



*Developed to
encourage
and enhance
a young
child's healthy
beginning.*

BLEND Beginnings

Color Challenge

Bonus Unit: COLOR CHALLENGE KEY MESSAGES

Fruits and vegetables come in terrific colors and flavors, but their real beauty lies in what's inside. Fruits and vegetables are great sources of nutrients, like fiber, folate, potassium, and vitamins A and C. In addition to fiber, minerals and vitamins, these naturally colored foods contain phytochemicals. A phytochemical is a natural bioactive compound found in plant foods that works with nutrients and dietary fiber to protect against disease. Phytochemicals, working together with nutrients found in fruits and vegetables, may help slow the aging process and reduce the risk of many diseases; including cancer, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, cataracts, osteoporosis, and urinary tract infections. These powerful nutrients are the disease-fighting substances that also give fruits and vegetables their beautiful array of colors.

It is important to start early and teach young children to eat a “rainbow” of colorful fruits and vegetables every day. Building an early acceptance of fruits and vegetables will help children experience positive and healthy food messages that will likely continue throughout adulthood. Each week a new color will be introduced to the children along with a featured fruit or vegetable to sample as a healthy snack. For some children, this unit may be a new experience, while for others it will be another opportunity to eat something nutritious and delicious. Nonetheless, it's important to be positive and support the children during this colorful unit.

In this unit the children will participate in colorful projects, sample healthy snacks in a rainbow of colors, sing color songs, and play colorful games that incorporate physical activity. The six colors chosen are from the USDA MyPyramid, including:

- Week 1 – Purple (Meats & Beans)
- Week 2 – Red (Fruits)
- Week 3 – Green (Vegetables)
- Week 4 – Yellow (Oils)
- Week 5 – Orange (Grains)
- Week 6 – Blue (Milk)

Tips for teaching young children about eating a rainbow of colorful fruits and vegetables:

1. Explore new ways to integrate a rainbow of color in the daily routine with songs, stories, art, activities, and healthy snacks.
2. Never force a child to eat something when the child says “no.” Respect the rejection and simply move on. After repeated exposure, and when comfort level increases, the child will come around and ask to try it.
3. Model positive behavior. As a staff member it is important for the children to see you eat a colorful plate of fruits and vegetables at breakfast, lunch, and at snack time!
4. Offer lots of variety. Give children a choice of fruits and vegetables and let them decide what they want.
5. Keep lessons short and fun.
6. Praise every child!



Bonus Unit: COLOR CHALLENGE CIRCLE TIME

Healthy eating habits are usually formed long before little ones start to select their own foods. Children take on the eating habits of their role models. Parents and child care providers are the first role models that children encounter. In many studies involving the eating patterns of young children, researchers found that their eating habits, including preferences for certain foods, were linked to the patterns and preferences of their parents and role models.

Preparing the environment:

- Hang the MyPyramid for Preschoolers Poster* in the Circle Time area.
- Place the “My Healthy Food” Picture Cards* in the BLEND Apron* and make available during Circle Time.
- “Healthy Food” Sitting Mats* should be available for the children to sit on during Circle Time conversations.
- Prepare reading books that support color, healthy foods, and active lifestyles.
- Explore the Snack Time section which contains healthy snack information, suggestions, and recipes (*pages 98-109*)

**Materials available in the BLEND Beginnings Program Container*

Leading a Circle Time Session:

During this unit, talk to the children about the six colors from the USDA’s MyPyramid and all the wonderful fruits and vegetables they will be learning about, experiencing, and tasting.

Week 1

Color Challenge: **Purple**
Food Challenge: **Raisins**

Week 2

Color Challenge: **Red**
Food Challenge: **Apples**

Week 3

Color Challenge: **Green**
Food Challenge: **Green Peppers**

Week 4

Color Challenge: **Yellow**
Food Challenge: **Pineapples**

Week 5

Color Challenge: **Orange**
Food Challenge: **Oranges**

Week 6

Color Challenge: **Blue**
Food Challenge: **Blueberries**



Content reviewed by Mary Caskey, Extension Educator, Health and Nutrition

Bonus Unit: COLOR CHALLENGE LESSON PLANS

Week 1 - Color Challenge - Purple

Circle Time (10 Minutes) Introduce the color PURPLE. Show “My Healthy Foods” cards and talk about all the healthy foods that are Purple.

Include the following activities in your Circle Time session:

- Who Is Wearing (Purple) Today? Song (page 90)
- Color Treasures – Purple (page 90)
- Color Share (page 90)

Activity Time (15 minutes):

- Grape Kool-Aid Art (page 91)

Energy Time (30 minutes)

- Grape, Grape, Raisin (page 91)

Snack Time: Raisins (pages 98–99)

Week 2 - Color Challenge - Red

Circle Time (10 Minutes) Introduce the color RED. Show “My Healthy Foods” cards and talk about all the healthy foods that are Red.

