Jody Haut  
Health/Life Science  
Grade: Kindergarten

**Nutrition and the Food Pyramid**

**Objective:** To determine students’ understanding of the structure and use of the food guide pyramid. To teach students a balance of the food groups in relevance to everyday foods and everyday life.

**QCC:**  
Life Science- The Living World: Human Body  
Health- Nutrition: Foods

**Materials/Time required:**  
- 1 hour in class  
- Food guide pyramid drawn on poster board  
- Magazine cutouts of food (all food groups)  
- Glue  
- Food guide pyramid worksheet from USDA website (for kids)  
- Crayons  
- Pre-prepared baggies with food from food groups (small enough to fit in spaces on worksheet). I used:  
  1. cracker (grains)  
  2. carrot stick (vegetable)  
  3. grape (fruit)  
  4. cheese cube (dairy)  
  5. peanuts (meat and nuts) (CHECK FOR ALLERGIES!)  
  6. cookie (sweets)

**Background information:**

The lesson was based on nutrition (we just finished learning about a healthy body). I decided to use the food pyramid (from the USDA) as a guide since children need to learn what is healthy to eat and in what amounts. Since this age is beginning to learn size of objects and shapes, they can use these skills to learn the idea of a pyramid divided into sections. I wanted to the children to really remember this very important lifelong lesson, so I chose to use real food. This excited the kids and made them want to learn since they eat every day, and not always in class!

**Preparation:**

I bought the food items and divided it all up (1 serving per student to be fair) into baggies the night/morning before. I sketched and labeled a pyramid for classroom display and cut out large and appropriate pictures (2 or 3 for each food group) from magazines. Before I
began the initial lesson on the floor, I laid out the worksheets and baggies at each student’s table.

Safety Issues:

It is crucial to find out if there are any allergies to peanuts or anything else. If so, special foods need to be chosen, and that child’s baggie would not be able to touch any of the others.

Activity Outline/Teacher Procedures:

The class began on the floor in front of me. I pinned the food guide pyramid poster on the board and explained the sections and proportions to the students. We talked about how the sections at the bottom (grains, vegetables, fruits) are the largest, so the most food should be eaten from those areas. Then we moved up to the smaller sections (dairy, meat/nuts, sweets). I then allowed quiet students to come up and choose a magazine cutout and decide (with the classes’ help) where it should go on the pyramid. The students then moved to their table, with my directions, and began to place the foods on the worksheet (using it as a placemat). They asked many questions such as “Is this right?” or “Where does this go?” but I allowed the students to figure it out. After I checked everyone’s, they were allowed to eat the food and color the pyramid. At the very end, I brought the group back to the floor to review and talk about healthy snacks after school.

Possible Questions:

- What food group does this food fit in?
- What should you eat the most of? The least?
- What foods are mostly green?
- What are good snacks?
- What are good substitutes for sweets?
- What kinds of foods do you like? (Especially vegetables and fruits!)

Assessment/Evaluation:

The kids definitely loved this activity because they got to eat food while learning! My teacher told me it was a very good lesson also. It was a fairly simple activity to plan and not much money was spent. The kids were able to keep the worksheet, which is good for parents to see also since it related directly to ages 2-6. The food guide pyramid poster also stayed up in the classroom for the students to refer to during the activity and at other times. Overall, a very good way to teach healthy eating!
FOOD IS FUN and learning about food is fun, too. Eating foods from the Food Guide Pyramid and being physically active will help you grow healthy and strong.

EAT a variety of FOODS AND ENJOY!