

5-2020

## Increasing Young Students Awareness on Nutrition

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Increasing Young Students Awareness on Nutrition

Selina Desantiago

A Capstone project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

## **Introduction**

Nowadays, most young children eat whatever their parents serve them at dinner time. However, many young children might not realize the foods that are healthy versus unhealthy. Therefore, I created a one day lesson on nutrition for ages 5 to 8 years old at Rebekah Children's Services in Gilroy California.

## **Needs Statement**

Many young children may lack nutrition education and consume foods that lack nutritional quality. Without good nutrition education, kids will have a higher chance of developing health problems. Children from low-income, low education households may be particularly vulnerable to poor nutrition education for many reasons. One big reason might be that their parents work long hours making it hard for the parents to provide a decent meal for the family. Another reason might be all the fast food restaurants that are taking over family meals.

Over at Rebekah's, the participants that I will be working with have some knowledge about nutrition. Having some knowledge about nutrition is important to me because I will know what and what not to teach them. An article shows how it is important for schools to provide nutrition and good eating habits to young children, especially in school settings (Maldonado, et al 2018). In their article they talk about how young children and adolescents are eating things based on what is provided to them. When kids are at school, they are more likely to grab an apple for lunch than at home (Maldonado, et al 2018). There are many reasons as to why young children do this, but it is mainly due to nutrition education and what is advertised around them. Nutrition education is important for many reasons. If someone makes poor nutrition choices, there can be some long term effects due to that (Bristol, 2012). In Bristol's article, he mentions

that there are some diseases that come along with poor eating habits. “Some common diseases are diabetes and heart disease. Along with these different diseases can bring other problems like obesity” (Bristol, 2012). Making poor food choices can have an overall effect. These effects can be negative and can affect them in the long run as they get older. This is why I chose to work with young children so that way they get some knowledge about nutrition. They might be young in age, but kids are a lot smarter than people think they are and I feel like this information will benefit them in the long run.

Going along with poor food choices, the students that I will be working with mostly come from low income Hispanic families. I know this because I have been working with them for a while now and I know a little bit about where their parents work. While I was working with these young children, some would actually tell me that sometimes their parents have to work extra hours and they usually come home late from work. Since these children are young, they stay at after school programs or often with an older sibling and they don't cook at home. When their parents come home, they say that they are tired and sometimes they just grab fast food because it is faster to get and eat. An article talks about lifestyles of school children and how it affects their school knowledge (Norman, 2009). Norman explains how eating certain vegetables can help with their eye vision.

One intervention that has been done before and is still being used today is having more fruits and veggies at the children's schools. Some fruits can include apples, bananas, oranges and much more. Some vegetables include having food with broccoli during lunch time. I still see this intervention being used at school and in after school programs. At after school programs they give students a little snack along with crackers and milk or juice. It is nice to know that these

interventions are still taking place because it gives the students an option to have a healthy snack while eating or after eating.

### **Theory**

The theory that I have chosen is Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Piaget determined that children's cognitive development is important for their understanding of and learning about the world around them. Piaget's theory can be used as a guide in nutrition education. His theory defines children's cognitive development, emphasizes a child centered approach, underlies play and self discovery and provides guidance in the preparation of age specific education. With this being said, his theory applies to my project because kids will start learning about which foods are healthy and unhealthy.

Piaget's theory is also based on the role of memory in cognitive development. Memory or remembering objects/events start at the same time as language. This is the period when children learn the different symbols for example of different restaurants. This theory applies to my project because students already have memory of the logo for most fast food restaurants. Working with the students, they will have some memory in healthy foods based on activities that I will be doing with them. One example would be creating a MyPlate. They will learn what a MyPlate is and they will also learn the different food choices that will go in each category. They will then create their own MyPlate based on the little lecture that I give as well as examples that I will have. This theory attends to my participants because they are in the stage where they are beginning to learn since they are starting school. Also, they will have some memory in what some healthy foods are as well as creating their own MyPlate.

