

# Balance Your Plate Lesson Plan TRAIN @ School

## Objectives

- Know which colors on the food plate correspond with each food group
- Make a healthy, balanced plate through a relay game

## Outline

- Introduction :
  - Read a children's book about food
  - Review the functions of the food groups
- Instruction:
  - Discuss what a healthy, balanced plate look likes
  - Make a sample of a healthy, balanced plate
- Activity:
  - Color a balanced plate
  - Make a balanced, healthy plate through a relay game



**Special Olympics**

**TRAIN**  
SO

## Supplies

Time: 15-60 minutes

Materials:  
Artificial food /pictures of food, coloring supplies, paper plates, children's book, transparency

## Resources:

Special Olympics Website : <http://www.specialolympics.org/>  
TRAIN SO Website: <http://trainso.blogspot.com>

## Balance Your Plate

- Time: 15-60 minutes
- Materials: Artificial foods (or pictures of foods), paper plates, coloring supplies (green, orange, blue, red), transparency (or SmartBoard) and writing tools, children's book
- Objectives:
  - Students will verbally state which color on the food plate corresponds with each food group.
  - Students will make a balanced plate, with a food item from each food group, through participating in a relay game.
- Introduction
  - Read a children's book that covers the topic of food.
    - Introduce the topic of a healthy, balance plate by reading a kids book that encourages eating a healthy meal such as *D.W. the Picky Eater* (Marc Brown), *Gregory the Terrible Eater* (Mitchell Sharmat), or *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Eric Carle). (These books are just suggestions; teachers can do their own research to find a book that covers the topic of healthy eating. Books will vary based on target audience for lesson.)

**We're going to read (*title of the book*). This is a story about food, and the importance of eating healthy. After we read the story, we're going to talk about what some of your favorite meals to eat are.**

*If you have older students you may want to find an article dealing with food or show a video clip of cooking.*
  - Discussion of some favorite meals.

**One of my favorite meals to eat is lasagna and salad, what are some of your favorite meals?**
- Instruction
  - Discuss the need to eat different food groups at each meal.
    - **Our body needs many nutrients to be healthy. The best way to get all the nutrients is to eat foods from various food groups at each meal. Focusing on eating foods from three different food groups at each meal is a way to have a balanced diet. Remember there are five different food groups. Fruits and vegetables have nutrients that keep your body healthy. Grains give your body energy. Meats and beans keep your muscles strong. Dairy gives you strong bones and teeth. Oils and fats are okay in small amounts, they give your body cushion.** Write the names of the food groups on the board as you list them.

Let's talk about some foods from different food groups that we like to eat for breakfast. One of my favorite breakfast foods is eggs, and it belongs to the meats and beans group. Write eggs near the meats and beans food group on the board. Can you tell me some of your favorite breakfast foods? Write the food the students say on the board near the food group it belongs to or have the students write the food item on the board themselves. Repeat this exercise for lunch and dinner if time allows.

- Introduce the balanced plate tool to the class.
  - **Now that we have talked about some of our favorite foods, and what food groups they belong too we are going to talk about a tool we can use at meal time to remind us that we need many food groups at each meal. A plate can be easily split up into three sections.** Provide the students with a visual representation of what their plate should look like. Teacher draws a circle that will represent a plate. (This can be done on a transparency, SmartBoard, or on a paper plate). Draw a line in the middle of the plate, and then divide one of the halves into half again. **These sections represent different food groups.**
  - **The biggest section, which takes up  $\frac{1}{2}$  the plate, is for fruits and vegetables. This section on the plate is the color green.** Color this section green and label it "fruits and vegetables" while you talk about it. **Fruits and vegetables take up the most room on our plate because they have many healthy nutrients that we need each day. They are also combined in one section because we don't have to eat a fruit and a vegetable at each meal. For example, I like vegetables but I don't like eating them for breakfast, so I usually eat a little more fruit instead.**
    - Fruit and Vegetable tip: **Fruit also makes a delicious desert!**
  - **One of the smaller sections, which take up  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the plate, is for grains. This section on the plate is the color orange.** Color this section orange and label it "grains" while you talk about it. **Grains are very important to have in our diet because they give us energy to be able to concentrate in school and play sports.**
    - Grain tip: **Whole grains are better for us than white grains because they have more nutrients in them!**
  - **The last section, which takes up  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the plate, is for meats and beans. This section on the plate is the color red.** Color this section red and label it "meats and beans" while you talk about it. **Meats and beans are important to eat because they make our body and muscles strong.**
    - Meats and beans tip: **Eat a variety of meats and beans such as chicken, fish, ham, and eggs.**

- The last food group is Dairy. Dairy will be shown on our plate by drawing a circle directly in the center, which goes through the other food groups. Draw the circle, color it blue, and label it “dairy” while you talk. Dairy is shown in the middle of our plate because it can be easily added to other food groups, for example I like to add cheese to my eggs. It is a circle to remind us that we can also get a dairy serving from milk that we may drink with our meal.
  - Dairy tip: Milk, cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt are all great ways to include dairy in your meal.