Include the following in your session:

- Who Is Wearing (Red) Today? Song (page 90)
- Color Treasures – Red (page 90)
- Color Share (page 90)
- Way up High in the Apple Tree (page 91)

Activity Time (15 minutes):

- Apple Tree Handprints (page 92)

Energy Time (30 minutes) Select from the following Physical Activity games:

- Apple Hide & Seek (page 92)
- Apple Hop (page 92)

Snack Time: Apples (pages 100–101)

Week 3 - Color Challenge - Green

Circle time (10 Minutes) Introduce the color GREEN. Show “My Healthy Foods” cards and talk about all the healthy foods that are Green. Teach the children the Green, Green, Green Song (page 93).

Include the following activities in your session:

- Who Is Wearing (Green) Today? Song (page 90)
- Color Treasures – Green (page 90)
- Color Share (page 90)

Activity Time (15 minutes):

- Green Bubbles (page 93)

Energy Time (30 minutes):

- Color Hop Song (page 94)

Snack Time: Green Peppers (pages 102–103)



Bonus Unit: COLOR CHALLENGE LESSON PLANS

Week 4 - Color Challenge - Yellow

Circle Time (10 Minutes) Introduce the color YELLOW. Show “My Healthy Foods” cards and talk about all the healthy foods that are Yellow.

Include the following activities in your session:

- Who Is Wearing (Yellow) Today? Song (page 90)
- Color Treasures – Yellow (page 90)
- Color Share (page 90)

Activity Time (15 minutes):

- Shaving Cream Art (page 94)

Energy Time (30 minutes):

- Jump Over the Sun (page 95)

Snack Time: Pineapples (pages 104–105)

Week 5 Color Challenge - Orange -- BLEND Food Challenge - Oranges

Circle Time (10 Minutes) Introduce the color ORANGE. Show “My Healthy Foods” cards and talk about all the healthy foods that are Orange.

Include the following activities in your session:

- Who Is Wearing (Orange) Today? Song (page 90)
- Color Treasures – Orange (page 90)
- Color Share (page 90)
- The Oranges Song (page 95)

Activity Time (15 minutes):

- Noisy Oranges (page 95)

Energy Time (30 minutes):

- Orange Jump Song (page 96)

Snack Time: Oranges (pages 106–107)

Week 6 Color Challenge - Blue

Circle time (10 Minutes): Introduce the color BLUE. Show “My Healthy Foods” cards and talk about all the healthy foods that are Blue (Dairy Group).

Include the following activities in your session:

- Who Is Wearing (Blue) Today? Song (page 90)
- Color Treasures – Blue (page 90)
- Color Share (page 90)
- The Blueberry Bush Song (page 96)

Activity Time (15 minutes): Select from the following activities:

- “Water” Colors (page 96)
- “Twister” Sarong (page 97)

Energy Time (30 minutes):

- Let’s Do the Twist (page 97)

Snack Time: Blueberries (pages 108–109)



BLEND Beginnings

Who Is Wearing (Color) Today? Song

During Circle Time ask the children to sit and sing along to the following song. Sing it to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

**Who is wearing “Purple” today,
“Purple” today, “Purple” today?
Who is wearing “Purple” today,
Please stand up.**

One at a time, ask each child that stood up to show you where they are wearing that color. You may need to assist the younger children and show them where they are wearing the specific color. Change the color for every weekly Color Challenge.

Color Treasures

Every week talk to the children about the Color Challenge and explain that this “Treasure” box will host a bunch of goodies that are specific to the color of the week.

What you need:

A box or basket
Items to decorate box

What to do:

Decorate your designated box or basket and place in an area that promotes the color (Circle Time area). At the beginning of every weekly Color Challenge, have the children hunt for items specific to that color throughout the center and/or outside. Have the child talk about the items – What is it? What is the color? What is the texture? etc. Have the child place the item in the basket. Keep those items in the “Treasures” box for the remainder of the week. For each week following – continue the same routine.

Color Share

This is a great activity to get parents involved in their child’s learning process. Throughout the six week Color Challenge, the children will have an opportunity to bring an item(s) from home and share it with the class during Circle Time. Some examples include: a red tractor, a blue car, a green shirt (worn by the child), etc.

This activity gives children a wonderful opportunity to create self-esteem and confidence; it will also encourage children to speak in front of a group as well as to learn to be an active listener.

Talk to the parents, or send out a letter* about this learning activity. Explain that they will need to assist their child in finding something that is specific to the color of the week.

**Parent Letter (see page 110)*



Grape Kool-Aid Art



This is a fun way to make a one-of-a-kind masterpiece. The children will love spritzing the paper with water and watching how the Kool-Aid transforms into a brilliant color of purple. The best part is – it smells great! Talk about the color purple and how it smells. Ask them what it smells like and tell them that their nose is breathing in all the wonderful grape smells.

What you need:

Grape Kool-Aid packets
White paper
Spray bottle
Water

What you need:

Give each child a piece of paper and write the child's name on it. Sprinkle a little dry Grape Kool-Aid mix onto the piece of paper. Have the child spray water from a spray bottle onto the paper. Watch the transformation! Allow it to dry and have the child take their artwork home.

Grape, Grape, Raisin



This is a great game to release some of the children's energy. Played like "Duck, Duck, Goose" except the children will say "Grape, Grape, Raisin."

