

Start Smart Eating & Reading

★ A fun-filled breakfast, nutrition, and reading program for 1st and 2nd grades ★

Module One: Breakfast Builds Better Brains

Lesson Overview

Through reading and discussion of *The Hatseller and the Monkeys*, children learn the lesson of how breakfast aids thinking. Children can then participate in one or more activities, including a no-cook food activity, an activity that reinforces the consequences of skipping breakfast, and a maze or cut-and-paste activity that traces the route of food to the brain. Finally, the children can apply these concepts when they begin tracking their daily breakfast habits.

Objectives

Children will:

- Learn that eating in the morning helps the brain to work better.
- Participate in activities that reinforce the importance of a healthy breakfast.
- Keep track of daily breakfast consumption.

What you will need

To Teach and Supplement the Lesson:

1. Teacher/Leader Resource Page
2. *The Hatseller and the Monkeys*, by Baba Wagué Diakité (©1999, Scholastic)
3. Breakfast Every Day! classroom poster
4. Breakfast Mix-n-Match game cards 🕒

5. Reproducible Handouts:

- B-R-E-A-K-F-A-S-T! Rap / Let's Eat Breakfast 🕒
- For Your Breakfast 🕒
- Breakfast Song 🕒
- Ever missed your breakfast? 🕒
- From mouth to brain: It's A-Maze-ing! 🕒
- Breakfast feeds your brain (cut-and-paste activity) 🕒
- My Breakfast Every Day individual calendar 🕒
- "Breakfast Bites" (parent newsletter) 🕒

6. Recorded music: Breakfast Rap, Let's Eat Breakfast, For Your Breakfast, Breakfast Song 🕒

For the Food Activity (Morning Smiles): 🕒

- English muffins or bagels (preferably whole grain varieties)
- Peanut butter or reduced fat cream cheese (check for allergies or school policy on use of peanut products)

Some or all of the following toppings:

- Grated carrots
- Fresh fruit, such as banana slices, berries or orange slices
- Canned fruit, such as pineapple tidbits or applesauce
- Dried fruit, such as raisins or cranberry raisins

Equipment/Supplies:

- Knives for peanut butter & cream cheese
- Serving spoons/utensils for toppings
- Plates, dull knives (enough for each student)

Most importantly:

- Clean hands!
- A clean work surface

 = As time allows

ATTENTION LEADERS

The best way to teach students the importance of eating breakfast is to model healthy habits. Make a point to mention your own breakfast habits throughout the year. This can be as simple as saying, "I've had my breakfast and I'm ready for the day!"

Teaching the Lesson

Before you begin, review the *Teacher/Leader Resource Page*.

Introduce the lesson by asking the children to raise their hands if they ate breakfast this morning. Allow them to briefly share their experiences, including the type of foods eaten and the reasons that maybe some children didn't have anything to eat.

DO

1. Read the book, *The Hatseller and the Monkeys*, to the children. After you are finished, lead a brief discussion of the story. Questions you might ask are included at right.
2. Sing one of the songs about breakfast. Use the recorded songs (copy from the website to a CD) and word sheets to help the children learn the song. Two songs have teaching tracks recorded. 🕒
3. Choose one or more of the following breakfast activities: 🕒

Ever missed your breakfast?

Have students complete this activity sheet on the consequences of skipping breakfast. They will read a poem and problem solve ways to eat breakfast every day. Students then reflect on their own habits and apply the concepts by drawing pictures of their favorite breakfast and how it makes them feel. Some children may need to draw instead of writing words. Others may need help spelling.

From mouth to brain: It's A-Maze-ing!

Children discover how the food they eat reaches their brain with this maze activity.

Breakfast feeds your brain

This cut-and-paste activity helps reinforce the journey food makes through the body on its way from the mouth to the brain.

Breakfast Mix-n-Match Cards

One or more activities using the Breakfast Mix-n-Match game cards are included in each module. Instructions for copying and coloring the cards are included on the card masters in the multi-module materials section. Blank cards for each food group are included. For some activities, more than one set of cards will be needed.

A balanced breakfast has healthy food choices from a variety of food groups. Although two healthy choices are better than no breakfast at all, the more groups the better. The following three groups will give children a good start on meeting the recommended daily amounts from each food group: (1) Fruits or Vegetables, (2) Grains, and (3) Milk.