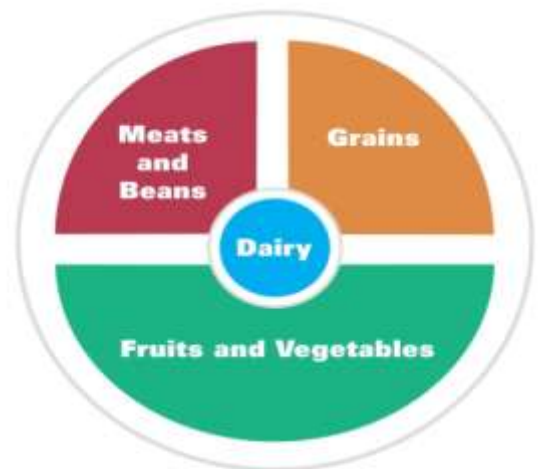
- Make a few sample plate as a class

**Remember that it is important to make sure that your meal plates are balanced.**

**Do we have each food group represented in our meal? Let’s make a few sample plates. Let’s make a breakfast, lunch, and dinner plate using the artificial (picture cut outs of) food that we have here. They should then visually represent it by placing artificial food or food pictures in the corresponding areas on the plate. Good job, that looks good. Look at the plate we made as a class. Is our plate balanced?**

**Do we have each food group represented?**

Go through each food section, and verbally say, and point to each picture. **We have toast which represents grains, we have an egg, which represents meats and beans, we have yogurt, which represents dairy, and we have some fresh fruit to eat. I think that this plate is a healthy, balanced meal. Be sure to point out that two food items will go in the fruits and vegetables section, since it takes up half the plate.** Continue on to make a sample plate for lunch and dinner as well.



- Activity
  - Color a balanced plate.
    - While discussing with students what a healthy, balanced plate looks like, have the students make their own balanced plate tool. They will color in a paper plate, dividing it into sections, and labeling the sections to correspond with each food group. Be sure to have paper plates and orange, red, green, and blue colors available for the students.
      - Planned Differentiation: This fun activity can be modified so that the students will do more or less of making their balanced plate tool. They could just be coloring an already labeled plate, or they could be responsible for drawing the lines and coloring. Students can work individually or the

teacher can have them all work together. The plate can be made at the same time as the teacher is making theirs in front of the class, or after the lesson as a form of an assessment.

- Guided: Students will make their individual plates as a class, while learning about each section together. Teacher will help the students make the plates (already having some premade) so that they just have to color in the sections.
  - Limited Guidance: Students will make the plates with teacher supervision during the lesson, drawing the lines and coloring the plate.
  - Independent: After the lesson, students will make the entire balanced plate independently. Teacher will walk around supervising and asking questions when necessary.
- Make a Balanced Plate Relay (*Look at attached instructions for more detailed game guidelines*)
    - **There are lots of different food items that you could eat on a regular. Earlier, we made a sample breakfast, lunch, and dinner plate. I want to see how well you guys are at making plates. We're going to play a game where we make meal plates, in a relay style game. The objective of this game is to make a healthy, balanced plate. You will need to find five food items and place them in the correct spot on the plate. Remember to do your best. At the front of the room, are various pictures, I want one person from each team to come up for each food group and pick an item to put in the correct spot on your plate.**
      - Planned Differentiation: This game can be differentiated many ways. The teacher can divide the teams in whatever way they want, along with setting up the game however they would like. The teacher can use picture of food, or they can use artificial food. Teachers can choose to time this game, or just observe effort.
      - Guided: Teacher will help students determine which food items belong to each food group, and where they belong on the plate.
      - Limited Guidance: Students will select which food item and determine where it goes with teacher prompting. (Example → Telling students certain clues about the food, reminding them of the functions, etc). The teacher will help the student if they place the food item in the wrong section on the plate.
      - Independent: Students will select a food item that goes with the food group announced and determine where on the plate it belongs independently.
- Conclusion

- After the relay game is complete, wrap up the lesson. **We just learned about what a healthy balanced meal looks like. Can someone tell me what food groups are on a healthy balanced plate? What color goes with each food group on the plate? How much of your plate should each section cover?** Call on students to answer questions. Then ask them if they have any more questions regarding this subject before the end of the lesson.
- Curriculum Connections
  - Mathematics
    - Numbers & Operations:
 