Grape, Grape, Raisin!!!

Instructions: Have the children sit in a circle. Talk about the difference between a grape and a raisin. After a brief chat – ask the children who wants to start the game and be the "grape." Have the child walk around the circle and touch each child on the head and say "grape." When the child touches one child on the head and says "raisin," that child becomes the raisin and chases the first child around the circle. The first child runs around the circle and sits in the second child's spot. If the second child catches the first one before he/she sits down, the first child has to sit in the middle of the circle for one turn. The second child then repeats the game by tapping children on the head sayings "grape."

Way Up High in the Apple Tree Song



Children love this rhyme:

**Way up high in the apple tree
Two little apples were smiling at me.**

**(Reach way up high on tiptoes)
(Make your hands into two circles
looking down at you)**

**I shook the tree as hard as I could.
Down came those apples,
And M-M-M were they good!**

**(Wiggle your body)
(Everybody squat down)
(Stand up, rub your tummy, and smile)**



Apple Tree Handprints

Once you teach the children the rhyme "Way up High in the Apple Tree," show them how they can create their own apple tree with the touch of their own hand. It's a bushel of fun!

What you need:

Red, brown, and green finger paint
White Construction paper
Round sponge daubers

What to do:

Give each child a piece of construction paper and write the child's name on it. Help the children paint their hands and wrists brown. Press hand and wrist on construction paper to represent the apple tree and trunk. Then have the children dip their finger into green paint and press all around the tree branches to represent the tree's leaves. Ask the children to use the round sponge dauber to create apples by dipping the sponge in red paint and press on the tree to represent the two little apples from the rhyme.

Optional: Allow the paint to dry and have the children use a marker to make faces on the apples. Also, make copies of the "Way up High in the Apple Tree" rhyme and paste a copy of the poem onto their paper. The children can then take their finished apple trees and rhymes home to share with their families.

Apple Hide & Seek

Tell the children that you are going to hide an "Apple." Show them the exact apple that you are going to hide. Now have all the children cover and close their eyes while you "hide" the apple in the room. Remember to "hide" the apple in plain view. Tell the children to find the apple, but not touch it. Once they spot the apple they should sit back down in their spot. Once everybody has spotted the apple have them point it out. The first one to sit down will get to hide the apple for the next round.

Apple Hop

Hop to children's music or to their favorite song!

What you need:

Apple pattern (see page 111)
Red paper

What to do:

Make copies of the apple pattern on red paper. Cut the apple shapes out and tape to the floor. When placing them on the floor, space them at different distances throughout the room, but not too far apart. Ask the children to hop from one apple to another. Play music, recite poems, or sing songs. Try "**This is My Apple**" sung to the tune of "You Are My Sunshine."

**This is my apple,
My shiny apple
It makes me happy – Everyday.
When I eat one
It make me healthy
Please don't take my apples away!**

Green, Green, Green Song

This song will help with the children's vocabulary and assist with fruit and vegetable recognition. Show the children "My Healthy Foods" cards as they sing the song. Change the green vegetables and make your own version. Also, change the word "rabbit" to a child's name in the group. Sing to the tune "Three Blind Mice."

**Green, green, green.
Green, green, green.
What is green? What is green?
A broccoli, a kiwi, and a cucumber,
A grape, a bean, and a celery,
The lettuce that my little rabbit eats,
They are green.**

Green Bubbles

This bubbly activity will excite the children and will blow them away with the beautiful art it makes.

What you need:

Bubble solution - recipe follows* (or make your own)
Green liquid food coloring
Bowls
Straws
White paper

What to do:

Supply the children with a bowl and a straw with a hole near the top to prevent children from sucking the soap up. Put some bubble mix in the bowl. Have the children blow into the straw while it is in the bowl, creating bubbles. Then have the children remove the straw and place a drop of green food coloring on the top of the bubbles. Quickly press a piece of paper on the top of the bubbles to create bubble prints. Staff members will likely need to help the children place the drop of food coloring on the bubbles and place the paper on the bubbles

*Recipe for bubbles:

Reuse bubble jars and blowers again and again by making your own bubble mix. For just pennies, you can make enough mix to fill an entire afternoon with bubbly fun.

Step 1: Combine ½ cup liquid dishwashing soap, 2 tsp sugar, and 1¼ cups water in a mixing bowl.

Step2: Mix gently. This recipe yields 1 ¾ cups of bubble mix.

Step3: Use immediately or store in a plastic container.



Color Hop Song (Green)

The children will love to sing this song to the tune of “Old MacDonald.” Begin by talking about green and point out (or have the children point out) some objects that are green. You may want to place green objects strategically in a visible area to allow for the children to find them easily and to hop in an open space.

**I see something that is green
Do you see it too?
I see something that is green.
HOP there if you do.
With a hop, hop here
And a hop, hop there. Hurry up! Hop it up!
Hop as fast as you dare.
I see something that is green.
Do you see it too?**

Shaving Cream Art

Children love to get messy! Creating art with shaving cream is a great project and a great learning activity for children. It’s also a project that kids can take home to show their parents.