### **Consideration of Diversity**

The ethnic/racial composition of individuals receiving services at Rebekah Children's is 33.3% Hispanic 27.8% White, . 22.2% Black , 11.1% Asian and the other is 5.6%. There are different demographics from the population that I will be working with. For the most part the group that I would be working with is divided in half when it comes to gender. The teachers however, are all women. In the group that I will be working with, there is one main teacher who is a female, and she has one more assistant which is also a female. The groups at the site are divided by ages and when I would see them walk by the teachers and their assistants are also females. In regards to the demographics, most of the kids are mostly Hispanic. The groups that I have worked with are Hispanic and the group that I will be working with is Hispanic. I would not expect my participants to be different from what the overall population looks like because the site mostly consisted of Hispanic students. Most of the participants are bilingual in English and Spanish; My content is directed towards the particular participants by having the presentation in English. If they do not understand something then I can translate it for them. To attend the program their parents must be in parenting classes which run anywhere from 6-8 weeks. They must also be from a low income family. Something that I would change to address a more diverse audience would be to do my presentation in all of the classes. This includes the classes that take place on different days as well. I think that If i were to do this, I would have more diverse data since there are other classes that have different ethnicities.

### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will be able to create their own MyPlate
2. Students will be able to distinguish healthy vs unhealthy foods
3. Students will give me examples of fruits and vegetables

## **Method**

### **Day 1**

First, I introduced myself and told the class why I am there. Then I asked the class to raise their hand if they have ever heard the word “nutrition.” After they had raised their hand, I asked if they could break up into two groups. Half of the students would come up with examples of the different types of junk foods and the other half would come up with examples of different types of healthy food options. I gave them about 5-7 minutes to discuss with their groups then told them to share their ideas with me. I wrote down their ideas on the white board . I gave those who participated a raffle ticket which after the presentation , three students would win a gift card to Jamba Juice. After the opening activity, I introduced the kids to the USDA’s My Plate. I gave them a brief description on what each category had. I then gave each student a worksheet that had different foods based on the My Plate. See Appendix A. I asked them to categorize them based on the MyPlate categories. They had the option of working together if they would like or if they preferred they could work alone. After the lesson, to make sure that the students learned something, I gave each student an empty MyPlate worksheet. I then asked them to either draw or write out their own MyPlate. See Appendix B. Once they were done with the activities, I collected their tickets and gave the prizes to the students that won.

### **Results**

(Not completed due to COVID-19)

### **Discussion**

(Not completed due to COVID-19)

## Appendix A

### [Food categories](#)



## [MYPLATE FOOD CHOICE CONTINUUM]

**Directions:** Put the following foods into the MyPlate Food Choice Continuum. Consider nutritional value, sodium content, fat content, portion size, foods that fall into multiple categories, etc. Be prepared to defend your answers. Star any foods that don't belong in one of the five categories.

- Strawberries & Whip Cream
- Donut
- 8oz Skim Milk
- Grilled Onions & Peppers
- 8oz Steak
- Large Fries
- 5 Beef Tacos
- 2 cups Orange Juice
- Hummus
- Hard Boiled Egg
- Hot Dog & Bun
- 20 Slices of Peperoni
- Hawaiian Pizza
- 16oz Soda
- Candy Corn
- 1 cup Quinoa
- Whole grain slice of bread
- 1 cup boiled cauliflower
- 1 cup green beans, steamed
- 2 Slices Watermelon
- 2 cups blueberries
- Chocolate Chip Cookie
- ½ cup Whole Wheat Pasta
- 1 cup pearled barley
- 1/4 cup dried mango
- 1 cup oat meal
- Roast Beef Sandwich on Rye
- 16oz Lemonade
- 2 Pancakes
- 1 Waffle
- 3oz broiled fish
- 1 cup stuffing
- 1 cup mashed potato
- 2 cups salad & 2 Tbsp. Ranch
- 20 chicken nuggets
- 10 Buffalo Wings
- 5 Onion Rings

