

## Promoting Healthy Habits in Young Children

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### INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year, I found out about the existence of The Houston Teachers Institute. One of the seminars this year was entitled “Health, Illness, and Medicine in Houston: A Cross-Cultural Exploration.” After reading a little bit about the institute’s objectives and the project the teachers were supposed to create and develop, I became very interested.

I am Mexican and became teacher through an Alternative Certification Program four years ago. I am currently working at Scroggins Elementary School in the Houston Independent School District in a low economic area of the city. The population at my school is about one hundred percent Hispanic and most of them come from families with little or no academic studies. My concern is the students overall health education. By the time most of them get into third grade, they are already overweigh, and by fifth a lot of them present obesity problems. The majority of the school does not practice any sport and are not interested in sports at all. Their diet is based in low cost food and frequently is left to the children the option of choosing their own food only by flavor and not by any nutritional characteristic in it. Some of the parents do not spend much time with their children and do not teach them about the importance of a good night’s sleep. As a result, many of the students feel tired or unmotivated during the school time.

I am currently a Bilingual Kindergarten Teacher, and the school year 2004-2005 was my first year teaching that grade. I have seen the lack of healthy habits in my students since I started working in this school. However, I have noticed parents and children are very interested in developing healthy habits. For example, I have asked parents to send a light snack to school with their child. Most of them brought a very expensive one but one lacking in nutritional value. After recognizing the problem, I specifically asked for fruit as a light snack for children because fruit was not supposed to make them feel full at all but contribute with the students’ daily diet. That was a big change for a lot of parents and some even seemed confused with my request. The results of the change were not only noticeable in the parents but also in the students. Some were disappointed and even wanted to refuse the change. However, before I knew it, my students were already very happy and pleased about eating fruits and receiving the benefits of a healthy diet. In kindergarten I had already two overweight students who diligently started following a balanced diet after learning about the facts of nutrition.

Our body is an amazing machine capable of so many things. It is the legacy of our ancestors and the source of existence. I had the fortune to be taught about this important fact in my early years and develop good habits as a treasure in my life. I envision myself teaching and passing on that legacy in to every one of my students for them to enjoy about life through their own living. The Houston Teachers Institute this year is offering me the opportunity to expand my wings and teach these important lessons to my students.

If you can get children to begin thinking about making healthy decisions at a young age, there is a better chance they will make habits out of those good decisions later in life. They learn through imitation. They love to copy what you do and say. As a Bilingual Kindergarten Teacher

and role model for my students, I feel very motivated to empower them maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

During the preschool years, children can be taught about healthy habits like eating right, exercise, sleep, hygiene and safety. “Developing a positive attitude about getting well is extremely important. You can communicate that to each child differently, based on her age, stage and personality,” comments Dr. Stanley Greenspan, author of *Building Healthy Minds*. “Some kids can talk about getting better with you. Others, particularly younger kids, can work it out through play. Older kids may already have a plan in place that you can support” (Quoted in “Getting Better and Staying Healthier”). It is very important to communicate how practicing healthy habits keeps kids well. However, the most significant thing for a child, Physicians recommend is for parents to become healthy role models. “Don’t just talk about it – do it yourself!” recommends family practitioner Dr. Benjamin Kligler (Quoted in “Getting Better and Staying Healthier”). It is easier to start them off on the right foot than it is to stop a bad habit in the future.

## **UNIT OBJECTIVES**

The unit will be taught for about a month and a half beginning with a major announcement of it and its advantages for students as well as parents. The unit is going to be presented as a whole to the students and the objectives of it are going to be exposed to them and their parents to allow them to keep track of their own learning and understanding. Also, every habit we study--eating right, exercise, sleep, hygiene and safety--is going to include different activities to promote habit enhancement. Some of the activities are going to be focus in the student’s parents and will required either working along with their children at the school or supporting their child with projects along the curriculum unit. One of the main purposes of the unit is to compel parents to become interested enough to be involved not just by invitation but voluntarily to create or increase and sharp the practice of healthy habits at home. At the end of the curriculum unit the class is going to have an extra activity to use as a conclusion to the project. The purpose of it is to create an image to students of a whole instead of just separated activities. The whole is the understanding of some of the most important healthy habits that children should remember but primarily the awareness in students about the topic and hopefully the development of a habit.

Since the audience in this curriculum unit is Bilingual Kindergarten students, the activities could be taught in both Spanish and English. This dual option of language is a great tool for the teacher to gather the students’ attention. Bilingual young children enjoy the transition made from one language they already use to another one they are learning. In addition, the lessons are taught first in Spanish and then as a review in English.

As a Kindergarten Bilingual Teacher, I envision myself teaching the curriculum unit “Promoting Healthy Habits in Young Children” as an opportunity to show my students facts that will help them ensure their own wellness in the future, but at the same time to encourage their parents to work in this important issue. We need to change lifestyles during preschool years, the time when children are developing their lifelong habits. The importance of following healthy habits will benefit not only the immediate family, but the entire society.

## **UNIT CONTENT**

### **Eating Right**

At an early age children develop tastes for certain foods. What they are eating is what they are learning to like. Eating habits and attitudes children pick through example are going to last a lifetime.

Unfortunately as adults, we sometimes do not realize the importance of giving them good examples. For instance, a parent who never drinks milk or refuses to eat certain vegetables is teaching a child that those foods are not important. The National Diet and Nutrition Survey of young people aged 4-18 years found that children were eating less than half the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables each day and one in five ate no fruit at all. As far as physical activity is concerned, they found that 40-69 percent of children over the age of six years old are largely inactive, spending less than one hour per day participating in moderate intensity activities. Over the past two decades, the rates of childhood obesity have tripled. The calorie-dense, fatty, salty diet eaten by American children, combined with the serious lack of physical activity means that 25% of kids under ten years of age have high cholesterol, high blood pressure or some other contributor to heart disease.