What you need:

Vinyl tablecloth
White paper or cardstock
Shaving cream (non-mentholated)
Yellow food coloring with eye droppers

What to do:

Lay down a drop cloth to protect the floor and the vinyl tablecloth to protect your table. Give each child a blank piece of white paper or cardstock. Since the paper is going to get wet, cardstock tends to work better. Ask the children to spray some shaving cream on their piece of cardstock with foam (spray the foam for the younger children). Place a few drops of yellow food coloring on each child’s shaving cream pile. Have the children use their hands to start spreading the shaving cream around their piece of cardstock.

After a little while, the food coloring combined with the shaving cream will begin to seep into the paper, creating a marble effect. Once the desired effect has been reached, brush off the extra shaving cream and let the paper or cardstock air dry. After it has dried, write the children’s name on their papers.



Jump Over the Sun



This is a great activity to help children with balance, coordination, and strength. Watch their delight as they jump over the biggest circles.

What you need:

Yellow paper

What to do:

Cut out different size circles from yellow paper (small enough for the children to be able to hop over) and tell the children these are suns. Explain to the children that the sun is yellow and that the sun is very important to help grow yummy fruits and vegetables. Place the “Suns” on the floor in an open area. Ask the children to take turns hopping over the suns.

The Orange Song



Place anything that is orange on the children’s shoe (ribbon, stickers, etc). You can change the article of clothing and the action you do to extend the song. Sing to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It.”

**If there's orange on your shoes, stand up quick,
If there's orange on your shoes, stand up quick.
If there's orange on your shoes,
If there's orange on your shoes,
If there's orange on your shoes, stand up quick!**

Noisy Oranges



Let the children make some noise for the color “Orange.” This game will help the children with color recognition and confidence.

What you need:

Gather several everyday items that are orange and a few that are not.

These items may include: a yam, oranges, carrots, a spoon, etc.

Musical instruments or items that make noise (pots and pans)

Bag for the items

What to do:

Put the items in a bag and bring the bag to Circle Time. Provide each child with a musical instrument or something that can make noise. One by one, remove the items in the bag and show the children the item. If the item is orange, have the children play their instruments. If not, have them remain silent. At first you can lead the children – let them know that the item is orange and that they should play their instruments.

Some will make mistakes, but that’s the fun of the game.



Orange Jump Song

Many children know the song “If You’re Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands”. Introduce the song with these new words. Don’t be afraid to change the lyrics to “Jump up and Clap” or “Jump up and Turn.”

**If you're wearing orange then
Jump up and Down,
Jump up and Down,
Jump up and Down,
If you're wearing orange then
Jump up and Down,
Now sit back down.**

The Blueberry Bush Song

Sing this song to the tune of “The Mulberry Bush.” Have the children join hands, go around circles, and sing along.

**Here we go round the blueberry bush,
The blueberry bush, the blueberry bush.
Here we go round the blueberry bush,
So early in the morning.
Pick the blueberries, small and round,
Small and round, small and round.
Pick the blueberries, small and round,
So early in the morning.**

“Water” Colors

Children will be fascinated with this activity. They will enjoy watching the blue coloring move ever so gracefully throughout the jar; eventually turning a beautiful blue color.

What you need:

- A large clear jar or container (with lid preferred)
- Water
- Blue food coloring
- Alka-Seltzer tablets (optional)

What you need:

Clean and remove all labels off a large jar (large pickle jars work perfectly). Place the jar in an area where it will be safe from falling (next to the color “Treasures” box). Fill the jar with water and let the water sit till calm. Tell the children that you will be dropping blue food coloring into the water one drop at a time. Stop after a few drops and see what happens. Add a few more – the color will intensify. As an option you can add a few more drops every day throughout the week or complete this activity in one day. You may also want to add an Alka-Seltzer tablet just for fun.



“Twister” Sarong (skirt or kilt)



The children will love to create a costume piece and dance to “Let’s Do the Twist”! Play different kinds of music and have the children move and groove all they want!

What you need:

Blue crepe paper
Yarn
Glue

What to do:

Tell the children that they will be making a “Twister’s” Sarong! First, give each child a piece of yarn long enough to go around the waist (allow extra to tie around their waists when completed). For each child, mark the yarn with a marker where both ends connect at the child’s waist (this will make sure that the crepe paper won’t get in the way when tying the sarong on).

Now, give each child 6-8 pieces of crepe paper (approximately 8-10 inches long). To attach the crepe paper pieces – lay a piece of crepe paper down and place the yarn (starting at a marker spot) about 2 inches from the top of the crepe paper. Put a dab of glue right below the yarn – wrap the crepe paper piece around the yarn and secure. Continue with the remainder of the paper. It is not necessary to place each crepe paper piece right next to the other – the pieces can be spaced out an inch or two.

Let’s Do the Twist



Dancing is not just great physical exercise – it’s also a good social skill builder. Teach the children how to twist and they’ll have fun moving their bodies without even knowing that you’re reinforcing social skills.