- Steamed Broccoli
- Fried Fish
- Spaghetti & Meatballs
- Loaded Baked Potato
- Microwaved sweet potato
- Apple
- Orange
- 8oz can of Fruit Cocktail
- Spinach artichoke dip
- Low fat Blueberry yogurt cup
- 1lb Lobster
- Birthday Cake
- Brown Rice
- Sushi
- Corn on the cob
- Fried Okra
- Potato Chips
- Pretzels
- Fruit Roll-Ups
- Pickles
- Olives
- Grill Cheese on White Bread
- Turkey Sandwich on Wheat
- Scalloped Potatoes
- Acorn Squash
- Scrambled Eggs with Cheddar
- Ice cream
- Gelato
- Cherry Pie
- Apple Pie
- Hash Browns
- Bacon
- 3oz Grilled Chicken
- Mozzarella Sticks
- Tomato Soup from a can
- 8oz Apple Juice
- 2 Biscuits

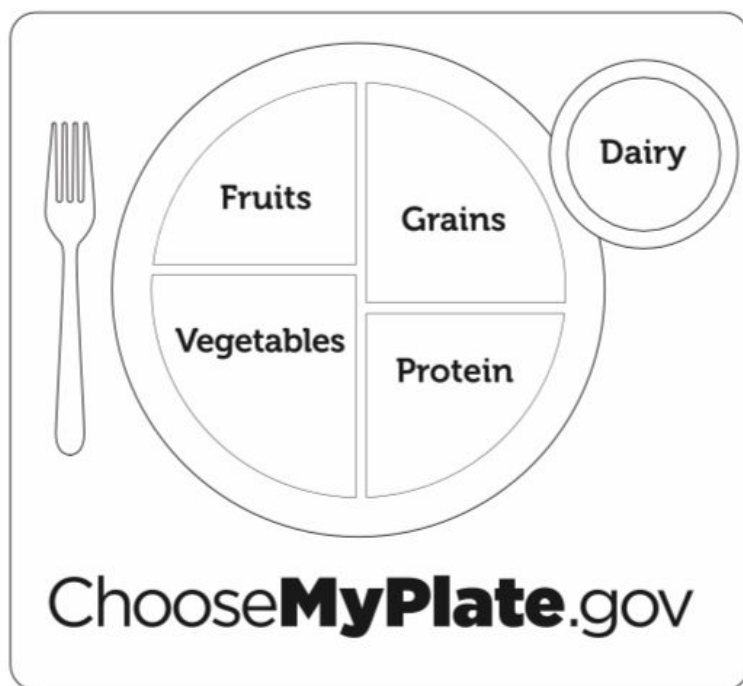


**[MYPLATE FOOD CHOICE CONTINUUM]**

	<i>Vegetables</i>	<i>Protein</i>	<i>Dairy</i>	<i>Fruits</i>	<i>Grains</i>
B e t t e r					
G o o d					
O k a y					
A v o i d					