While extreme calorie reduction is not advisable for children, a balanced diet of whole foods and reduced dietary fat is recommended. The biggest challenge is finding a way to make what's nutritious delicious enough to satisfy kids' cravings for sweets. Weight problems that develop during childhood can lead to weight related illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes later in life. Nonetheless, there is not single right way to good nutrition. A wide variety of foods contain proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals children need. Having the basic nutritional information will help children develop good eating habits.

The Oregon State University Extension Service (*Helping Children Grow – Starting Healthy Eating Habits*) mentions as Recipes for Good Habits several activities. Serving a variety of foods to children will allow them to have a bigger spectrum to choose the ones they like and at the same time not to feel afraid about always trying new food. Encourage children to prepare meals will teach them to appreciate the meal a lot and value the work parents do every time preparing food. Make the mealtime a pleasant experience. Mealtimes can be fun, they provide an opportunity to discuss the day's events, plan out things, and get to know one another better. If mealtimes are relaxed and happy, children will begin to associate the nutritious foods served with good feelings.

The Oregon State University Extension Service also mentions that a healthy diet for young children includes food from every different group in the food pyramid as well as specific portions depending on age. Six servings of breads and cereals, three servings of vegetables, two servings of fruits, two servings of milk and milk products, and two servings of meat and meat alternates.

It is extremely important to involve parents during the development of the lesson. In this way the lesson will become more valuable for the students as a lot more interesting. The lesson's final objective will be to create a higher level of awareness and practice of this healthy habit from the student and his/her family. The curriculum unit will teach children about the importance of eating right for about a week. The activities are going to be described in the following paragraphs.

### ***Food Pyramid Explanation***

The students are going to be exposed to the information about the food pyramid for them to visualize and understand the different kinds of groups in which food is divided as well as the benefits of every single group. The students are going to personalize the food groups in the pyramid in teams and explain orally and with pictures or drawings the benefits of the group they are presenting.

### ***Food Related Literature***

I will include literature in the student's library about nutrition to reinforce interest in children. The students are going to start a discussion about the importance of eating a variety of foods by reading aloud from a library book such as *Bread and Jam for Frances* by Russell Hoban. The book talks about what happens when Frances finally gets to eat bread and jam for every meal and why it's healthier to eat from the different groups of food.

Then it is the right time to review and reinforce if necessary about the food pyramid and the way it may be used every day. However, the most important aspect to emphasize to the students will be the fact that learning about good nutrition is not just for this unit or specific time in the school but as long lasting information that should be followed by experiencing every day while being in charge of their own wellness.

### ***Analysis of Food Intake***

The students are going to realize about the variety of food they are eating every day by filling out a chart at home either with drawings or words about the meals taken. As a group practice they are going to evaluate the diet of a different peer every day.

### ***Exercise***

Young Children are in perpetual motion. The University of Iowa Health Care (*Exercise: Are Your Children Getting Enough?*) says that at the age of 12 children tend to slow down and their recreational activities are even more dependent upon adults to be organized.

Having healthy, active children should be a major goal for parents. According to an opinion survey released by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) exercise has become a top goal. It found that nearly 95 percent of all parents believe that daily physical activity helps children do better academically and is important to their physical health. Over 95 percent of parents also think physical education should be part of a school curriculum for all K-12 students; and over half believe physical education is as important as math, science and English.

The State Board of Education/Department of Public Instruction in its article, "Making the Grade Encouraging Healthy Active Children," says that extensive research indicates that with age adults tend to become more inactive. Sedentary living among adults has been linked to Inactivity during childhood. Chronic diseases, once thought to be found only in adults, are becoming more and more common in children. Therefore, promoting children's active lifestyle has become an important goal to Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC).

Exercise benefits everybody in many ways. Now another question comes into mind. Are our children getting enough exercise? According to the Council for Physical Education, 60 minutes is the minimum amount of daily activity recommended for children. To get the best benefits, the exercise should exceed 60 minutes per day, preferably taking little breaks every 15 minutes. For moderate activity it should include some brisk walking and another more vigorous activity than that. The curriculum unit will teach children about the importance of exercise. The next paragraphs are the recommended activities to be taught during the week teaching the habit of exercise.

### ***Importance of Exercise***

The students are going to be taught about the importance of exercise, how to prepare before start doing it, as well as some sports characteristics.

### ***Exercise and Body Parts***

In this activity the teacher is going to be wearing attention-getting items placed in the body parts in study. She is going to start singing the song "Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes." Students will stimulate their motor skills by the use of movement. They are going to exercise by the repetition of body movements practiced during the lesson. Finally they will practice the name of different body parts.

During the development of this activity the teacher could include literature in the student's library about body parts and the importance of exercise to reinforce interest in children, such as *My First Body Book* by Christopher Rice, Melanie Rice, and Dorling Kindersley, as a book for

students. As a book for teachers to enhance the quality and excitement of the lesson in process, the teacher can use the book called *Everybody Has a Body: Science from Head to Toe/Activities* by Robert E. Rockwell, Robert A. Williams, and Elizabeth A. Sherwood. There is also an animated presentation on Internet about the human body and the most important organs with this electronic address: <http://www.apples4theteacher.com/elibrary/bodybook.html>.

### ***Exercise and the Community***

Parental involvement is going to be required to emphasize understanding as well as importance of the lesson creating livable experiences among their beloved ones.