**Have students count how many foods they have on their plates.**

      - *Understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers, and number systems.*

**Have students add more or take away foods from their plates to practice addition and subtraction.**

      - *Understand meanings of operations and how they relate to one another.*
      - *Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates.*
    - Fractions
 

**Work on fractions by dividing the plate up by  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and then by  $\frac{1}{4}$ .**

      - *Understand measurable attributes of objects and the units, systems, and process of measurement.*
      - *Apply appropriate techniques, tools, and formulas to determine measurements.*
    - Finance
 

**Include example prices for all of the foods. Each student will be given a set amount of money to make a complete healthy meal.**

      - *Understand measurable attributes of objects and the units, systems, and process of measurement.*
      - *Solve problems that arise in mathematics and in other contexts.*
      - *Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve problems.*

**Opportunity Cost: The prices of their favorite foods may cost more than alternatives that they don't enjoy as much. They need to make a healthy, balanced meal while making decisions such as buying their favorite foods that are more expensive instead of cheaper foods they don't enjoy as much.**

- *Understand measurable attributes of objects and the units, systems, and process of measurement.*
- *Solve problems that arise in mathematics and in other contexts.*
- *Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve problems.*
- *Recognize and apply mathematics in contexts outside of mathematics.*

○ English

▪ Reading

**Label the plate and all the food items; have the students read the labels. Have each food item labeled (next to the pictures and artificial foods labeled). Allow the student to place the food in the correct section on their plate only after reading the name of the food and the food group it belongs to.**

- *Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment.*
- *Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).*

▪ Writing/Spelling

**Have the students make up the labels for the food groups as well as the foods. As an introductory activity, have students write down on paper their favorite foods, and their favorite fruit and vegetables, etc. During the class discussion, let them write what foods they mention on the board.**

- *Students adjust their use of spoken written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.*
- *Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.*

- *Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).*
- Life Skills
  - Grocery Shopping → A field trip to the actual grocery store would be beneficial, but making a mock grocery store in the classroom will work. Different topics such as: fresh versus frozen/canned foods (cost and food spoilage), how to choose good produce, price comparisons, etc. can be discussed.
  - Food Preparation → After discussion of the food pyramid and food groups, students can make a healthy recipe. This may be a healthy alternative to a class favorite food, an all-in-one complete meal, or more about preparing specific foods. Following a recipe is a great way to work on math skills, measurement, as well as working as a team. Each student can be given a set task to complete and together they will make a food they can all enjoy.



## Balanced Plate Relay Instructions

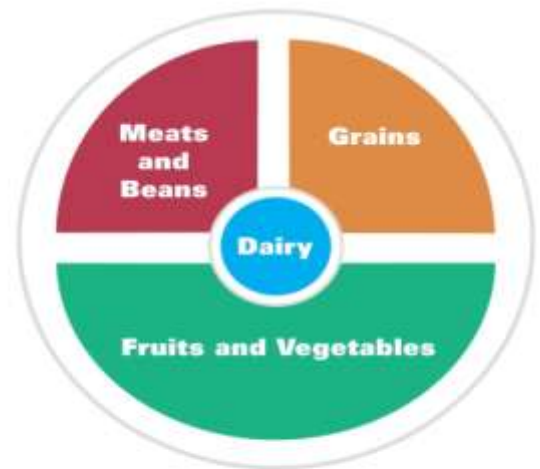
**Objective:** Students will identify which foods belong with individual each food group, and where they belong on the plate in order to make a healthy, balanced plate.

**Materials:** Artificial food, food plates, food pictures

**Setup:** Teacher arranges food items in the front of the classroom how they want (mixed, or divided by food groups). Students use the food plates that they have made.

### Play the game:

Divide the class up in any way that the teacher sees fit. Have the students come up to the front and to pick the food item for their plate and rush back to their group to make put onto the portion plate. **There are lots of foods in each food group. You are going to work together as a team to see if you can make a healthy balanced plate. You will each get to come up and pick a food item (either the teacher says which food group, or they have to be responsible themselves to make sure they represent each food group) and go back to your team and put it in the correct spot on the plate.** Demonstrate for the students. **“Fruits” was called out. I go to the table and see that an apple is a fruit, so if I picked up the apple and rush back to my table. I will work with my teammates to put the apple on the fruits and vegetables section of the plate.** If the student is having a hard time deciding which food group the food item goes in, give them some clues about the food (such as the food functions). This game can go on as long as the teacher wants. The rules can be changed, and they can work individually or as teams.



Balanced Plate