What you need:

Song: “Let’s Do the Twist” by Chubby Checkers
Blue crepe paper “Twister” sarong

What to do:

Have the children put on their “twisters.” While wearing a twister, demonstrate to the children how to do the twist. Tell the children that their twister will move and dance with them – the more they twist, the more the twister will twist! Now play the song “Let’s Do the Twist” – encourage the children to dance along with you or encourage the children to pair up and follow one another. Add new movements as the children seem ready for them. For example, you could:

- Twist with your hands in the air.***
- Twist with your body leaning forward.***
- Twist with your body leaning back.***
- Twist with one leg off the ground.***
- Twist and turn around.***
- Twist and move up and down.***



Snack Time: Raisins (Week 1)

Raisins are loaded with antioxidants and high in carbohydrates (an immediate source of energy); raisins are also high in fiber and iron.

Suggested daily servings for fruits (raisins are included in the fruits category) for a preschooler is:

- 2-3 year olds — 1 cup
- 4-8 year olds — 1 – 1 ½ cups

Suggested serving sizes for fruit for a preschooler is (1 Tbsp. per year of age):

- ½ whole fruit (banana, apple, orange, etc)
- ½ cup of 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup cooked or canned fruit
- ¼ cup of raisins

Safety check from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

Choking hazards: Do not feed children younger than four round, firm food unless it is *chopped completely*. The following foods are choking hazards: nuts and seeds; chunks of meat or cheese; hot dogs; whole grapes; fruit chunks (such as apples); hard, sticky dried fruits; popcorn; raw vegetables; hard, gooey, or sticky candy; and chewing gum. Peanut butter can be a choking hazard for children younger than two.

Ideas/Recipes for Serving Raisins

Bear Sandwiches

Whole wheat bread slices

Low-fat cream cheese, flavored cream cheese, or other spreads. (*peanut butter can be substituted. Or, mix together peanut butter and mashed banana and spread on bread.*)

Raisins (chop if necessary)

Maraschino cherries

Let the children use a heart-shape cookie cutter to cut heart shapes out of bread slices (partially frozen bread cuts easily or lightly toast the bread). Show them how to cut the points off their hearts to make the shapes resemble bear faces. Then let them spread peanut butter over the heart shape. Add raisins to make the eyes and mouth. Add cherries to make the nose.

Cracker Bug

Whole wheat crackers

Low-fat cream cheese (*peanut butter can be substituted*)

Pretzel Sticks

Raisins (chop if necessary)

Spread low-fat cream cheese (or peanut butter) on a cracker. Stick pretzels into the cheese to make the legs. Finally add raisins for the eyes.



Ideas/Recipes for serving Raisins (cont'd)

Carrot Raisin Salad

2 tablespoons raisins
 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
 1 cup carrots -- coarsely shredded
 ½ cup pineapple tidbits in juice – drained
 2 tablespoons pineapple juice – unsweetened
 Dash ground cinnamon
 Dash ground nutmeg

Combine raisins and vinegar in a medium bowl; let stand 15 minutes. Add carrots and pineapple tidbits; stir well. Combine pineapple juice, cinnamon, and nutmeg; pour over carrot mixture, and toss well. Cover and chill.

Fruit Pleasers

Whole wheat bread slices
 Low-fat cream cheese, flavored cream cheese, or other spreads. (*peanut butter can be substituted*)
 Raisins (chop if necessary)
 Grated fruit (apples, pears, peaches, etc.)
 Applesauce
 Banana

Options:

- Spread the cream cheese on the bread and top with grated apples, pear or peach
- Or, mix ½ cup cream cheese, ½ cup raisins, ½ cup applesauce and spread on bread

Bugs on a Log

Celery sticks (cut about 3 inches long)
 Low-fat cream cheese, flavored cream cheese, or other spreads.
**Peanut butter can be substituted*

Raisins

Wash and dry the celery. Cut it into 3" pieces. Spread the cream cheese in groove shaped section of celery (you can use a knife or spoon). Push raisins into the cream cheese. Now, eat and enjoy!

- Raisins are traditionally used, however raisins, sunflower seeds, dried cherries or blueberries, chopped peanuts, granola clusters, dried fruit pieces (apricots, apples, and dates), and unsweetened cereal can be used as the "bugs."
- Other suggestions: low fat cream cheese and pineapple, low fat cream cheese and pimento, hummus with your favorite "bugs".



Snack Time: Apples (Week 2)

Apples are a healthy food choice and encourage healthy food habits. Apples are an excellent fruit for building healthy bodies because they are fat-free, sodium-free, and are a great source of fiber.

Suggested daily servings for fruits for a preschooler are:

- 2-3 year olds — 1 cup
- 4-8 year olds — 1 ½ cups

Suggested serving size for fruit for a preschooler is (1 Tbsp. per year of age):

- ¼ cup of raisins
- ½ whole fruit (banana, apple, orange, etc)
- ½ cup of 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup cooked or canned fruit (applesauce)

Safety check from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

Choking hazards: Do not feed children younger than four round, firm food unless it is chopped completely. The following foods are choking hazards: nuts and seeds; chunks of meat or cheese; hot dogs; whole grapes; fruit chunks (such as apples); hard, sticky dried fruits; popcorn; raw vegetables; hard, gooey, or sticky candy; and chewing gum. Peanut butter can be a choking hazard for children younger than 2

Ideas/Recipes for Serving Apples

Apple Yogurt Dip

- ½ cup plain non-fat yogurt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 medium apple (your favorite variety)
- Fresh strawberries and sliced bananas (optional)

Combine the yogurt, cinnamon, and vanilla in a small bowl. Core and slice the apple into slices. Arrange on a platter with fresh strawberries and sliced bananas. Dip into yogurt mixture and enjoy!