### **Sleep**

Sleep deprivation can occur at all ages. Children in every age group do not get even the minimum recommended level of sleep according to a new survey assures the article “Young Children Don’t Sleep Enough” by Sid Kirchheimer. According to the Sleep in America poll, children are sleeping less than experts recommend while more than two-thirds experience sleep problems. Children are already experiencing poor sleep habits and as a result parents/caregivers sometimes lose an estimated 200 hours of sleep a year due to their child’s awakenings.

Based on answers from 1,500 parents of young children, these are some likely reasons suggested by the survey. Two in three kids have at least one sleep problem several times a week, such as resistance in going to sleep, trouble falling asleep, night awakenings, or snoring. And one in three needs attention from their parents at least once a week. Nearly half of kids – including one in three preschoolers – have a TV in their bedrooms. They get about two hours less sleep each week than children who don’t. One in four kids has at least one caffeinated beverage a day, and averages three and a half hours less sleep per week than children who don’t have caffeinated drinks (Kirchheimer).

Debra Babcock, MD, a pediatrician in Los Altos, California who has been studying sleep disorders in children at the Stanford Sleep Disorders Center says, “Although loss of sleep can weaken immunity, it’s hard to say if sleep deprivation leads to any permanent impairment. But it may cause permanent behavioral problems. There is evidence that children who show signs of attention deficient disorder are, indeed, sleep deprived. Certainly there are other reasons that kids get ADD, but being overtired may be one of them. Some kids treated for ADD, in fact, are in need of a good night’s sleep” (Quoted in Kirchheimer).

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) in 2001 launched a major five year educational initiative to reach young children and their parents, teachers, and health care providers – with the message that adequate nighttime sleep – at least nine hours each night – is important to children’s performance and safety. The curriculum unit is going to focus in promoting the likelihood the children will have a good night’s sleep.

### **Importance of Sleeping Time**

The students are going to be taught about the importance of sleeping time by reading a book and relating themselves to their own need of sleep.

### ***Good Night Activity***

This activity is focused in the book *Good Night, Gorilla*, by Peggy Rathmann, to interact with manipulatives and practice about the sleeping habit.

### ***Tracking Hours of Sleep***

Students are going to be provided with a chart where they are going to keep track of their own sleep as well as the dreams they had had during that week.

## **Hygiene**

Looking neat and clean is not just what good hygiene is all about; it also reduces the spread of disease. Good hygiene affects health and well being of children, and the one of people with whom they live around.

Children will play and explore their environment with out thinking about staying clean. They need to learn what hygiene means and how they should behave to keep themselves clean. Clean children (the ones that take baths, look neat, and do not have behaviors that spread diseases) keep everyone healthier at any childcare program. However, the worse thing is when young children ignore or tease dirty or smelly kids, attaining to their self-esteem. A child that starts a day with clean body, hair and clothes will experience a positive attitude from others. A daily habit routine is the best way for children to learn about hygiene. *The Health & Safety Notes* from the California Childcare Health Program offers some tips for children to develop good personal hygiene habits focusing in specific body areas.

### ***Learning about Germs***

Students will see what different germs look like under a microscope and compare their physical attributes. They will also create a germ themselves.

### ***Respectful Sneezing***

The teacher is going to read the book called *The Flea's Sneeze* by Lynn Downey. After reading it to the students and discussing about the proper way to sneeze, she is going to ask the children to draw a self-portrait demonstrating the proper way to cover their mouths when sneezing.

### ***Dental Health***

Read to the students the book called *Dr. de Soto* by William Steig. Explain the class about the importance of observing dental health. After discussing the book, ask the students if they have ever lost a tooth and how they felt.

## **Safety**

Children are precious and deserve a safe environment in which to live and play. As adults we are responsible to keep them safe and teach them about safety issues as early in life as possible. Caregivers, guardians as well as parents should work together to encourage safety education to children and practice it to improve the chance of success.

The NCSA (The National Center for Statistics & Analysis) notes, "Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children form 2 to 14 years old" (based on 2001 figures, which are the latest mortality data currently available from the National Center for Health Statistics) (Quoted in *Traffic Safety Facts*). In 2003, 21 percent of the children under 15 years old who were killed in motor vehicle crashes were killed in alcohol-related crashes. On the other hand, adults take for granted that everyone knows a stranger when they see one. However, some studies revelations ensure that children often do not know what a stranger is. We as adults interact with people we know and some we do not and our children watch us normally doing that.

It is very important to remember children take information literally, especially if they sense tension during explanations from adults and may be easily frightened. Therefore, whenever teaching children about safety issues, the teacher should not focus in the frightening problem at all, but instead on behaviors the child can do to be safe and make them feel a sense of control. There is not doubt that consistent routines, modeling and practice are great tools while creating safety habits in children. Expending time outside every day also offers children the opportunity to experience about safety.

Teaching children about safety should be a team effort. The curriculum unit will focus in three specific areas to make an impact in children.

### ***Strangers' Ways***

The class will discuss how to deal with potentially dangerous situations with strangers following some simple tips. These tips will not be frightening or stressful, but will alert students to situations and actions.

### ***Emergency Safety***

It is crucial that our children learn to successfully dial their home telephone number and Emergency 911 for safety reasons. There are emergency situations that warrant that our children be able to make a phone call home or dial 911. Some of these emergency situations can be a fire, an accident, or sudden illness involving a parent or caregiver and other situations.

### ***Street Smarts***

The students are going to learn tips about safety issues on the street. They are going to be introduced to road signs and their meanings and to traffic lights. The safety rules when waking to their destinations but specially the development of safety habits.

