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Healthy Living' Nutrition Education in Kindergarteners

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Nutrition in Kindertartens

Healthy Living' Nutrition Education in Kindertarteners

Delia Estrada

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

Nutrition in Kindergartens

Introduction

Nutrition should be considered an important factor in one's life, and be discussed into further context at school as well as at home. Having healthy nutrition can help with physical growth and development of an individual, allowing children the development of mindset, capacity building, capabilities, cognitive development, gross and motor skills within an individual's effective consumption of healthy and nutritious meals. In order to support the nutrition skill regulations, I have developed a two-day curriculum for Kindergarten children at Alisal Community Elementary in Salinas, California. In this curriculum, I would explain to the participants how to differentiate a healthy meal or snack; allowing them to process and analyze if the food being consumed is healthy and nutritious.

Needs Statement

Maintaining communication skills and visual representation with Kindergartens to teach them a better understanding on nutrition education while being in school could be great help to differentiate what foods are healthy and which ones are not. For example, the goal is to be able to help my participants identify and be able to explain why nutrition education is extremely important to maintain a healthy lifestyle. During this time period, nutrition will also affect physical growth and maturation, thus affecting growth rate, body weight and finally their height (Grantham-McGregor, 2007).

Although many participants are at an age in which they consume food that generally tastes good to them leaving aside the risk that many of the food items being consumed varies

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from healthy to not healthy. Indeed, multiple of the participants depend on their parents to provide them with the exemplary food necessary to help them grow and maintain a healthy lifestyle, allowing them to think that they are being provided with healthy choices. Some of the behaviors that can deficit nutrition in Kindergarten children would be lack of concentration (e.g., sleepiness or crying), not being able to maintain physical activities during play time, and not participating in any classroom activity. These factors can be seen in children due to not maintaining a healthy diet making them less likely to function properly without the proper nutrition that they are required to have (Food and Nutrition Services, 2019).

Many of the times, the food provided at school is not something children would want to consume, however this is why implying to accommodate and make the menu healthier would attract children to fully consume the snacks provided as well as the lunch food provided by the school. In order to solve these problems, it is important to start with small changes on the meals that are given at home during breakfast (if not being provided by school) , snack time, and lunch time. To begin, the participants can start by limiting the amount of big meals eaten, avoiding sugary foods or candies, no soda or juices; steps like this can help make a small difference in understanding what is healthy and what is not (Cleveland Clinic, 2021).

Theory

Progressively, children go through a variety of developmental stages in their life. For example, Piaget, uses the Theory of Cognitive Development, describing the purpose on the influence theories that will demonstrate how *children think differently than adults* (Marwaha S, Byrne O, Sege R., 2017).

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As part of this stage, cognitive theory may have children go through one of the four stages: Sensorimotor Stage, Pre-Operational Stage, Concrete Operational Stage and Formal Operational Stage. The participants in the project fall into the second stage in Piaget's theory. During this stage, children begin to engage in symbolic play and learn to manipulate symbols. However, Piaget does explain that during this stage they do not yet understand concrete logic. In Preoperational Thought, thinking still tends to be very concrete, but children become much more logical and sophisticated in their thinking during this stage of development. In other words, children develop their thinking skills, in terms of nutrition,...due to thinking logically to create and understand the difference in academic nutrition.

This period expands as they develop, causing children to be aware of the food that is being consumed during school time as well as in their home environment; leaving them to analyze and think more abstractly of the healthy eating choices they are making. Indeed, Piaget explains the understanding of logic in his theory that children have the ability to understand that other people have different perspectives, thoughts, feelings, and mental states as theory of mind (Marwaha S, Byrne O, Sege R., 2017). In other words, children may experience tiredness or not be able to concentrate after consuming a heavy meal at school or at home. This might then make us reason that from that experience of eating a heavy meal can cause the child to not perform at his or her potential.

Consideration of Diversity

The project will take place in Alisal Community Elementary School, a diverse group of Kindergarteners and the ethnic composition that the participants reflect. According to the Alisal

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Union School District, there are approximately ,92% Latinos, 1% White, <1% each: African American, Asian, Filipino, Pacific Islander . In that mix of students about, 75% are English Learners, 10% Migrant, 10% Homeless and 10% students with disabilities (*this does not affect their ability to understand the content*).