Cinnamon Apple Wraps

- Whole wheat tortilla shells, 7 inch
- Applesauce
- Shredded cheddar cheese
- Cinnamon powder

Spread ¼ cup of applesauce over tortilla. Sprinkle ½ tsp. of cinnamon over applesauce. Top with ¼ cup shredded cheddar cheese. Wrap each tortilla and heat in microwave until cheese melts. Cut into snack size pieces.



Ideas/Recipes for Serving Apples (cont'd)

Apple Frogs

Red apples, cut into wedges

Grapes (cut in half)

Low-fat cream cheese, flavored cream cheese, or other spreads.

Peanut butter can be substituted

Mini chocolate chips

Adults should cut apples into wedges (leaving the peel on for children over 4). Allow child to spread cream cheese on top of apple slice and layer another slice on top. Add dabs of cream cheese on top and attach green grapes. Add another dab of cream cheese and place chocolate chips on for eyes.

Blender Applesauce

3 tart apples

¼ cup honey

Peel apples. Cut each apple into 4 pieces. Remove seeds. Put the apples into blender with honey and a small amount of water. Blend until smooth. Eat applesauce immediately.

Mini Applesauce Pizzas

Per Child:

½ English muffin

1 tablespoon soft low-fat cream cheese (room temperature)

1 tablespoons applesauce (use Blender Applesauce recipe or purchased applesauce)

1 shake cinnamon

A few raisins (chop up if needed)

Paper plates, plastic knives, toaster and oven.

The children will love to make these mini pizzas. First, prepare the applesauce and set out cream cheese. Then, lightly toast the English muffins. Give each child a half of an English muffin and ask them to spread the softened cheese over the top. Then spread a tablespoon of the applesauce over the cheese. Sprinkle with cinnamon and raisins. Toast until warm (can do a bunch on a cookie sheet in the oven). Cool slightly before serving.



Snack Time: Green Peppers (Week 3)

Green peppers are a great source of vitamins A and C. They make a colorful addition to any meal. Bell peppers can be found in a rainbow of colors and can vary in flavor. The variety of the pepper plant and the stage of the ripeness determine the flavor and color of each pepper. For example, a red bell pepper is simply a mature green bell pepper. As a bell pepper ages, its flavor becomes sweeter and milder.

Suggested daily servings for vegetables for a preschooler are:

- 2-3 year olds — 1 cup
- 4-8 year olds — 1 ½ cups

Suggested serving sizes for vegetables for a preschooler is:

- ½ cup of raw or cooked vegetables
- ½ cup vegetable juice
- 1 cup of raw leafy greens

Ideas/Recipes for Serving Green Peppers

Silly Face Sandwich

Whole wheat bread (cut out a face shape using a small circle cookie cutter)

Ham or other thinly sliced cold cuts

Assortment of vegetables and toppings: green and/or black olives, cherry tomatoes, cheese, carrots, onions, and bell peppers.

Condiments (ketchup, mustard, or softened cream cheese)

Cut the vegetables and toppings in a creative way mimicking face features. For example, grate carrots to make shreds of hair, cut olives in small pieces to look like eyes, etc. Spread your child's favorite condiment on the bottom half of the bread and layer with cold cuts. Tell the children that they are to build their own "Silly Face Sandwich" with all the fixings that they want on it. The children will love to create their own sandwiches and will love to eat the sandwiches even more.

Lucky Peppers

Green peppers

Low-fat vegetable dip

Create a lucky pepper snack that's tempting and healthful for kids. Slice a green bell pepper widthwise; it will reveal a shamrock or lucky four-leaf clover shape. Slice another pepper lengthwise to create stems. Serve with your child's favorite dip.



Ideas/Recipes for Serving Green Peppers (cont'd)

Vegetable Kabob

- 1 stalk celery
- 1 small carrot
- 12 small cherry tomatoes
- 1 small green pepper

Wash all the vegetables and pat them dry with paper towels. Cut the celery into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch pieces. Cut the carrots into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch rounds. Clean the green pepper, being sure to get out all the seeds. Cut the pepper into pieces about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch square. Take the kabob stick and place a celery piece on the end. Add a piece of carrot, a tomato, a green pepper square, another celery, another carrot, another tomato, and so on until the kabob stick is full. This is a good snack to use with a vegetable dip.



Snack Time: Pineapples (Week 4)

Pineapple is healthy, sweet, and delicious. Fresh pineapple is great for snacking, just cut it into slices, wedges or chunks – serve and eat. Pineapple is high in vitamin C. Just two slices of fresh pineapple counts as one serving of your fruit intake.