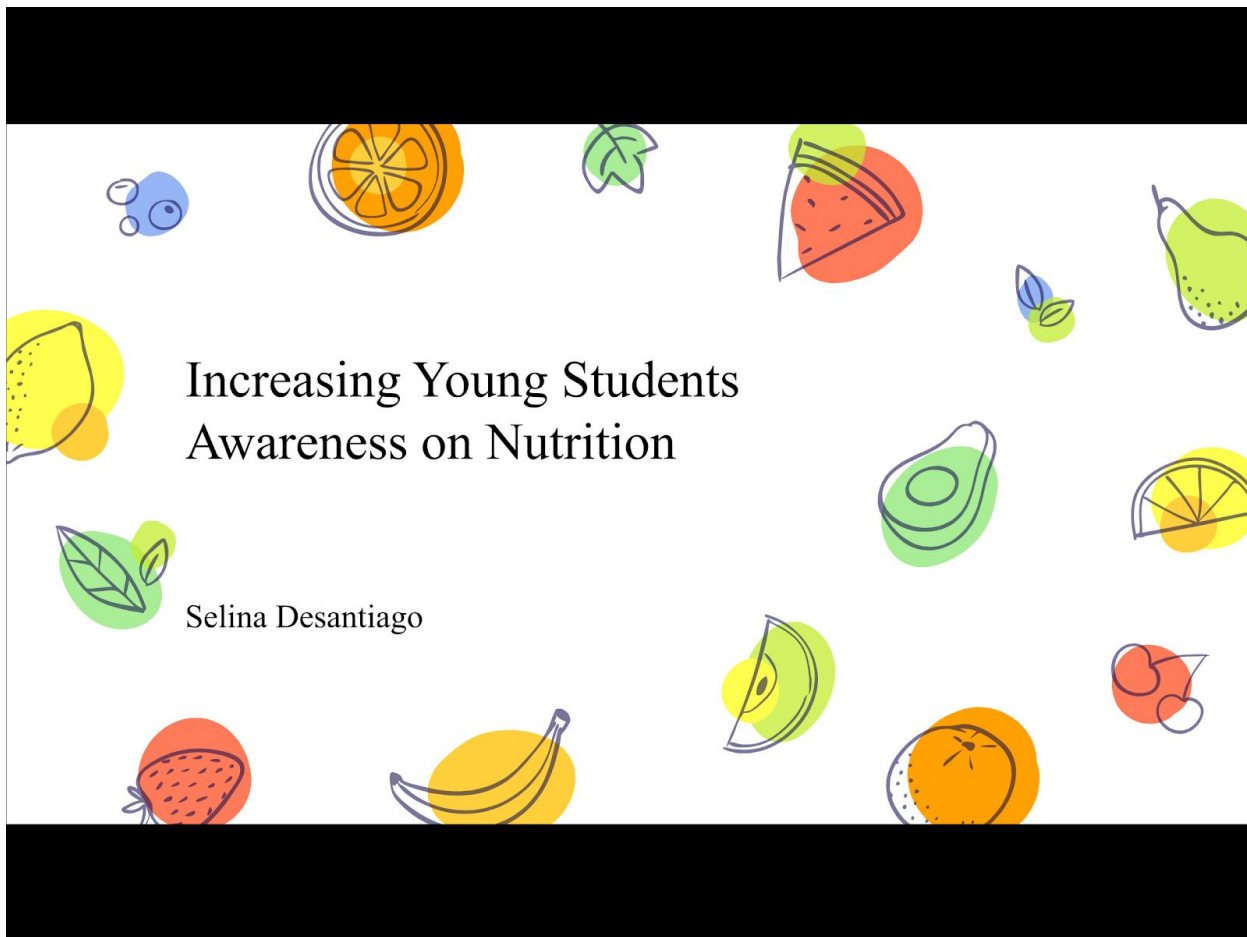
## Appendix B

[Empty MyPlate Worksheet](#)



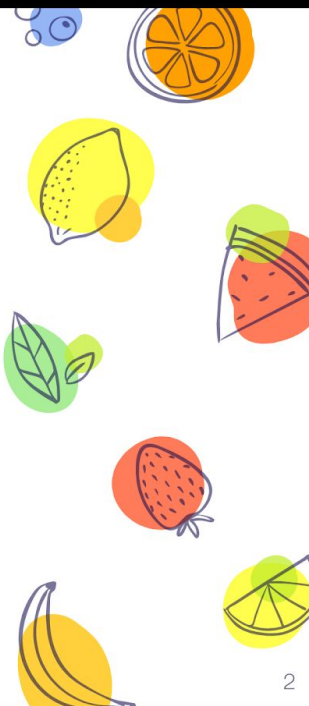
Appendix C

Powerpoint on Nutrition



## Need

Many young children may lack nutrition education and consume foods that lack nutritional activity.



# Theory Piaget

- × children's cognitive development is important for their understanding & learning about the world around them
- × can be used as a guide in nutrition education
- × based on the role of memory in cognitive development (remembering logos for fast food places)
- × Provides guidance in preparation of age specific education (kids will start learning about which foods are healthy and unhealthy)

