

Let's Go Grocery Shopping



Objective

Children will identify common foods as healthy.

Relationship & Self-Management Skills

As children freely investigate materials and choose how they play, they begin to explore their preferences and abilities. This experience promotes the child's sense of competence and emerging self-awareness.

Learning Support

Encourage Role-Playing and Independent Exploration:

Allow children to freely explore the grocery store setup. Observe and wait for children to invite you into their play: "Angel, I see you have a lot of food in your basket. Tell me about the healthy foods you are shopping for." If children play as cashiers, model friendly conversations: "You bought bananas and milk! These are great for strong bones and energy!"

Extend Learning Beyond the Dramatic Play Area:

Continue discussions about healthy food during mealtime. "Tell me about the healthy foods on your plate today." Encourage children to notice real food choices at home: "Next time you go shopping with your family, see if you can find some of your favorite healthy foods!"

Inclusive Practices Tips:

Pair children together for shopping and checkout roles. Reinforce cooperation: "Look how you and James worked together to fill the grocery basket with healthy food!" Praise all levels of engagement: "Lily found lots of vegetables today!" "Ethan helped at the cash register. Great job!" Allow flexibility-some children may enjoy shopping, while others prefer being the cashier or organizing food items .

Emergent Bilingual (ELL/DLL/MLL) Strategies:

Narrate play and encourage conversations: "I am buying apples because they are good for my body." "I see you put yogurt in your basket. Yogurt helps make our bones strong!" Encourage verbal participation with simple prompts: "I am buying ____." "This food is ____ (healthy/unhealthy)." "I like to eat ____ because ____." If a child says, "Carrot healthy," respond with, "Yes! Carrots help keep our eyes strong and healthy."

Let's Go Grocery Shopping



Procedure & Teacher Talk

1. During Together Time, activate prior knowledge and set clear expectations by introducing the changes you have made.
2. For example, you can say, **"Have you ever been grocery shopping with your family?"**
3. Pause to allow children to comment. Repeat and extend as appropriate. **"Nico, I heard you say that you shop with your mommy. What do you buy?", "Your mommy buys eggs. Eggs are good aren't they?"**
4. You can then introduce the changes by saying, **"We now have a grocery store in our dramatic play area."** Pause for comments, repeat and extend as needed.
5. Use this as an opportunity to describe what you have added as well as activate their prior knowledge about the definition of healthy. **"When I go shopping, I like to buy food that is healthy which means good for my body. Can you think of any foods that are good for your body?"**
6. Allow children to brainstorm their ideas, repeat and extend as appropriate to validate their communication attempts.
7. Scaffolding is needed to deepen their understanding of what types of food are healthy. For example, you can say, **"Maria, you said apples make you strong. That's right. Apples are healthy and taste good too."**
8. To set clear expectations, you can say, **"I know you are excited to play with the new items. The grocery store will be here all week so everyone will get a chance to play and shop."**
9. Choose an appropriate transition to move children to other activities. As children migrate to the dramatic play area, observe and monitor for conflicts with the material.
10. Once children are engaged and exploring, observe and listen. As children invite you into their play, through eye contact, gestures, or verbal requests, describe their actions and use open-ended prompts to encourage them to identify food that is healthy.
11. **"Angel, I see you have a lot of food in your basket. I wonder what you have that's good for your body. Tell me about the healthy food that you are shopping for."**
12. If a child identifies something unhealthy such as cookies, candy or chips as healthy, scaffold and deepen their understanding of the difference.
13. For example, **"I heard you say candy is healthy, hmmm, candy has a lot of sugar. Sugar can hurt our teeth and lots of sugar isn't good for our body. I wonder if you have something else in your basket that is good for your body. Let's look together."**
14. The grocery store can remain throughout the week and beyond if children stay engaged.
15. Extend this experience to mealtime with questions and open-ended prompts. For example, you can say, **"Tell me about the healthy foods on your plate."**



Little Red Hen's Kitchen - Dramatic Play



Objective

Children will initiate a dramatic play story and sometimes direct others to do or say specific things while utilizing different objects as props as they act out the story of "The Little Red Hen."

Relationship & Self-Management Skills

Children develop relationships with peers as they engage in pretend play with others for a sustained amount of time.

Learning Support

Lesson Scaffolding Ideas:

Start by reading the book "The Little Red Hen" to the children, using expressive voices for each character to model how they might act out their parts. Demonstrate using the props (bowl, spoons, measuring cups) to show how they might be used in the story. Encourage participation by assigning roles and guiding children on what to say or do next. For example, "Now, let's have the Little Red Hen ask for help. Who can say, 'Who will help me plant this grain of wheat?'" Begin with simpler scenes from the story and gradually introduce more complex parts. Initially, focus on the hen asking for help and the animals refusing. Later, add scenes of planting, baking, and eating the bread.