## **EATING RIGHT LESSON PLANS**

### **Food Pyramid Explanation**

The objective of his lesson is for the students to understand the importance of the food pyramid. They are also going to identify the different groups in the food pyramid and some of their characteristics. These are some of the keywords students are going to learn in the lesson: nutrition, food groups (grain, vegetables, fruits, meat, milk, fat and sweet), serving, food pyramid, and variety.

The teacher will explain the importance of food intake in our body's health and development. Then, the students will be briefly taught about some of the illnesses related to poor nutrition. After that the teacher will offer the food pyramid as a good tool to use to ensure healthy eating habits.

The materials needed for the lesson consist of a Food pyramid chart with real pictures and printed words, a blank food pyramid chart with divisions, at least one item of real food from each food pyramid group, and some printed names of every food pyramid group.

The teacher will first explain the different groups in the food pyramid by filling out a chart with printed names and pictures of the food in every group. The students are randomly selected to identify the groups and some of the foods included in them; at the same time the teacher remind the class about the amount of servings and characteristics in every group while the students are identifying it. Then, the class is divided in groups to present every group in the food pyramid explaining amount of servings required and characteristic s. Always include drawing and words at the same time for the students to identify concepts either with the picture, word or both for age adaptation.

There is going to be a group assessment at the time of the presentation of every group in the food pyramid. However, there will be an individual assessment in which the students are going to identify the different food groups and some of the different foods that fit in every one of them.

### **Food Related Literature**

The teacher initiates a discussion about the importance of eating a variety of foods by reading aloud from a library book such as *Bread and Jam for Frances* by Russell Hoban. The book talks

about what happens when Frances finally gets to eat bread and jam for every meal and why it's healthier to eat from the main groups of food.

Then it is the right time to review, and reinforce if necessary, about the food pyramid and the way it may be used every day. However, the most important aspect to emphasize to the students will be the fact that learning about good nutrition is not just for this unit or specific time in the school but as long lasting information that should be followed by experiencing every day while being in charge of their own wellness.

### **Analysis of Food Intake**

The objective of this lesson is for the students to identify the different groups of food in the food pyramid. They will also evaluate their own food intake as well as that of their peers. The keywords for this lesson are serving, food pyramid, variety, and food group. There is going to be used a daily blank chart for the food pyramid intake identification per meal. A copy of a brief explanation about every group of food in the pyramid and the different ingredients it has with drawings included for age adaptation. The results of their intake of food during a week will be listed in the evaluation sheet provided before. Finally, there will be a list of words selected from students' spelling or vocabulary lists or from a list of high-frequency words for students to spell.

As a preliminary instruction, the class is going to review the different food groups in the food pyramid by emphasizing the special characteristics, servings, and variety of food each one includes. Also the students are going to have to participate in the analysis of examples of dishes at every meal in a day as a group.

The lesson starts with the creation of four teams in the class and make each team take their analysis sheet of the week of food intake. Each team selects a good day of food intake of their own work sheets of the week in which they had eaten food of every group in the food pyramid. Every team will fill out a big chart of a day of food intake complete with drawings and will evaluate it all together. At the end the group creating the greater number of days of balanced food intakes wins. We always include drawings and words at the same time for the students to identify concepts either with the picture, word or both for age adaptation.

The game ends any time after each group has had one opportunity to evaluate and present the food intake of one of their peers in the group. Have one student from each team count and record the final number of tally marks so you can determine the winning team.

## **EXERCISE LESSON PLANS**

### **Importance of Exercise**

As an objective of this lesson students will understand some of the benefits of exercise, recognize some illnesses that could be caused by the lack of exercise and learn about the rules of two different sports. The keywords to learn include exercise, strength, wellness, obesity, high cholesterol, soccer, basketball, point, and goal. It is necessary to construct a list of words selected from students' spelling or vocabulary lists or from a list of high-frequency words for students to spell, a small plastic or portable basketball hoop and a small soccer ball, pictures to show the benefits of exercise and the illnesses, and pencils/markers and paper.

As a preliminary introduction the class is going to be taught about the benefits of exercise, illnesses caused for the lack of it, and the rules of the two different sports. There is going to be a scoreboard on the blackboard or on chart paper. In addition the class is going to be divided into two teams.

The activity starts by calling up the first student from each team. Provide the two students with clipboards with paper and a pencil/marker. Make a question in which the answer will include a word of the key vocabulary and make them write it on the paper. When the students have

written the words, they can share them with classmates by showing their written response. If the student spells the word correctly, he/she will make a tally mark representing a point on his/her team's side of the scoreboard. If the student spells the word incorrectly, he/she earns no point. Show that student the correctly spelled word before he/she sits down. Students who spell a word correctly get an opportunity to score a bonus point for their team. They stand at the shooting line drawn or taped on the floor and shoot the basketball or the soccer ball, depending their choice two times. They score an additional point/tally mark for each basket they make. Repeat this activity until all team members have had a chance to spell a word. Have one student from each team count and record the final number of tally marks so you can determine the winning team.

The game ends after each student has had one opportunity to spell a word. Have one student from each team count and record the final number of tally marks so you can determine the winning team.

### **Exercise and Body Parts**

The objectives of this lesson consist of stimulating the students' motor skills by the use of movement. Exercise by repetitive body movements practice during the lesson and practice about the name of the body parts. Some keywords are body parts, head, shoulders, knees, and toes. It is good to use a list of words selected from students' spelling or vocabulary lists related to the theme or from a list of high-frequency words for students to spell, as well as the list of the new vocabulary. Also needed are the use of items as "attention caller" to accentuate the body parts, like a hat, bright socks and the use of a chalkboard or chart paper.