# What, Who, Where?

What: One day lesson

Who: 5-8 age students

Where: Rebekah Children's Services in  
Gilroy, CA





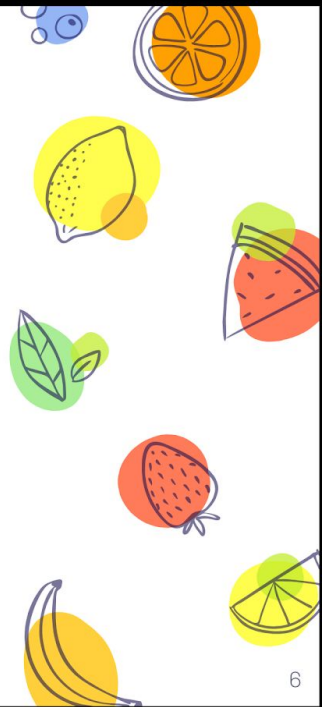
## Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to create their own MyPlate
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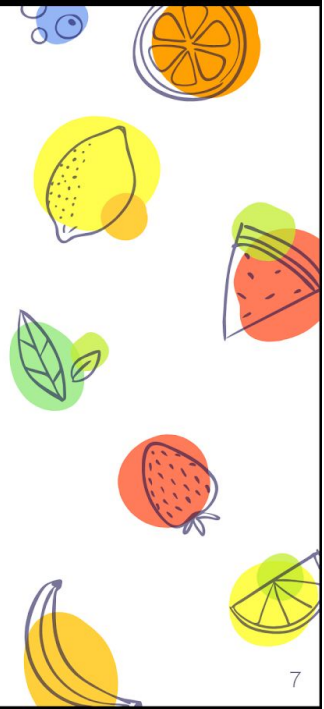
## Method Day 1

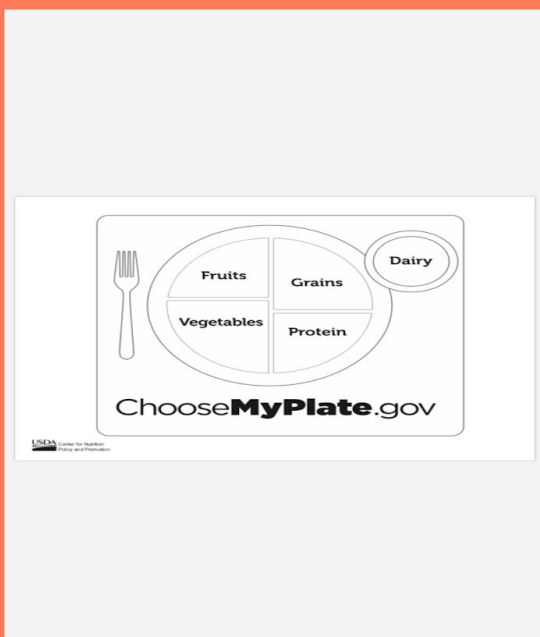
1. Split classroom in half
2. I asked half the students to give me examples of junk food and the other half examples of healthy foods.
3. Introduce students to MyPlate



## Method Day 1 Continued

4. Have students create their own MyPlate
5. Gave students worksheet that had different foods based on MyPlate
6. Asked students to categorize them based on the MyPlate categories.





**[MYPLATE FOOD CHOICE CONTINUUM]**

**Directions:** Put the following foods into the MyPlate Food Choice Continuum. Consider nutritional value, sodium content, fat content, portion size, foods that fall into multiple categories, etc. Be prepared to defend your answers. Star any foods that don't belong in one of the five categories.

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- 16oz Soda
- Candy Corn
- 1 cup Quinoa
- Whole grain slice of bread
- 1 cup boiled cauliflower
- 1 cup green beans, steamed
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- 1 cup pearly barley
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- 1 cup oat meal
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- Grill Cheese on White Bread
- 1/2 Turkey Sandwich on Wheat
- Scalloped Potatoes
- Acorn Squash
- Scrambled Eggs with Cheddar
- Ice cream
- Gelato
- Cherry Pie
- Apple Pie
- Hash Browns
- Bacon
- 3oz Grilled Chicken
- Mozzarella Sticks
- Tomato Soup from a can
- 8oz Apple Juice
- 2 Biscuits

[www.FamilyConsumerSciences.com](http://www.FamilyConsumerSciences.com)

**[MYPLATE FOOD CHOICE CONTINUUM]**

	Vegetables	Protein	Dairy	Fruits	Grains
B e t t e r					
G o o d					
O k a y					
A v o i d					

[www.FamilyConsumerSciences.com](http://www.FamilyConsumerSciences.com)



## Results

(Not completed due to COVID-19).



## Discussion

(Not completed due to COVID-19).





Thank You

Questions?



## References

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