Individually or in small groups, children can play with the cards in a variety of ways. To become familiar with the food groups and which foods belong in each group, children can:

- Sort them into food group piles and name the food pictured. This is a first step to becoming familiar with MyPyramid.
- Put together favorite breakfast combinations with three, four, or five food groups. This can help teach the concept of combining a variety of food groups.

REFLECT

The Hatseller and the Monkeys

Ask the children:

- Why didn't BaMusa eat breakfast the morning of his journey?
- Why did BaMusa have to stop and rest?
- What did BaMusa need to do before he could think clearly?
- How do you think breakfast helps **you** think clearly?
- Do you know what kind of food a mango is? Have you ever tasted a mango?
- What "secret of success" did BaMusa learn in this story?

REFLECT

Morning Smiles

Ask the children:

- Why is it important to wash your hands before handling food?
- What ingredients did you use on your morning smile?
- How many different types of food did you include? Name them.
- Will you make this recipe again at home?
- What different ingredients would you like to try next time?

- Find the cards that show what they ate for breakfast. How many groups were included? Use blank cards to draw a picture of a food representing a food group that is missing. Help them use the correct food group card.
- Play a guessing game, “What’s In My Breakfast?”—“My healthy breakfast has the following foods: a food that a chicken lays, a vegetable that is orange, and a grain that’s round with a hole in the middle.” Children guess the food for each description.
- Use two matching sets or subsets of cards to play “Memory.” Be sure there is a pair of each card used. Lay the cards face down in a rectangular pattern. Children take turns turning over two cards at a time. If the cards match, the child removes them from the rectangle and takes a second turn to find a match. If no match is made, the cards are returned to face down and another player takes a turn. Play proceeds until all cards are matched. The player with the most pairs wins. This game will help children recognize foods and food groups.

Food Activity: Morning Smiles

1. All children and instructors should thoroughly wash hands with hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds (for the duration of the A-B-C song).
2. Set up a clean table with the ingredients, plates, knives, etc. listed above in the “What You Will Need” section.
3. Instruct students to assemble their own Morning Smiles:
 - Choose one of the bread choices and spread with peanut butter or cream cheese.
 - Add toppings to create a unique face or design.
 - Eat and enjoy!

APPLY

Try the following:

- Encourage children to “practice” eating breakfast every day and keep track of their progress using the individual “My Breakfast Every Day” calendar. Keeping records can be a great boost to behavior change.
- Fill in the student names and display the classroom poster “Breakfast Every Day!”. Explain that you will place a sticker, stamp or mark by their name for every day they report eating breakfast.
- Ask children to share the “Breakfast Bites” newsletter with their parents and make “Morning Smiles” together at home.

Going Further

1. Send home copies of “Breakfast Bites,” an activity-based newsletter for parents and children to share.
2. Reinforce breakfast concepts every day with a “60 seconds” activity. Some ideas:
 - Sing one of the songs about breakfast.
 - Ask “What’s on the menu for tomorrow’s school breakfast?”
 - Ask “Who had a food starting with the letter “P” this morning?” (vary the letter each day)
 - Ask “Who had fruit or fruit juice this morning?” (vary the type of food each day)
3. Make stickers on precut peel-and-stick computer labels that share the messages from this lesson; i.e., “Breakfast helps me think.” “Eat Breakfast Every Day!” Give them to the children to wear.

4. More Reading About Eating:

Good Enough to Eat: A Kid’s Guide to Food and Nutrition, by Lizzy Rockwell (©1999, HarperCollins). A good nutrition reference book written especially for children.

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Teacher/Leader Resource Page

Why Breakfast?

Start the day ready for success

A real eye-opener, the morning meal charges brain cells to full capacity. Breakfast is the meal most directly connected to school achievement. Kids who skip breakfast have shorter attention spans, do poorly in tasks requiring concentration and even score lower on standard achievement tests. Hungry kids are more likely to have behavior as well as academic problems than children who are properly nourished.¹

Nutritional benefits

Kids who regularly eat breakfast also have a better overall diet than their peers who choose to snooze in the morning. They eat more servings of grain, fruit, and milk and take in higher levels of calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, riboflavin, vitamin A, vitamin B-12 and folic acid over the course of the day.²

What to eat

Not just any breakfast will do. Super sweet breakfast pastries and sugar-laden cereals burn off long before the ring of the lunch bell. Variety is the key when designing a breakfast that will supply energy to last throughout the morning:

- Kids need a balance of nutrients. Foods from a variety of MyPyramid food groups supply many nutrients at breakfast. Good choices from one or two food groups are better than no breakfast. Choices from three or more groups may be more likely to help children reach their recommended daily food intake from each group.
- A minimum of one serving from the grain group (whole grain is best), a serving of protein or dairy and a serving of vegetable or fruit represent a balanced breakfast.
- School breakfast provides a variety of choices and is a nutritious option for all students. Schools enrolled in the Universal School Breakfast Program provide a free morning meal to all students (see box above).