Based on the information provided, about 85% qualify for free/reduced-priced meals. I would assume that the percentage of participants that qualify for a free meal would be higher. However, the variety of parents that live around the school area come from low income homes; leaving many parents financially unstable and unwilling to provide lunch for their children . As a result, it is possible that some of the participants eat at home or take their own lunch to school or only consume food at school. Due to the way I will be conducting this project and based on the majority of Latinos attending, I would possibly have to translate some of the parts of this project and explain in simpler terms why healthy nutrition is beneficial for them. This project is intended towards Kindergarteners, and hope to obtain a positive outcome and change their perspective of the healthy meals and snacks that should be consumed to perform effectively and have a healthy lifestyle.

Learning Outcomes

I intend to provide two day , 45-minute lessons to Kindergartners enrolled in Alisal Community School. By the end of the project, participants will be able to...

- Demonstrate building a healthy plate
 - By watching a short video
- Place food in the correct categories of the Food Pyramid
 - Use a white sheet to draw a healthy plate while using the Food Pyramid
- Be able to identify health and unhealthy foods
 - By describing the item that is provided in the flashcard

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Method

Day 1

I would like to start first by introducing myself, and giving a brief background of why I decided to talk about nutrition to Kindergartners. I will initiate by asking my participants to explain in their own understanding why eating health is important to all of us. At the beginning many of my participants may feel intimidated by seeing a new face in their classroom, and in order to make things easier for them I will begin by playing a video “Fruits and Veggies Nutrition Song” from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1u5HOURq7kQ> that is approximately 4 minutes long. I intend to play it twice in order for the participants to understand the food colors of the foods provided. Having my participants visually see what the goal is when it comes to eating healthy based on this song would allow me to ask them and myself what we would add to our food plates and wait for their response. In addition to this video, and some discussions on why it is important to have a rainbow plate I will hand out a plain white sheet of paper and give my participants about 10-15 minutes to complete the ideal plate and to color code it with the healthy rainbow colors. At the end, each child would explain what he or she added to their ideal plate.

Day 2

Today, I hope many of my participants are energized and ready to proceed with the rest of the lesson. This is the last day I will be with them and I plan on making it fun for them and the

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people around them. In order for them to remember how efficient and important it is to eat healthy, I am going to ask my participants to take out their ideal food plate that they created the previous day. As I walk around making observations and asking them individually where they would place each food item that they drew. To conclude the day, I made flashcards with an image of a healthy and an unhealthy item and as a ticket out the door, the participants had to tell me if it's healthy or not and the color of the item or name. Everyone would get rewarded with a sticker at the end for their contribution and hard work.

Results

Learning outcome 1 was that the participants will be able to identify a representation of what nutrition is giving an example learned from the session. This being said a video will be provided explaining different vegetables, food and colors allowing them to later be able to draw their own healthy plate.

Learning outcome 2 would be shown using the right “rainbow plate” that the participants drew and being able to define what food placements fall into the Food Pyramid based on the video we saw previously.

Learning outcome 3 the participants will be able to use the flashcards that were provided as a ticket out the door and be able to identify if the items are healthy or not leaving them with the insights on eating healthy.

Discussion

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I believe that this project was a success and full of fun activities for myself and the participants. The participants were engaged in the topic and in the work that was provided making them able to learn a lot from this experience. Due to the participants being in Piaget's theory of cognitive development they are able to observe and think logically why healthy food is better than junk food. Discussion about these topics and how it can affect your performance as a scholar can result in negative and positive results. Being able to use examples and have participants engage in all the activities allows them to process what they have learned and use these practices at home or any other place that involves their health and wellbeing.

In terms of diversity, this project included the participation of everyone. This being said, it gave an opportunity for everyone to share opinions, comments or any concern they may have had. If I had the opportunity to do this project again, I would have encouraged the participants to bring a healthy snack and provide one fun fact. I think being able to hear their point of view before initiating the project could really help them understand why eating healthy is extremely important.

