

Food and Nutrition Lesson Plan: Kindergarten Guide for Educators



Lessons include:

[1: Food Explorers](#)

[3: Seed to Sprout](#)

[2: Roots of Our Food](#)

[4: Drink Water](#)

Developed by AHS, Nutrition Services in consultation with the Body Image Research Lab at the University of Calgary's Werklund School of Education

Overview

This lesson addresses the Kindergarten [Physical and Education and Wellness Curriculum outcomes](#) and was developed using [age-appropriate food and nutrition literacy guidance](#).

Students will understand:

- Food is what we eat or drink to get energy for our bodies to move and function.
- Eating a variety of foods helps us grow and be healthy.
- Food comes from different places like grocery stores, markets, or from the land.
- Sometimes we garden, fish, farm, or hunt for the food that we get from the land. These foods come from plants and animals.
- We can explore and compare different foods with all our senses: observe it with our eyes, smell it with our noses, feel it, then taste and chew it.



Teaching considerations: To support students in developing healthy eating patterns, approach food and nutrition education in a way that promotes a [healthy relationship with food](#), recognizes that students may have [varying access to food](#), and [considers potential biases](#) towards food and eating practices.

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Learning Outcome:

Children explore how food connects to daily life.

Refer to last page for the [Knowledge, Understanding, Skills, and Procedures](#)

Teacher Background




Eating a variety of food helps provide the body with the energy and nutrients it needs to grow. Exploring new foods with their senses (including sight, smell, touch, taste) allows children to learn about food. It helps them build a healthy relationship with food, accept new foods, and build variety within their eating pattern over time.

As an optional learning activity (Lesson 1: Foods Explorers) the teacher can provide a food for students to explore, learn, and try if they would like. The student can decide if they would like to try the food; it is okay if they do not want to. Before doing any taste tests, it is important to let parents know what food you will be trying and confirm there are no allergies or dietary restrictions to consider. It is also helpful to learn, read, or talk about the food beforehand.

In Alberta, families may get food from grocery stores, farmers markets, and farm stands. Many families also receive food directly from the land, through gardening, farming, hunting, and fishing. Traditional foods in Alberta include berries, such as Saskatoon berries, wild blueberries, chokecherries, root vegetables, mushrooms, greens, and the 'three sisters' - corn, beans, and squash. Other traditional foods that are hunted, trapped, or fished include elk, deer, caribou, moose, bison, rabbit, duck, and fish. Modern farming practices allow us to grow and raise many plants and animals. Because of our long cold winters and relatively dry climate, there are many foods from other parts of the world, such as tropical fruits, that we can only buy in stores.

Drinking water helps us feel our best. Fluids need to be replenished daily. For example, we lose water by sweating, breathing, and going to the bathroom. Therefore, this fluid needs to be replenished throughout the day. It is important to drink water when we are thirsty. We need more when it is hot outside, if we are playing hard, or if we are sweating. Other drinks that help our bodies stay hydrated and grow are unsweetened milk (plain white milk) and fortified plant-based beverages (or plant-based 'milks' such as, soy milk).

Additional Sources of Background Information

-  [5 Senses Bridge to Discovering New Foods](#) (CHEERS In Early Learning)
Learn how to be supportive when introducing new foods to children
-  [Encouraging Your Kids to Discover Gardening](#) (Canadian Food Focus)
Tips and tricks for engaging children in gardening and discovering how food grows
-  [Make Water Your Drink of Choice](#) (Health Canada)

Lesson 1: Food Explorers

Estimated Time

45 minutes

Required Materials

- Suggested books about trying new foods (optional):
 - *The Foodie Flamingo* by Vanessa Howl or
 - *Becoming a Food Explorer* by Arielle Dani Lebovitz

Taste test

- [Exploring New Foods worksheet](#) (one per student)
- Colouring utensils
- Garbage can
- Cutting board
- Serving tray (optional)
- Tongs or serving utensils
- Knife
- Napkins
- Paper plates or muffin liners for serving samples
- Variety of foods cut into samples (such as apple, pear, orange, sweet peppers, broccoli, cucumbers, cauliflower, berries, melons)
- If food samples are not available, another option is to use [Food Cards](#) or play foods.