As a preliminary instruction students have to learn about the body parts in study. They will also receive previous adequate warm up for the students to start with the activity. During the activity the teacher is going to be wearing the attention-getting items placed on the body parts in study. She is going to start singing the song "Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes." She is going to make sure the students are being able to repeat the song along with her. After modeling the specific movements, singing and touching each body part, the students should be able to follow the teacher's movements. The fun part about this occurs when the students get to do it in slow motion or fast motion following the sound of musical instruments indicating the speed of the activity. The best students following the game get to wear the attention-getting items and perform the dance for the whole group.

This activity can be changed, depending on the body parts in study. Also, instead of everybody making all the movements for every specific body part, the class could be divided in groups by body part and move just at the time when that body part name gets to be mentioned. This dance can be performed every day of the week studying about exercise.

### **Fun and Exercise**

The objective of this lesson is for the students to spell and write words from a list of spelling, vocabulary, or high frequency words they should know. Participate in a two-team spelling game and shoot a ball into a hoop as a reward for spelling a word correctly to earn extra points for their team. Keywords are spelling, language arts, basketball, high frequency words, vocabulary, sight words and game. The list of words should be selected from students' spelling or vocabulary lists or from a list of high-frequency words for students to spell. Materials include a small plastic or portable basketball hoop, a plastic basketball, two clipboards with pencils/markers and paper, and a chalkboard or chart paper.

As preliminary instruction the class is going to be divided in two teams. There is going to be a scoreboard on the blackboard or a chart paper. The teacher will set up a small portable basketball hoop and find a lightweight plastic or foam rubber basketball. At the end the teacher

will establish on the floor a shooting line using tape or chalk; the line should be at a distance from the hoop that is appropriate for students.

The lesson starts by calling up the first student from each team. Provide the two students with clipboards with paper and a pencil/marker. Say a word from the determined list and have the child use the clipboard to write it on the paper. When the students have written the words, they can share them with classmates by showing their written response. If the student spells the word correctly, he/she will make a tally mark representing a point on his/her team's side of the scoreboard. Nonetheless, if the student spells the word incorrectly, he/she earns no point. Show that student the correctly spelled word before he/she sits down.

Students who spell a word correctly get an opportunity to score a bonus point for their team. They stand at the shooting line drawn or taped on the floor and shoot the basketball two times at the hoop. They score an additional point/tally mark for each basket they make. Repeat this activity until all team members have had a chance to spell a word. Have one student from each team count and record the final number of tally marks so you can determine the winning team.

As a game adaptation at the end of the game, you might give students who misspelled a word during the game one final opportunity to correctly spell the word they missed. If they spell the word correctly, they earn a point for their team. They do not, however, earn an opportunity to shoot the basketball for extra points. You might play this game the day before each week's spelling test. That will provide students with one final opportunity to see and hear the word spelled correctly.

The game ends any time after each student has had one opportunity to spell a word. Have one student from each team count and record the final number of tally marks so you can determine the winning team.

### **Exercise and the Community**

The activities involving parents are the exercise contest and recording exercise data.

In the contest students are going to implement what they have learned during the exercise week. At the same time, including parents' participation will accentuate the importance of the practice of exercise, especially when the example comes from parents-- it makes a stronger impact on children. This will be possible by having them participate in pair's parent-child. The contest will include activities like Jumping bags racing (carreras de costales), obstacles racing, basketball shutting contest, running with a tight shoe, and book equilibrium racing.

Recording Exercise Data -- Parents are going to be responsible for their children's exercise activities for a week. The students are going to be asked to observe and fill out a chart including their physical activities made every day and the amount of time spent in it for a week. The chart can be filled out with words or drawings, depending on the child's skills at the time of the practice (Fig. 1 at the end of the lesson).

### **SLEEP LESSON PLANS**

#### **Importance of Sleeping Time**

In this lesson students will enhance their listening and comprehension skills by practicing making deductions and relating themselves to the characters of the story about the need of sleep. The keywords for the lesson are sleep habit, need, night time, day time, gorilla, mouse, elephant, lion, and giraffe. The lesson will need a list of words selected from students' spelling or vocabulary lists related to the theme or from a list of high-frequency words for students to spell, as well as the list of the new vocabulary with drawing for better understanding. Items include an "attention caller" to accentuate the theme like an old fashion sleeping hat. A colorful sleepy animal faces and a baby doll in a crib.

Before the lesson students are going to be asked about their last night's sleep. There is going to be a big banner displayed with the words sleep habit. The activity starts with the teacher wearing the attention caller item, reading the book called *Good Night, Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann. Just before she starts reading the book she is going to fix the sleeping hat in her head and pretend she is a little sleepy to catch the students' attentions and give them a clue about the lesson in study. While reading the almost wordless book, she is going to be able to ask a lot of deductive questions like, what is the time of the day? Where do the animals go after they get into their cages? What happens next? etc. Once the students have discussed the book focusing in the animals need of sleep, they are going to look at some sleepy animal faces and try to understand how they feel at that time and what they do after that and where they go. This is now the time for the teacher to teach about the facts of a good night sleep on children, like sleeping at least 10 hours daily, not being hungry before going to bed, having adequate light, having a serene environment, visiting the bathroom, and wearing adequate clothes. Finally the teacher is going to bring the baby doll and place her in the crib; at the same time she is going to explain all the necessary factors that need to have taken place before the child can get to sleep.

As an assessment, students are going to be asked to locate the factors involved in a good night's sleep by posting them on the board with both drawings and words. As an independent assessment, the students are going to draw pictures about the facts learned during the lesson. This lesson is a great way for the teacher to teach the knowledge needed for the activities during the week of sleep habit.