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Table 1

Percentage on Youtube Video

Did you enjoy the video?	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
	Yes
Total	100%

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Table 2

List of responses on what food items were placed in their plate

“I put apples, because they are my favorite”

“I like milk”

“The carrots in my plate, are vegetables and that’s why I like it”

“In my house, my mom puts broccoli in my plate... but she said it's healthy to eat”

“ I like eating healthy because I run fast when we are in recess”

“Teacher Lopez, says that we have to eat the snacks to grow big and my mom puts vegetables”

“I like chicken in my plate, because it tastes good... and then my mommy makes it with vegetables”

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Table 3

List of responses on “Ticket out the door” flashcards

Questions	Responses
Is an apple healthy?	Yes
Is pizza healthy?	No
Are bananas healthy?	Yes
Is broccoli healthy?	Yes
Are burgers healthy?	No
Is soda healthy?	No
Are carrots healthy?	Yes
Is bread healthy?	Yes
Are strawberries	Yes
Is candy healthy?	No
Are fries healthy?	No
Is watermelon healthy?	Yes
Is water healthy?	Yes
Is chicken healthy?	Yes
Is mango healthy?	Yes
Is peanut butter healthy?	Yes
Are chips healthy?	No
Is fast food healthy?	No
Is juice healthy?	No
Is celery healthy?	Yes

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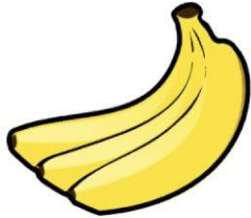


Figure 1 : Plate from a student

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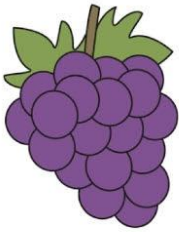


Figure 2 : Flashcards before cutting them



Healthy Living

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Introduction

The intended audience will understand the importance of nutrition education while being in school and at home; and will be able to differentiate food items that are healthy and which ones are not.



Needs Statement

Participants will be able to identify and explain why nutrition education is extremely important to maintain a healthy lifestyle as they grow .

Nutrition will affect:

- physical growth*
- maturation*
- growth rate*
- body weight*
- height.*



Piaget's Theory: *Cognitive development*

*Allowing children to be concern and aware of what food is being consumed during school time as well as at home. Making them able to analyze more abstract healthy eating choices. Piaget, explains the logic in his theory that, **children become more concrete about specific things, but still struggle with abstract ideas.***

Diversity



Participants:

*Kindergartners (**Age 5**) students from
Alisal Community School in Salinas Ca.*



Method: Day 1

I created a 2 day lesson for 45 minutes each day:



Fruits and Veggies Nutrition Song for Kids
14M views · 5 years ago #FruitsandVeggiesforKids #FruitsandVeggies
#eatyourrainbow

First day: I explain why I decided to speak about nutrition and show an introduction video that consist of 4 mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1u5HOURq7kQ>

Method: Day 1 cont...

Student will be able to sum up in a drawing based on what they say in the video and draw their rainbow plate



Method: Day 2

Students will be able to identify which food item in the flashcard is healthy and which one is not using the food pyramid



Learning Outcomes

- *Demonstrate building a healthy plate*
 - *By watching a short video*
- *Place food in the correct categories of the Food Pyramid*
 - *Use a worksheet using the Food Pyramid*
- *Be able to identify health and unhealthy foods*
 - *Using a ticket out the door flashcard*

Results: Learning Outcome 2

Table 2

List of responses on what food items were placed in their plate

"I put apples, because they are my favorite"

"I like milk"

"The carrots in my plate, are vegetables and that's why I like it"

"In my house, my mom puts broccoli in my plate... but she said it's healthy to eat"

"I like eating healthy because I run fast when we are in recess"

"Teacher Lopez, says that we have to eat the snacks to grow big and my mom puts vegetables"

"I like chicken in my plate, because it tastes good... and then my mommy makes it with vegetables"

Results: Learning Outcomes 3

Table 3

List of responses on "Ticket out the door" flashcards

Questions	Responses
Is an apple healthy?	Yes
Is pizza healthy?	No
Are bananas healthy?	Yes
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Are burgers healthy?	No
Is soda healthy?	No
Are carrots healthy?	Yes
Is bread healthy?	Yes
Are strawberries	Yes
Is candy healthy?	No
Are fries healthy?	No
Is watermelon healthy?	Yes
Is water healthy?	Yes
Is chicken healthy?	Yes
Is mango healthy?	Yes
Is peanut butter healthy?	Yes
Are chips healthy?	No
Is fast food healthy?	No
Is juice healthy?	No
Is celery healthy?	Yes

Discussion

I believe that this project was a success and full of fun activities for myself and the participants. The participants were engaged in the topic and in the work that was provided making them able to learn a lot from this experience.

Questions

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