Messages for students when exploring new foods:



If you decide you do not want to try a new food that is okay. We can experience new foods in different ways. You can say, “I’m not ready yet”, or “I do not want to try it today.”

If you do choose to try a food and don’t like it, you can use a “No thank-you napkin” to quietly take it from your mouth and put it in the garbage (or compost bin if available). Good job for exploring!

Instructions

1. (Optional) Read one of the suggested books with the class:

Ask: Can anyone tell me one of the senses explored in the book?

Sample Answers:

- Seeing/ sight
- Taste
- Touch
- Hearing/ sound

Ask: What happened when they started trying new foods?

Sample Answers:

- They liked the taste
- They enjoyed the new food
- They did not like the taste
- They became full
- They were surprised

2. Taste test

- a) Prior to activity, wash sample foods and hands.
- b) Provide one [Exploring New Foods worksheet](#) to each student.
- c) Cut foods into desired sample sizes with students watching. Show students all parts of the food– peel, core, seeds, etc.
- d) Teach: When we try new foods, it helps us learn about different smells, textures (feels), and flavours (tastes). When we learn to eat many different foods, we are more likely to get the fuel and nutrition our body needs to grow healthy and play.
- e) Pass around samples of one food at a time or have students line up to receive their sample. Use paper muffin liners or plates to serve food samples. Encourage students to take sips from their water bottles to clear their mouth after trying each food item.
- f) If food samples are not available, pass around printed [food cards](#) or play foods (one per student) for discussion below.
- g) **Optional movement idea:** Hide food cards or play foods around the classroom prior to the lesson. Ask students to find a card prior to beginning discussion.

h) Discussion: Ask the following questions after the class tries each food.

When trying a new food, we can see it with our eyes.

Ask: What colour and shape does it have?

Sample Answers: round, long and curvy

When trying a new food, we can smell it with our nose.

Ask: Does it have a smell? What did you smell?

Sample Answers: spicy, sweet, fruity, strong, no smell

When trying a new food, we can touch it with our fingers and in our mouth.

Ask: How does the food feel?

Sample Answers: hard, soft, smooth, rough, wet, hot, cold, or room temperature

When trying a new food, we can taste it with our tongue and chew it.

Ask: How does it taste?

Sample Answers: sweet, sour, salty, bitter

Discussion: Once the worksheet is complete, reflect with the class.

Ask: What is your favourite food? Why? Use senses to describe.

Sample Answer: Answers will vary

Ask: What is your least favourite food? Why? Use senses to describe.

Sample Answer: Answers will vary

Alternative activities that do not require food (optional):



[Explore Veggies and Fruit](#) (Health Canada)

Lesson 2: Roots of Our Food

Estimated Time

30 minutes

Required Materials

- Interactive whiteboard or projector
- [Roots of Our Food presentation](#)
- [Roots of Our Foods presentation \(educator version with notes\)](#)
- [Roots of Our Food worksheet](#) (one per student)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Suggested books about food origins (optional):
 - *Amara's Farm* by JaNay Brown-Wood
 - *Grow! How we get food from our garden* by Karl Beckstrand

Instructions

1. Prior to class, download or print the [Roots of Our Foods presentation \(educator's version with notes\)](#) and print a [Roots of Our Food worksheet](#) for each student.
2. Introduce the activity.
Ask: Where do you think food comes from?
Sample Answers: The store, the garden, earth, forest, lake, farm, hunting
3. Optional: read a storybook that explores where food comes from and validates the answers provided by students.
4. Using the [Roots of Our Food presentation](#), review slides 3–9 with the class. These slides introduce the concept that food can come from farms, gardens, grocery stores, farmers markets, restaurants or we can fish, hunt, and gather from forests, river, lakes, and the natural environment around us.

To encourage movement and kinesthetic learning, introduce the below movement activity following slides 10–12.

Where do I grow? (slide 13)

State the name of a fruit or vegetable. Suggestions are listed in the table below and in the speaker notes on slide 13. Students will imitate how the plant of the fruit or vegetable grows with actions. These actions can be modified as needed.

For example instead of sitting on the ground in a ball to represent growing below ground, student can wrap their arms around their trunk without lowering to the ground, etc.