### **Good Night Activity**

The students will enhance their listening and comprehension skills, practice making deductions, and relate themselves to the characters of the story about the need for sleep. They will also learn characteristics of different animals, enhance their social abilities, and read a chart. The keywords of the lesson are sleep habit, need, night time, day time, gorilla, mouse, elephant, lion, giraffe and team. The teacher should create a list of words selected from students' spelling or vocabulary lists related to the theme or from a list of high-frequency words for students to spell, as well as the list of the new vocabulary with drawings for better understanding. Materials include finger puppets of the animal characters in the story, several of each character for every one in the class to wear one, also, and a chart with the names of the animal characters in the story.

As a preliminary instruction students are going to be asked about their last night sleep. There is going to be a big banner displayed with the words "sleep habit." During the lesson students are going to be asked about the summary of the book *Good Night, Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann. They are going to wear their puppets and join into their respective groups depending on the animal character they are representing. The teacher is going to start making questions about the sleeping facts learned in the past lesson. Each group is supposed to answer the question, and if it is right they get a point in the point chart. After answering the question and being sure it is right then the rest of the students in the class are going to say together "Good night" and the name of the animal character participating in the question. The group that gets the most points wins the game.

### **Tracking Hours of Sleep**

The day after the first lesson about sleep, the students are going to be asked to fill out a chart to track their hours of sleep every day during that week of study of the lesson as well as some drawing to represent the dreams they had during that time. This is going to be an activity in which parents are going to be involved in order to help with the filling out of the chart.

On Friday of the sleeping week, students are going to bring their chart and the teacher is going to start by grabbing their attention with the use of a story of a book called *The Berenstain Bears and the Bad Dream* by Stan Berenstain. The book talks about a brother and sister bear who

after watching a scary movie are troubled by nightmares until Mama and Papa explain what causes bad dreams. On that day the teacher is going to evaluate the results of the charts by asking the students how they felt about being able to keep track of their sleeping time and also about their dreaming experiences during that week.

From the students who had had bad dreams during that week, five are going to be randomly chosen and are going to share their experiences with the rest of the class and display their drawings of that dream in the classroom bulletin board (Fig. 2 at the end of the lesson).

## **HYGIENE LESSON PLANS**

### **Learning about Germs**

In this lesson children will learn that there are many varieties of germs and that two types are viruses and certain bacteria. They will see what different germs look like under a microscope and compare their physical attributes. They can even create a germ of their own. The keywords for this lesson are bacteria, disease, germs, microbe, microscope, organism, and virus. It is necessary having materials to create the shape of a germ (cake sprinkles for rods and macaroni for spiral), crayons and paper, photographs of magnified germs, and a microscope (or a photograph of one).

The activity consists in students seeing what different germs look like under a microscope and compare their physical attributes. They will also create a germ themselves. Ask children if they can see the wind. How do we know it's there? Advise children that germs are tiny living organisms, also called microbes, that can't be seen with our eyes alone and that cause disease. Explain that to see germs, we need the help of a microscope, which is like a giant magnifying glass. Microscopes help us to see things that are very, very small in size. Hold up the microscope (or the photograph). Explain that there are many types of germs. Ask children where they think germs are most likely found. Tell students that the two most common types of germs that make us sick are viruses and certain bacteria. Show the pictures of bacteria and viruses as seen under the microscope. Have children describe what these germs look like. Ask children to draw some germs shapes based on what they have learned and finally make a class collage using those drawings. Finally, make a class collage using those drawings.

As an assessment ask students the following questions. What are germs? How can we see germs? Where can germs be found? What kinds of shapes do bacteria have? What kinds of shapes do viruses have?

### **Respectful Sneezing**

This lesson has different objectives: constructing a self-portrait (art), learning health etiquette (Social Skills), and emphasizing the relationship between sneezes and germs (Science). Students will learn that covering a sneeze helps to prevent the spread of germs and understand that using a tissue or sneezing into an elbow or shoulder keeps germs from getting on hands. Some keywords are fungi, seed, and seed germination. The material needed consists of construction paper (two and a half 9" x 12" sheets per child), oval pattern, scissors and glue or glue sticks, and a cut 9" x 6" sheet of construction paper for each child. This sheet will be used for tracing their hands; facial tissue and yarn are optional.

As a preliminary instruction explain to the class about the importance of covering our mouths when sneezing and the proper way to do it. The lesson starts when the teacher is reading the book called *The Flea's Sneeze* by Lynn Downey. After reading it to the students and discussing the proper way to sneeze, she is going to ask the children to draw a self-portrait demonstrating the proper way to cover their mouths when sneezing. Explain to the class that they will be creating portraits of themselves covering a sneeze with a tissue. Have children cut out the oval from the sheet of construction paper and glue it onto another blank sheet of construction paper. Tell

children to draw their face on the oval. Have children trace one of their hands on the 9" x 6" sheet of paper and cut it out. Then the students will glue the bottom of the hand (palm area) onto the chin of the drawn face, so that the fingers of the hand still lift up. Have children slide a piece of tissue between the face and the unglued part of the hand, covering the mouth and nose. At the end, glue on the yarn as hair.

As an assessment ask students the following questions: Why is it important to cover a sneeze? Why is the tissue important? Why is it important to wash and/or sanitize your hands after using a tissue? How else can you cover a sneeze? What other ways are germs spread? What else can children do to stop the spread of germs?

