



Food for Life Curriculum Pack

Topic 5: How do we make choices about the food we eat?

In this section we have included activities that will enable children to consider how they might make more active choices about what they eat. These activities can be carried out by individual classes or could form part of a whole school initiative linked to the citizenship curriculum. Discussions could be fed back to a school council, and taken on board by the staff and governors.

We hope that schools can find opportunities for pupils to have an input into the decisions being made about food in their school, for example, establishing rules for appropriate break time snacks, behaviour codes in the dining room, or incentive schemes to encourage healthy eating. The government has recognised the importance of pupil input; the consultation of children about school food policies is a requirement of the National Healthy School Standard (DfES 1999).

Activities for key stage one

Activity 1: The influence of others...

Activity 2: Taking a closer look at food advertising

Activity 3: Developing a point of view

Activity 1: The influence of others...

Curriculum links

Science Sc2 2c
PSHE 2c, 3a 5d

Objectives

- To enable children to understand that there are a range of people who might influence what they eat
- To help them understand that they should take some responsibility in choosing what they eat.

What to do

Brainstorm with the children a list of people who might influence their food choices:

Themselves
Parents
Peers
Teachers
Lunchtime supervisors
GPs
Food companies

Who do they think has the biggest influence?

Ask the children to give you suggestions for what these people might say to try and influence what they eat. Write the ideas in speech bubbles on the board. Now ask children to work in pairs and imagine a conversation about food choices that might occur between one of the people and a child of their age. Ask a few pairs to act out their conversations in front of the others and discuss. Does this affect who they think has the most influence?

Activity 2: Taking a closer look at food advertising

Curriculum links

Science Sc2 2c

PSHE 2a, 2b, 3a, 5c, 5d, 5g

Objectives

- To make children more aware of the impact that advertising has on them
- To encourage children to evaluate advertising objectively.

Resources

1. Examples of magazine adverts for foods promoted to children.
2. Food packaging with promotions and collectables, for example, crisp packets, sugary cereals.

What to do

Show the children the magazine adverts and packaging. Ask them what kind of foods they are for, and whether they have tried them. Explain that the people who make them hope that the adverts, packaging and special offers will make children and their parents want to buy the foods. Do they think that the foods that are being advertised are healthy foods?

Ask the pupils to draw an advert for their favourite fruit. Explain that it normally has a picture of the product and its name on it. Can they think of words that describe the fruit that would make other people want to try it, for example bananas give you energy, or strawberries are soft and juicy? Afterwards discuss the adverts. Which ones make the children want to try the fruit?

Teachers' notes

A detailed summary of the main arguments about advertising to children can be found in Sustain's Grab 5 curriculum pack: Section 11 in 'Improving children's diets'. Go to www.sustainweb.org/g5cp. The Food Commission have produced a 'Guide to Children's Food' poster which looks at the way foods are marketed to children. To order call 020 7837 2250.

Activity 3: Developing a point of view

Curriculum links

PSHE 1a, 2a, 2d, 2f, 3a, 5c, 5d

Objectives

- To express their point of view on a topical issue
- To consider alternative points of view before making a decision.

What to do

Begin the lesson by placing a statement on the board. For example:

Crisps should be banned in this school

All the pupils in this school should have school dinners

Breakfast should be offered in the dining hall every morning

The school should have a tuck shop selling fruit only

Without any discussion, ask all the children to vote on whether they agree/disagree with the statement. This could be done with eyes closed or on paper as a secret ballot. Reveal the result, and then ask a few children to give a reason for their view. Explain that you are going to have a debate on this issue to explore it further. In pairs ask the children to make a list of the pros and cons. For example:

All the pupils in this school should have school dinners	
Pros	Cons
Everyone eats together and this is good socially – for example children who have school lunches won't feel excluded	Lots of people don't like the food that is served up at lunch time
Parents will know that their child is getting a hot meal every day	Packed lunch type food is more fun to eat than a hot meal
The catering staff could improve the choice of food available	Some people have special diets and need to bring food from home
There would be less rubbish around the school if no one had lunch boxes	Parents like to know exactly what their children are eating at lunch time

After the children have prepared these arguments in pairs, you can ask them to feed back and then summarize on the board. Ask them to think very carefully about what you have all discussed. Repeat the voting process and then discuss with them whether considering the pros and cons helped them to formulate a view. Even if it didn't change their vote, did it make them think more carefully about their view?