Suggested daily servings for fruits for a preschooler are:

- 2-3 year olds — 1 cup
- 4-8 year olds — 1 ½ cups

Suggested serving size for fruits for a preschooler is (1 Tbsp. per year of age):

- ½ cup pineapple
- ½ whole fruit (banana, apple, orange, etc)
- ½ cup of 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup cooked or canned fruit

Ideas/Recipes for Serving Pineapples

Bahama Bagels

1/3 cup low fat cream cheese
1 tablespoon chopped walnuts
1 tablespoon crushed pineapple
Whole wheat bagels, sliced in half

Mix cream cheese, pineapple, and nuts in small bowl. Spread on each half of the bagels. Serve.

Pineapple Cheese Ball

2 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese
1 (8 oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained
¼ cup chopped bell pepper
1 teaspoon seasoned salt
2 teaspoons grated onion
2 cups pecans, chopped finely (optional)*
Whole grain crackers

Combine cream cheese, pineapple, bell pepper, seasoned salt, onion, and 1 cup pecans. Form into 2 cheese balls. Put remaining 1 cup pecans on the outside of the cheese ball. Wrap in foil and refrigerate. Serve with crackers.

**Leave out pecans if peanut allergies exist.*



Ideas/Recipes for Serving Pineapples (cont'd)

Graham Cracker Face-ups

Graham crackers

Low-fat cream cheese, flavored cream cheese, or other spreads.

Peanut butter can be substituted

Add-ons:

- ¼ banana, sliced
- 2 tablespoons applesauce
- 2 tablespoons crushed pineapple

Sprinkle-ons: (1 tsp. each)

- Raisins
- Sunflower seeds
- Crisp rice cereal
- Granola
- Coconut

Break each graham cracker into two squares. Using a table knife, spread each square with spread. Select one of the add-ons to spread on top of cracker. Sprinkle one or more of the sprinkle-ons on top.

Tropical Celery Boat

4 celery stalks

1 (15oz) part-skim ricotta cheese

1 small can crushed pineapple

Strain the juice from a can of crushed pineapple. Wash celery and trim off the leafy tops and wide bottom. Cut celery in 3" pieces. Put the ricotta cheese in bowl and add the pineapple, stir completely. Spread the mixture into the hollow part of the celery stalk.



Snack Time: Oranges (Week 5)

The orange is one of the most common and popular fruits. It is one of Mother Nature's best super foods, packed with an unbelievable array of disease-fighting nutrients, all tucked neatly beneath the peel. The orange is loaded with vitamins, and the most abundant vitamin in the orange is Vitamin C. This powerful vitamin protects our body against harmful elements and helps the body heal if you get a cut. Oranges make good snack – just peel and enjoy.

Suggested daily servings for fruits for a preschooler are:

- 2-3 year olds — 1 cup
- 4-8 year olds — 1 ½ cups

Suggested serving size for fruits for a preschooler is (1 Tbsp. per year of age):

- ½ whole fruit (banana, apple, orange, etc)
- ½ cup of 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup cooked or canned fruit
- One serving of berries is ½ cup

Ideas/Recipes for Serving Oranges

Creamsicle Smoothie

- 1 cup skim milk
- 1 (6 oz.) container low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1/3 cup calcium-fortified frozen orange juice concentrate
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 5 ice cubes

Combine milk, yogurt, orange juice concentrate, and vanilla extract in blender. Blend 15 seconds to combine ingredients. Add ice cubes and blend about 20 seconds to crush ice. Serve immediately. Serves 2.

Juicy Finger Blocks

- 3 envelopes unflavored gelatin
- ¾ cup boiling water
- 1(12 oz.) can frozen orange, apple, grape, or other juice concentrate.

Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Add juice and stir until mixed. Pour into a lightly greased 9 x 13-inch cake pan. Chill in the refrigerator about 2 hours until firm. Cut into squares or use cookie cutters to make shapes. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.



Ideas/Recipes for Serving Oranges (cont'd)

Fruit Dip

½ cup plain yogurt, low fat or regular
 1 tablespoon unsweetened frozen orange juice concentrate
 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
 Cinnamon or nutmeg (optional)

Mix the yogurt, orange juice concentrate, and vanilla in a small bowl. Sprinkle with cinnamon or nutmeg. Cut up small size pieces of soft fruit such as peaches, oranges, bananas, strawberries, melon, or apple for children to dip and eat.

Natural Soda Pop

Combine half a glass of 100% fruit juice (orange, grape, apple, or pineapple) with half a glass of club soda or seltzer. Add ice and enjoy.

Porky Pine Balls

Select an orange or apple and use it as the base to hold tidbits of fruit and cheese. Cut strawberries, pineapple, grapes, cheese cubes, etc, into small tidbits. Place fruit pieces and cheese cubes on a toothpick and stick all around the apple or orange to make a Porky Pine Ball.