## **Dental Health**

The objectives in this lesson include students learning about tooth care and importance, practice mathematical skills, and practice their listening and comprehension skills. Some of the keywords are dentist, dental care, caries, plaque, infection, tooth brush, floss, and rinse. The necessary materials for the lesson are construction paper, big colorful happy face with mouth wide open, big paper teeth and big tooth brush, big paper numbers to ten, and some big paper words with the keywords.

Before the lesson starts, the teacher reads the book called *Dr. de Soto* by William Steig and explains to the class about the importance of dental health. The lesson's first step after discussing the book is to ask the students if they have ever lost a tooth and how they felt. Explain to the class that they will be adding and subtracting teeth to the happy face. Have children randomly participate in addition or subtraction activities using the teeth as well as the numbers to indicate the total of the equation on top of the happy face. Every time a child does a correct addition or subtraction have him brush the teeth of the happy face.

The teacher is going to ask questions about dental health discussed with the book to the entire class as an assessment. At the time the teacher is giving facts, she is going to be posting the keywords explained on the board. At the end of the explanation she is going to randomly ask some students about the meaning of each word with open questions.

## **SAFETY LESSON PLANS**

### **Strangers' Ways**

The objective of the lesson will be offering tips to students about dealing with potentially dangerous situations with strangers. These tips will not be frightened or stressed but will alert students to situations and actions. The keywords in the lesson are strangers, dangerous situations, and stay away. The necessary materials include a *Little Red Riding Hood* book, a little Red Riding Hood template, and big paper words with the keywords

Before the lesson the teacher reads to the students the book called *Little Red Riding Hood* and explain the class about the importance of following simple tips to prevent dangerous situations with strangers. The FBI offers some good rules for children to follow to protect themselves.

1. Share a secret code word with your parents.
2. Stay away from strangers.
3. Grownups should NOT ask kids to do things that other adults can do for them.
4. If you lose your parents in a public place like a store or a park, do not go looking for them.
5. Always ask your parents or a grownup in charge.
6. Let your parents know where, when, with whom, etc.
7. If someone follows you on foot or in a car, STAY AWAY.

The story of Little Red Riding Hood is an appropriate opportunity to address a safety issue that we had much rather not even think about or contemplate; nonetheless, it requires our attention to help our children avoid the unthinkable. The activities of the lesson consist of reading the story *Little Red Riding Hood* to students. Ask, what should Little Red Riding Hood have done to avoid what happened. Make one craft of the characters. Ask children now to recall the events in their own words, review key safety issues briefly, and role-play with the crafts.

As an assessment the teacher asks questions about safety issues discussed in the book to the entire class. The students are going to be asked about the FBI tips to be safe and the keywords everyone knowing the answer is going to get a cookie for the Little Red Riding Hood basket. The teacher may want to let parents know the topic that will be discussed and provide a safety sheet outlining the key FBI safety tips before hand, so parents are prepared for children's questions.

### **Emergency Safety**

The class will learn about dialing 911 in case of an emergency, student's own phone number, understand the confidentiality of it and differentiate between the kind of emergency that the 911 phone number attends and the ones that are not handled by them. Some keywords in the lesson are dial tone, emergency, stay calm, telephone number, address, and police officer). The necessary materials include puppets to characterize different situations in which 911 will help, *La Gran Aventura del 911 Video*, big paper words with the keywords as well as a paper (old fashion) telephone and another one of tones, a telephone template clear for kids with 10 spaces to write their own phone number, a number template to find and cut students phone numbers in the assessment practice, address template fill out for kids to keep in case of emergency, and a real telephone of tones.

As preliminary instruction, watch the video *La Gran Aventura del 911 Video*, in which the students are going to experience through puppets representations, the responsibility, different emergencies and importance of calling 911. The teacher will provide each student his or her own address and phone number. The first step of the activity is for the child to be able to recognize the numbers and to point to them on the telephone keys. This requires regular practice to keep the numbers and the process fresh in their minds. The class is going to review the kind of emergency the 911 department attends learned in the 911 video. The teacher will use puppets to dramatize different kinds of emergencies. Students then are going to differentiate between 911 emergencies and the ones that the department does not handle. The teacher shows the steps about making 911 phone call:

- Have a real people emergency.
- Pick up a real working phone and listen the dial tone.
- Dial 911 in a tone or disc telephone.
- Explain the kind of emergency.
- Wait to give the correct address.
- Do not hang up until the police officer tells you to do it.
- Stay always calm.

Use puppets to dramatize the steps in a 911 call when having an emergency. Randomly choose some students to dramatize the steps when calling 911. Finally review with the class the importance and responsibility about making a 911 call.

The teacher as an assessment asks questions about the lesson and steps about making a 911 phone call. Students are going to use the telephone template with 10 spaces and the numbers template to find their own phone number previously indicated by the teacher. They are going to be asked to paste the right numbers in the right places to dial their own phone number. The teacher is going to make sure students understand the importance of the confidentiality of a

personal phone number. The teacher may want to let parents know the topic that will be discussed and provide a 911 sheet outlining the key tips before hand, so parents are prepared for children's questions and keep fill out phone number and address templates at hand for an emergency.

### **Street Smarts**

Students will recognize the importance of street safety issues. They are going to be introduced to road signs and their meanings, learn about safety rules for pedestrians, understand the importance of wearing safety helmets when bicycling, and the use of seat belts. The keywords of the lesson are safety, road signs, pedestrians, safety helmets, seat belts, and traffic. The materials to use consist on a Giovanni Caviezel Book *Street Safety Hints*. Other materials include big paper words with the keywords and some others with the pedestrian's safety steps by Loma Linda University Children's Hospital (Stop, Look, Wait and Keep on Looking), and also a big car toy for a student to ride on.