Teaching Tips

- There are two calendars to track the children's breakfast. The classroom "Breakfast Every Day!" poster can be posted for everyone to see. Fill in student's names and explain that you will place a colored mark or sticker by their name for every day they report eating breakfast. Alternately, each child can keep an individual "My Breakfast Every Day" calendar.

The calendars serve two purposes in this program. The most important goal is to motivate and remind children to eat breakfast every day. A secondary goal is to evaluate the impact that this curriculum has on the breakfast patterns of students. To gain data without right or wrong answers, three colors of markers or stickers could indicate whether the child (1) ate at home, (2) ate at school, or (3) is waiting until lunch to eat. Use the same colors for the entire tracking period. You can add a key to indicate the meaning of each color.

- Be a good role model! Talk about what you ate for breakfast, your favorite breakfast foods, what you eat when you're in a hurry, etc.

Universal Breakfast in Oregon

Universal Breakfast is served in more than 100 Oregon schools. "Universal" means that all breakfast meals are served at no charge—*free*—to all students in the school. This program is also called "Provisions," and was enacted by Congress in an effort to reduce paperwork at the local level.

Besides reducing administrative burden, Universal Breakfast removes the free and reduced-price "stigma" surrounding school meals. Another very important benefit is the potential for improving academic outcomes of students.

For more information regarding Universal Breakfast, contact the Oregon Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, at 503-378-3600 ext. 2614.

The Food Stamp Program can help families buy nutritious foods. To find out more, call Oregon SafeNet at 1-800-SAFENET (723-3638) or (503) 988-5858 in the Portland metro area.

- Reinforce breakfast and nutrition concepts in your classroom all year long. Incorporate some or all of the suggested “60 seconds a day” activities into your regular classroom routine.
- **Keep it Clean & Safe**
If you plan to prepare food in your classroom, be sure to handle food safely. Reinforce and demonstrate the importance of hand washing, clean food preparation areas and proper storage of foods. The “**Fight Bac**” site is a good resource for food safety education materials and resources. The site is located at <http://www.fightbac.org/>

Glossary

(Simple definitions to use when teaching this lesson)

Absorption: When nutrients from the food you eat move from your small intestine to your bloodstream.

Brain: The “thinking” organ in your head.

Breakfast: The meal you eat in the morning.

Digestion: How food gets broken down and used in your body.

Esophagus: The tube that carries food from your mouth to your stomach.

Intestines: After the food leaves your stomach, it travels to the small intestine where it gets broken down into very small pieces (nutrients), which are then absorbed into the bloodstream. The remaining food goes into the large intestine and gets passed out of your body when you use the bathroom.

Nutrient: The important parts of food that your body needs for good health. (Nutrients include carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins, minerals and water.)

Stomach: An organ in your body where digestion of your food begins.

References

1. Kleinman, R.E., et al. Hunger in children in the United States: potential behavioral and emotional correlates. *Pediatrics*. 1998;101(1). Available on the web at <http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/101/1/e3>
2. Basiotis, P.P., Lino, M., and Anand, R.S. Eating Breakfast Greatly Improves Schoolchildren’s Diet Quality. *Nutrition Insights*; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. Insight 15, December 1999. Access this document at <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/Insights/insight15.PDF>
3. Energizing the Classroom: A Summary of the Three Year Study of the Universal School Breakfast Pilot Program in Minnesota Elementary Schools. Available on the web at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/schoolmeals/States/energize.pdf>

Lesson Enhancement Ideas

- Bring mangoes for observation and tasting.
- Try an alternative for “Morning Smiles” using tortillas, refried beans, shredded cheese, cherry tomatoes and olives. Heat in the microwave if desired.
- Ask students to write a story and/or draw a picture about breakfast using the theme “Breakfast wakes up your brain.”
- Open a “Smart Start Cafe,” a dramatic play area that features a breakfast restaurant.
- Ask students to create another verse for one of the songs.