peppers, dark green lettuce, green peppers, broccoli, and spinach.

11. What nutrients can you find in Vegetables and Fruit?
Some possible answers: Fibre, vitamin C (for healthy skin), vitamin A (for healthy eyes).

12. What Grain Products do you like to eat?
Have students list foods from this food group. Do this as a whole group, or break into pairs and come up with a list.

13. Why should we eat Grain Products?
For energy (for activity); to provide us with fibre, which helps keep our heart healthy; fibre also helps keep us full longer and keeps our digestive system (in our stomach area) healthy; Grains also provide B vitamins, iron, zinc and magnesium, which we need to stay healthy.

14. How many servings of Grain Products do you need each day?
6 servings (For children ages 9–13)
4 servings (For children ages 4–8)

15. How much is 1 serving of Grain Products?
- ½ bagel = 45 g = about the size of a hockey puck
- Cooked rice, pasta, quinoa, couscous = ½ cup (125 mL) = about the size of a hockey puck
- Cold cereal = ~1 cup (30 g) = about the size of a baseball
- Hot cereal = ¾ cup (175 mL) = about the size of a tennis ball

16. Why should we eat Milk and Alternatives?
To help build strong bones and teeth

17. How many servings of Milk and Alternatives do you need each day?
3–4 servings (For children ages 9–13)
2 servings (For children ages 4–8)

18. How much is one serving of Milk and Alternatives?
- Milk or soy beverage = 1 cup (250 mL) = about the size of a baseball
- Yogurt = ¾ cup (175 mL) = about the size of a tennis ball
- Cheese = 1 ½ oz (50 g) = about the size of 2 white erasers

19. What mineral can you find in Milk and Alternatives?
Calcium.

20. What are some examples of meat?
Beef, chicken, turkey, pork, fish, wild meat.

21. What are some examples of meat alternatives?
Beans (e.g. kidney, black, brown), tofu, lentils, nuts, seeds, eggs.

22. Why should we eat Meat and Alternatives?
To help keep our muscles strong; to help us grow; to keep our blood healthy.
23. How many servings of *Meat and Alternatives* do you need each day?
   1–2 servings (For children 9–13)
   1 servings (For children 4–8)

24. What is a serving of *Meat and Alternatives*?
   - Cooked fish, poultry, lean meats = 75 g (2 ½ oz) = about the size of a hockey puck
   - Cooked legumes (beans) = ¾ cup (175 mL) = about the size of a tennis ball
   - Peanut or nut butters = 2 Tbsp (30 mL) = about the size of a golf ball
   - 2 eggs

At the end of these trivia questions, provide the handout *Eat More Vegetables and Fruit*, for students to take home.

**Supplementary Activity**
To enhance this lesson, have students taste test various vegetables and fruit, and describe what they like about each one. Students can write down positive comments about each food they try, or list their favourites. They can take this list home, to help encourage them to try new foods at home with their family.

For more nutrition lesson plan ideas, go to:
School Nutrition: Healthy Eating Lessons
http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page2918.aspx

For more healthy eating information, go to: www.HealthyEatingStartsHere.ca