**Lesson Title: Spilling the Beans about GREEN BEANS**

Grade Group: Kindergarten

Topic: Trying New Foods

Nutrition Competency:

Overarching: All students will demonstrate the ability to promote and support a sustainable, nutritious food supply and healthy lifestyles for families and communities.

Grade-Specific: Identify and try a new fruit/vegetable.

Materials Needed:

-The words ‘Green Beans’ typed

-Spoon/utensil/tongs to portion salad

-Evaluations for teachers

-Small disposable paper cups (2 ounce) to sample food

-Napkins

-Tablecloth and display bowl for food

-Bean salad recipe index cards

-Bean salad and fresh green beans

-Image of Green Bean plant

-Extension handout

Lesson Background:

A balanced diet with variety is critical for optimal growth and development of children. In order to increase variety in the children’s diet, this lesson plan promotes one new food (green beans) for the children to try in two different forms (raw and in a salad). Green beans play an important role in our health, providing nutrition for good eyes, strong bones, and increased energy. Because children do not have discretion over everything they eat, the focus is to introduce new foods and encourage variety in their diet, which can also help overcome picky eating (Bellows). Early childhood is a crucial time to introduce and encourage healthy nutrition, because early exposure helps establish good eating habits that carry into adulthood.

Most young children’s diets could use improvement, which are usually high in fat, sodium, and sugar and low in fiber (Bellows). Since children establish food preferences and dietary habits during the first six years of life, it is essential to introduce a variety of foods to children at an early age (Birch). Consistently offering a variety of foods helps majority of children to overcome the natural tendency to reject new foods. Parents and caregivers influence children’s eating practices in several ways. Thus it is important to educate not only the children about nutrition, but to also address and share with the parents about strategies for encouraging the children to eat new, healthy foods.

Lesson Objectives:

-The children will be able to list three reasons why it’s important to eat a variety of foods.

-The children will want to try new foods.

-The children will be able to taste and learn about green beans, listing 3 ways green beans support their health.

Lesson Description: This lesson is about exposing the children to a new food and getting them to try something new. Green beans are the food they will be trying, in two different forms (raw and in a salad). This will emphasize that foods take on different tastes when combined with other foods/ingredients. For example, the children may like raw green beans but not the bean salad.

Lesson and Activity

Getting Ready:

1. Prepare Asian-Style 3 Bean Salad
2. Cut small samples of raw, trimmed green beans
3. Prepare a sign with the words ‘green beans’
4. Set-up sampling area
5. Get a picture of the green bean plant and have it on hand
6. Print out recipe index cards of the Asian-Style 3 Bean Salad

Schedule:

1. Gather children around in a circle near the samples of food. Explain that you will be talking about green beans. Point to the word ‘green beans.’ Read it aloud and ask the children if they know what it is. Build on their responses and explain it’s a vegetable grown in Spring and Summer that is full of vitamins and minerals for good eyes, strong bones, and high energy.
2. Point to a picture of the green bean plant and show where green beans come from. Then hold up an actual green bean, the raw form. Have the children sample the green beans. Once they finish sampling, ask them to raise their hands if they loved it, liked it, or disliked it.
3. Explain to the children that it is important to eat foods from different food groups, including a variety of vegetables, so that we have energy and nutrition to play, grow, learn, and think.
4. Then demonstrate that foods can alter in flavor when added with other foods. Have the children sample the Asian-Style 3 Bean Salad. Once they finish sampling, ask them to raise their hands if they loved it, liked it or disliked it. Also, ask:
   * Do you like the green beans raw or in a bean salad?
   * Would you eat green beans at home?
   * Now that you’ve tried something new, will you try other new foods?
5. Explain to children that food from each food group helps our bodies grow in different ways. If we only ate the same foods everyday, then our bodies may not get all the nutrition needed to be healthy and strong. Lastly, encourage the children to keep trying new foods.
6. Thank the children for sampling the beans and encourage them to tell their parents they want to try new foods. Getting their parents involved would be a good idea, since they can benefit from trying new foods as well. (Hand out recipe index cards.)

Assessment: Ask the children to raise their hands if they liked, disliked and would eat the green beans raw or in a salad like the one sampled.

-Can anyone tell me why eating a variety of foods is important?

-Now that you’ve tried something new, will you try other new foods?

-Why are green beans healthy?

Closing: In summary, the lesson is to expose the children to new foods and include more variety in their diets to ensure adequate nutrition. Specifically, this lesson is to target ‘Green Beans’ as the new food to be tried in two different preparation styles (raw and in a bean salad). Green beans specifically are beneficial for good eyes, strong bones, and high energy.

Extension Options:

-The child can take the recipe home and cook with their parents, sharing what they learned.

-This lesson could also be applied to try other new foods at home or in the cafeteria. I have included an additional activity where the children have a list of fruits and vegetables. Once a food is tried, the students check the box next to the food and color in the face that best describes how they liked the food. The idea here is that the children are encouraged to try new foods even after the lesson. Once they complete the handout, they can return it to their teacher and receive a sticker or star by their name. The teacher could even make another lesson plan out of it by discussing the new foods the children tried.

[Please see additional handout for children to use].

Safety Note: Some children may be allergic to certain foods or ingredients. Before sampling or having the food near children, be sure to get a list of food allergies that the children may have. Examine the list and be sure the food served is indeed safe for each child.

References:

Bellows, L., K. Cole, & J. Anderson. In press. Family fun with new foods: A parent component to the Food Friends social marketing campaign. Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior.

Birch, L. 1998. Development of food acceptance patterns in the first years of life. Proceedings of the Nutrition Society 57: 617–24.