Where it grows	Fruits or vegetables to name	Action
Below ground	Potato, carrots, beets, onions, garlic, turnip	Sit on ground in a ball
Bush or near the ground	Raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, beans, tomatoes, peas, lettuce, pumpkins, watermelons, corn	Squat or crouch down low, hold arms out to side or in front
On a tree	Apples, cherries, oranges, peaches, plums	Stretch tall with hands in the air and sway in the wind

- Hand out the [Roots of Our Food worksheet](#). Ask students to colour examples of different foods in Alberta (vegetables, livestock, fish, wild game, etc.) and where they grow or are harvested (underground, above ground, field, forest, water, etc.).

Lesson 3: Seed to Sprout

Estimated Time

30 minutes

Required Materials

- Seeds to display such as: bean, pea, carrot, sunflower, pumpkin or apple (optional)
- Clear plastic jars or containers to display seeds (optional)
- Clear plastic cups or small pots
- Planting seeds for each student- beans or peas work well
- Potting soil
- Watering can or spray bottle
- Paper towels
- Masking tape or popsicle sticks to label cups
- Markers to label
- [How Does It Grow?](#) (Health Canada)
- [Life Cycle of a Plant worksheet](#) (one per student)

Instructions

1. Gather students and review the teaching points below.
 - a) Optional - Show students different types of seeds (if available) and ask if anyone knows what they are.
 - b) Show [How Does It Grow?](#) (Health Canada) to demonstrate how plants start and grow into the foods we know and eat.
 - c) Teach:
 - Plants need water, sunlight, air, and soil to grow. Water helps seeds swell and break open.
 - Seeds grow into plants that give us food. It takes time for seeds to grow into the foods we eat.
 - Once a seed grows into a food, we may get this food directly from the land, or may buy it from a grocery store or market.

2. Pass out [Life Cycle of a Plant worksheets](#) to students. Have students complete the worksheet.
3. Students will plant their own seeds next. Over time, they will watch them grow.
4. Demonstrate to students how to fill their cups with potting soil, leaving some space at the top. Show how to plant seeds by making small holes in the soil with fingers or pencils and covering with soil.
5. Have each student plant 2–3 seeds in their cup.
6. Instruct students to cover the seeds lightly with soil and water gently using a watering can or spray bottle.
7. Provide markers, masking tape or a popsicle stick for students to label their cups with their names and the type of seeds planted. Add creative flair by having students colour and design their popsicle stick seed marker.
8. Have the students place their cups in a spot in the classroom that gets sunlight.
9. During the following days, have the students water their cup as needed (the soil should be moist but not soggy), and monitor for the growth of seedlings.

Complementary Activity (optional):

- To help children learn further about how seeds become plants, and that plants produce foods for us to eat, refer to [Grow at home](#) (Health Canada).

Lesson 4: Drink Water

Estimated Time

20 minutes

Required Materials

- 5 or more cups (that hold 1 cup/ 8 oz. / 250 mL each)
- 1 or more plastic jug(s)
- Water to fill up the jug(s)
- Large bowl or measuring cup that can hold 5 cups (1250 mL) water
- Sensory bin or tray to contain cups being filled with water (optional)
- Paper or tea towels

Instructions

1. **Set up water display:** line up 5 empty cups in front of the class. If class size is large, organize children into groups (suggest 2–5 students per group) and provide 5 empty cups to each group of students. Fill up jug(s) with water.
2. **Explain** to the students that our bodies need water to function. We lose water with sweating, breathing and going to the bathroom. To keep our body working well we need to add back this fluid by drinking water each day. In general, they need to drink 5 cups (1250 mL) of water every day.
3. **Demonstrate** to the class by filling up one empty cup. Then have 4 students volunteer to fill up (independent or with help) an empty cup in front of the class. This represents the total amount of water to aim to drink every day.

To finish, pour all 5 cups of water into a large clear bowl or measuring cup so students can see the total volume of water needed in a day.

Discussion

Ask: What else needs water to grow?

Sample Answers:

- Animals need water just like us for their bodies to work properly and grow.
- Plants need water to grow, like trees, flowers, vegetables, and fruits.

What food are you exploring today?_____.