Mandarin Orange Pasta Salad

1 ½ cups dry medium shell or elbow macaroni
 1 ½ cup chopped cooked chicken
 1 cup fresh OR 1 (11 oz) can mandarin orange slices, drained
 1 cup seedless red or green grapes, halved
 ½ cup sliced celery
 ½ cup low-fat ranch salad dressing

Cook macaroni according to directions on package, rinse with cold water. In large mixing bowl combine pasta, chicken, mandarin slices, grapes and celery. Pour ranch dressing over salad mixture and toss lightly. Serve immediately or refrigerate.

Orange Smoothies

1 (11 oz.) can mandarin oranges in juice
 ½ cup frozen pineapple chunks
 ½ cup vanilla yogurt
 1 tablespoon honey
 1 cup skim milk OR vanilla soy milk
 ½ cup ice

Open can of oranges and drain. Place in a zip-top plastic bag and freeze several hours. Place the frozen oranges and pineapple chunks in the bottom of a blender, or food processor. Add yogurt, honey soy milk and ice. Puree until the mixture reaches the texture of a milkshake. Add more ice, if desired, until an icy consistency is achieved.



Snack Time: Blueberries (Week 6)

Blueberries are very healthy for children as a part of their diet. Blueberries are a great treat for kids of all ages because they are packed with nutrition, but low in calories. Blueberries are ranked #1 in antioxidant benefits, and are high in Vitamins A and C.

Suggested daily servings for fruits for a preschooler are:

- 2-3 year olds — 1 cup
- 4-8 year olds — 1 ½ cups

Suggested serving size for fruits for a preschooler is (1 Tbsp. per year of age):

- One serving of blueberries is ½ cup
- ½ whole fruit (banana, apple, orange, etc)
- ½ cup of 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup cooked or canned fruit

Ideas/Recipes for Serving Blueberries

Yogurt Fruit Parfait

Paper cups or small glasses

Plain or vanilla flavored yogurt

Granola cereal

Fruits: blueberries, apple chunks, peach slices, kiwifruit, strawberries, banana slices, grapes.

Put yogurt into each paper cup or glass. Sprinkle granola over the yogurt. Put spoonfuls of fruit over the granola. Put more yogurt over the fruit. Sprinkle with a little granola on top.

Frozen Berry Delight

Frozen blueberries

Skim milk

Plain yogurt

Blend 1 cup frozen blueberries berries (can use any frozen berries – strawberries, raspberries) with 1–2 cups milk. Add ¼ cup yogurt. No ice needed with frozen fruit. Serve immediately.



Ideas/Recipes for Serving Blueberries (cont'd)

Blueberry Smoothie

- ½ cup of skimmed milk
- 1 cup of low-fat vanilla ice cream
- 2 cups of frozen blueberries

Put all ingredients in the blender and blend until smooth.

Berry Good Smoothie

- 1 cup low-fat strawberry yogurt
- 1 cup orange juice with added calcium
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1 cup frozen blueberries
- 1 cup frozen raspberries

Combine the low-fat yogurt and the orange juice in a blender and blend. Slowly add the frozen berries while blending. If smoothie is too thick, add more orange juice until it is the consistency you like.

Blueberry Dazzler Juice

- ¾ cup apple juice
- ½ cup plain yogurt
- 1 banana, sliced and frozen
- 6 ounces frozen blueberries
- Whole fresh blueberries for decoration

Pour the apple juice into a food processor. Add the yogurt and process until smooth. Add the banana and half of the blueberries and process well. Then add the remaining blueberries and process until smooth. Decorate with whole fresh blueberries and serve.

Rainbow Salad

Children will learn their colors by making and eating a delicious and nutritious snack. Ask the children to wash and peel (if needed) the fruit. Cut into small pieces and mix all the ingredients together.

- Red strawberries**
- Orange oranges**
- Yellow pineapple**
- Green apples**
- Blue blueberries**
- Purple grapes**



BLEND

Better Living: Exercise & Nutrition Daily

Mark your Calendar!

| Color | Date |
|--------|------|
| Purple | |
| Red | |
| Green | |
| Yellow | |
| Orange | |
| Blue | |

Each week we will talk about a color and would like that each child share something from home that represents that color. Encourage your child to look for a toy, a piece of nature, a favorite article of clothing, or a clipping from a magazine.

Visit the BLEND website for more information on how you and your family can live a healthy and active lifestyle:

www.BLENDCentralMN.org

Bonus
Unit

110

Beginnings

Parent/Guardian,

Your child is currently learning about healthy living and the importance of being active and eating healthy foods through physical and creative activities and games. Soon we will be teaching the children the colors of fruits and vegetables.

The BLEND Color Challenge will help your child learn about the rainbow of colors which will continue to give your child a solid foundation to grow up healthy.

Healthy Snack



Apple Yogurt Dip

- ½ cup plain non-fat yogurt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 medium apple (your favorite variety)
- Fresh strawberries and sliced bananas (optional)

Combine the yogurt, cinnamon, and vanilla in a small bowl. Core and slice the apple into slices. Arrange on a platter with fresh strawberries and sliced bananas. Dip into yogurt mixture and enjoy!

BLEND Color Challenge

Color Challenge: “Apple Hop” Activity