Read the book *Street Safety Hints* by Giovanni Caviezel as a preliminary instruction and stress the meaning of the keywords found in the development of the story. During the lesson's activity students are going to discuss about the book and the need for kids to understand those safety street issues and follow the pedestrian safety rules to ensure safety. The teacher introduces students to the easy safety steps for pedestrians:

- STOP at the curb or edge of the road.
- NEVER run into the street.
- LOOK for traffic left, right, and left again.
- WAIT until traffic is clear, then cross.
- KEEP ON LOOKING both ways until you've safely crossed the street.

The class is going to discuss each of them. With help of the class the teacher asks students to convey about the kind of drawing the class should agree on making to represent each of the four steps. Two randomly chosen students dramatize a scene about crossing the street.

As assessment the teacher asks questions about the lesson and street safety pedestrian's steps. Discuss the importance of the safety street issues with the class. Finally ask the students to create themselves drawings to represent the street safety pedestrian's steps and arrange them in order. The teacher may want to let parents know the topic that will be discussed and provide a sheet outlining the key street safety pedestrian's tips proposed by the LLU Children's Hospital, so parents are prepared for children's questions and keep in their minds those important and easy steps.

### **CONCLUSION OF THE CURRICULUM UNIT**

To conclude with the curriculum unit the class is going to create a bulletin board about the theme of the unit "Healthy Habits."

#### **Healthy Habits Bulletin Board**

Children will be able to identify the healthy habits (eating right, exercise, sleep, hygiene, and safety) learned during the development of the lesson. The necessary materials are: "Healthy Habits" words (Eating Right, Exercise, Sleep, Hygiene and Safety.) Other materials include clear bulletin board border sheets for the students to color; pencils; crayons; and scissors, one pair per student. In addition, you will need an assortment of magazines and items to gather attention from students about the Healthy Habits, such as a basket with healthy food, a ball, a pillow, soap, and a stop sign.

Before the lesson starts children will discuss healthy habits and why they are important. The lesson's activity consists of placing the gathering attention items in front of the room. Ask the children if they can guess what they are going to talk about (Healthy Habits.) Then, lead them in a

discussion about the importance. Ask children to think of other things they do to take good care of themselves. Let them pantomime these healthy behaviors for the class to guess. (Brush teeth, shampoo and comb hair, wash hands, bathe, do the dishes, wipe down counters.) After each act, categorize it in the habit of study it is supposed to belong, discuss what was done, why it is important and what happens if you don't practice this healthy habit. Divide children into groups. Let them go through magazines to find pictures that promote healthy habits. It can be a picture of someone doing a healthy behavior or a product that supports a healthy habit. Let each group share the pictures it found. Explain to the children that they get to help build a "Healthy Habits" bulletin board. Distribute border sheets to the children and tell each of them to color one. If they are working on identifying colors and following directions, guide them as they color. Ask for volunteers to help you color the "Healthy Habits" lettering. As children complete their sheets, have them bring them up to be stapled to the board. Staple the "Healthy Habits" lettering across the top of the board. Once the board has been assembled, post the pictures the children found in magazines onto it, grouping similar pictures together by the habit they address. Have children help create labels for each healthy habit represented.

As assessment observe children as they are cutting out pictures for the bulletin board. Ask them why they chose those pictures, or have each group share its pictures with the class. An extension of the lesson would be to make a "Healthy Habits" book with the class. Let each child finish the sentence: I am healthy because I \_\_\_\_\_. Have them draw a picture to go with their sentence. Finally, ask children to look for healthy habits and products that promote them on television.

**Actividad Física Realizada en una Semana**

(Fig. 1)

	LUNES	MARTES	MIERCOLES	JUEVES	VIERNES	SABADO	DOMINGO
Tiempo							
Ejercicio							

## Cuadro del Tiempo que duermo diariamente y lo que Sueño

(Fig. 2)

	LUNES	MARTES	MIERCOLES	JUEVES	VIERNES
Tiempo					
Dibujo acerca del Sueño en cada noche.					

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The ads employ humor to promote healthy eating and habits among children. For example, one lists the "hundreds of fun and simple things you and your family can do to live a healthier lifestyle," including "walk to work, walk the dog, have the dog walk you. Take a hike, take a bike, skate, dance, hop, jump, do the humpty hump. Drop the fat, drop the sugar, drop down and give me ten." In another spot, a young boy asks his mother what is in their living room. The mother says it is "an igloo made of carrots," and pushes her son in, saying "The only way out is to eat your way out." Newsletter Sign Up. To help kids develop a healthy liquid calorie habit from an early age, give your toddler plenty of water and plain milk to avoid getting them used to sugary juice or chocolate milk. If you do give them juice, give them 100 percent fruit juice and water it down, mixing equal parts water and juice. Promote Fruits and Veggies at Dinner. Making them eat when they are no longer hungry can lead to unhealthy overeating habits. To help your young child learn to listen to their body's fullness cues at mealtime, the USDA recommends ask them questions such as "Is your tummy telling you that you're full?" or "Is your stomach still making that hungry growling noise?" Stick to a Strict Meal and Snack Schedule. (Image credit: Photosmart | Dreamstime.com). Good fluid intake in children is vitally important as they have immature thirst mechanisms, relatively high rates of fluid loss and are physically active. Poor fluid intake may affect children's cognitive functioning as well as bladder control. Research shows that children drink seven times as much soft drink as water. Schools have a vital role to play in ensuring that children develop healthy drinking patterns. Do you want to read the rest of this article? Request full-text. Citations (2). References (0). Mediators of the Effectiveness of an Intervention Promoting Water Consumption in Pr