How does it look? Draw it in the box below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for a child to draw the food they are exploring.

Circle your answers below.

How does it smell?



Spicy



Sweet



Fruity



Strong



No smell

How does it feel?



Hard



Soft



Smooth



Rough



Wet

How does it taste?



Sweet



Sour



Salty



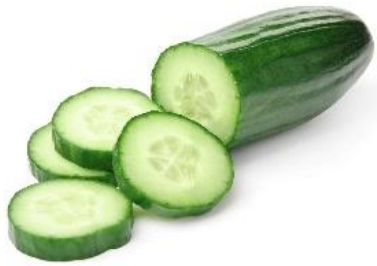
Bitter

How did you feel about it?



| Kindergarten – Food Cards

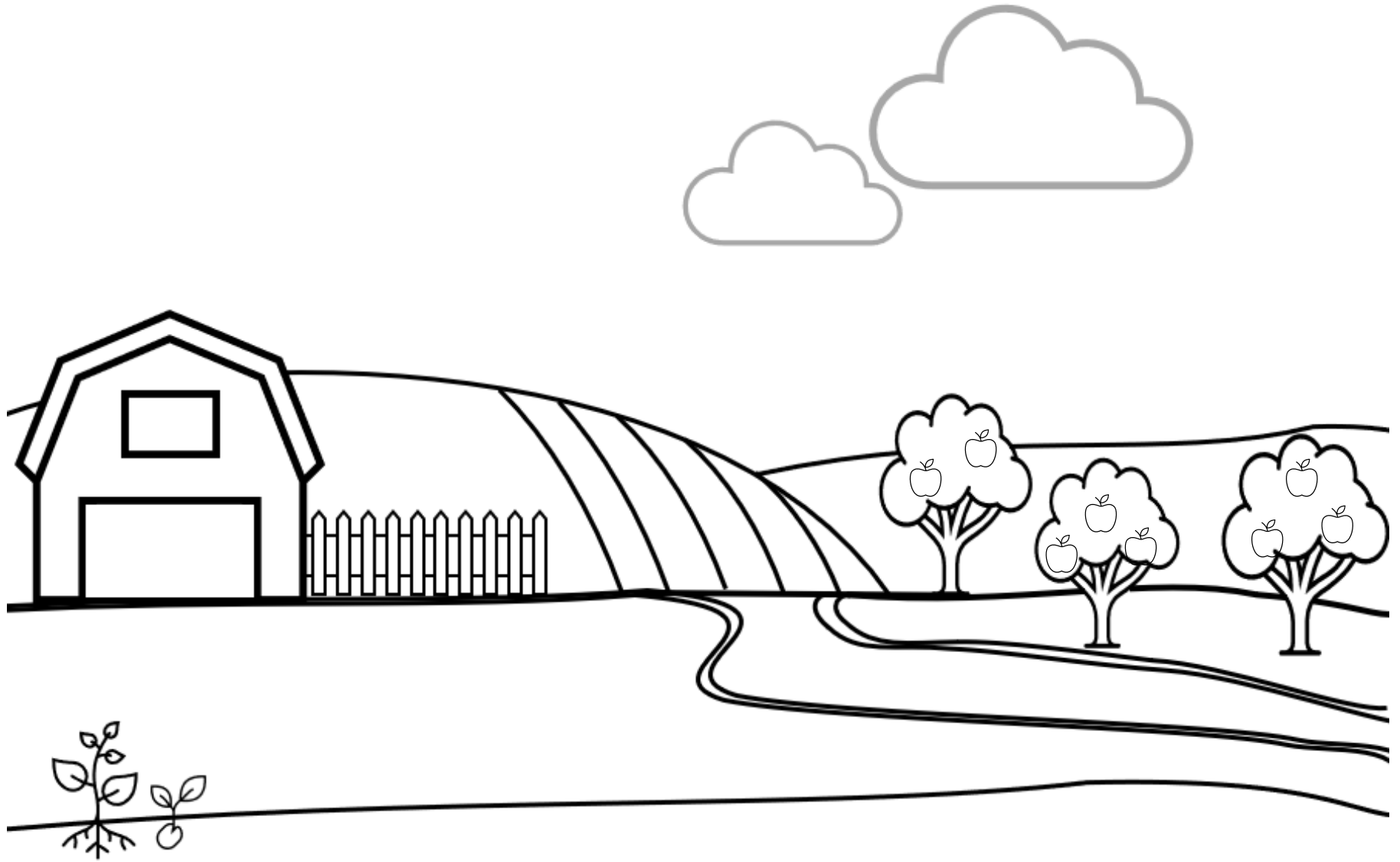




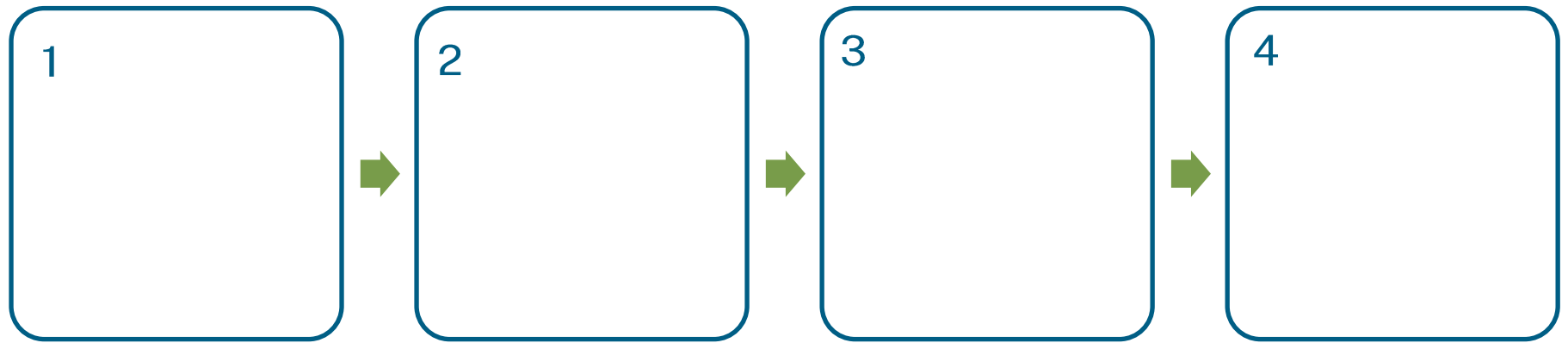




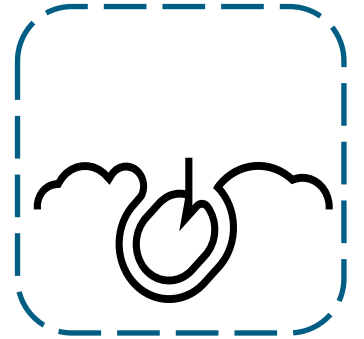
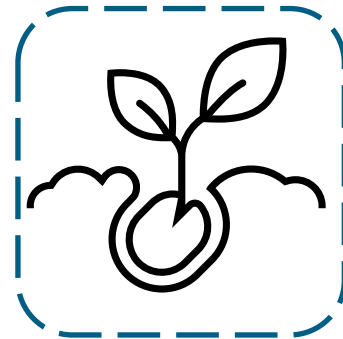
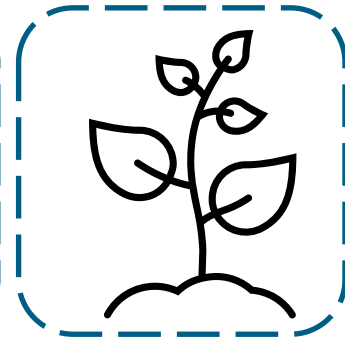
| Kindergarten – Roots of Our Food



Life Cycle of a Plant



Cut and glue the pictures in order.



Learning Outcomes

All KUSPs from the Kindergarten [Physical Education and Wellness](#) curriculum are addressed in this lesson plan.

Knowledge:	Understanding:	Skills and Procedures:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food is what individuals eat or drink. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food provides energy that helps the body function and grow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore a variety of foods that help the body grow.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food can be obtained from markets, grocery stores, or directly from the land. Food from the land can be obtained directly in a variety of ways, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gardening fishing hunting farming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food can be obtained from a variety of sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the source and origin of a variety of foods.