Inclusive Practices Tips:

For children with fine motor difficulties, provide larger or adapted props that are easier to handle, such as bigger spoons or lightweight measuring cups. Ensure the dramatic play area has a variety of textures and materials to engage children with different sensory preferences. Provide soft blankets, textured costumes, and different kinds of 'ingredients' to touch and feel. Allow children who may have difficulty with physical actions to participate in other ways, such as helping to direct the play, holding up props, or making sound effects. Make sure the dramatic play area is spacious and free of obstacles to accommodate children with mobility aids. Ensure that props and costumes are within easy reach for all children.

ELL/DLL Strategy:

Provide bilingual support by using key vocabulary from the story in both English and the children's home languages. Label props and costumes with bilingual tags to help children make connections between the two languages. Use visual supports such as pictures of the characters, key actions, and props to reinforce understanding. These visual cues can help children follow along with the story and understand their roles better. Use simplified language and repeat key phrases to ensure comprehension. For example, repeat the phrase "Who will help me?" several times and encourage children to use it during the play. Incorporate gestures and body language to support communication. Demonstrate actions and expressions that match the characters' feelings and actions to help children understand and mimic them.

Little Red Hen's Kitchen - Dramatic Play



Procedure & Teacher Talk

1. As you prepare children to transition to center time, explain that today, dramatic play is going to become the Little Red Hen's kitchen.
2. Show children the book, and ask them to explain what happens in the story. Then ask, **"What things will you need to act out the story?"**
3. After children respond, point out the things bowl, spoons and measuring cups, and bread recipe you placed in the area. Suggest that they look around in the kitchen area for other things they need.
4. Ask, **"How will you dress up to play the hen, dog, cat, and mouse?"** After children respond, say, **"I wonder how you could use a blanket for an apron, or a cape to pretend to be animal fur?"**
5. After children make center choices, visit dramatic play from time to time to see how the play is going. While some children may stick with the original story, do not be surprised if the script changes as they go, as well as the list of characters. There is no reason why a zebra or dinosaur cannot help bake the bread!
6. Children may ask if they can use the counting bears, bottle cap collection, or other loose parts as 'ingredients' as they 'cook.' Support their play to the extent possible while asking how they can be sure that the objects make it back to their containers when center time is done.
7. Observe how children interact with one another. Is one taking the lead and "directing" the others? Is anyone being left out? Without taking over the play, ask, **"Who needs some help? I think Dog is ready to help. Is that right, Dog?"**
8. Some children may lose interest and move to another center after a short while while others will stay longer. Notice how the play evolves with changing participants. If children are waiting for a turn to join, ask some who have been their longest to choose another center to make room for others.



Let's Create Our Community Cafe



Objective

Children will participate in conversations about personal experiences with goods and services and help to develop new 'goods and services' dramatic play based on recent experiences.

Relationship & Self-Management Skills

As children participate in a group conversation, they begin to use a familiar adult's prompts and suggestions to think about their past experiences in restaurants and dramatic play in the classroom.

Learning Support

Follow the Children's Lead:

Keep in mind that some children may prefer to explore and play with the materials rather than get the area ready. Interaction instead of interference will create a natural opportunity for a back-and-forth exchange related to the learning objective. For example, If a child is engaging with the materials instead of helping with the transition, you can say, "I heard you say you are going to cook breakfast. What are you going to cook and how much are you going to charge someone when they order it?"

Include Visual Support:

One hallmark of a high-quality classroom is the use of a variety of visual supports that help children understand their learning environment. Use colorful pictures, visual schedules, and role-play badges to visually define roles and sequences. Pictures can reflect other cultures and familiar foods. Visual schedules can depict the sequence of actions for each role (chef, server, customer) in a clear, step-by-step format. Badges can be pinned on aprons or hats to encourage engagement and more conversation. Encourage children to use visual cues to communicate with each other about what they need or what they are doing next.

Inclusive Practice Tip:

Collaborate with service providers, such as a Speech Language Pathologist, and family members to support children's speech and language development. For non-verbal children, ensure they have alternative ways to communicate, such as gestures, signs, or picture communication boards. For children with visual impairments, incorporate tactile materials like raised letters and Braille labels alongside visual signs and symbols. Raised lines and dots may be added to pictures by using puffy paint or glue to create an outline children can feel.

ELL/DLL Strategy:

For Dual Language Learners integrate bilingual labels and resources in the learning environment. The Community Cafe provides multiple opportunities to integrate a child's home language. Include both the child's home language and its English counterpart. Label the play equipment, and have menus in their home language along with food items that represent other cultures. Reach out to families for empty food containers of favorite food to include those.

Let's Create Our Community Cafe



Procedure & Teacher Talk

1. Invite 3 to 4 children to the center and introduce the items. **"I wonder if you would like to help transition our dramatic play center into our new theme?"**
2. Say, **"We will have a Community Cafe in our dramatic play center for the next few weeks. A cafe is a restaurant that is typically open for breakfast and lunch. What do you think we need for a community cafe?"**
3. Provide wait time, listen to answers, respond, and ask clarifying or extension questions.
4. **"Have you ever eaten breakfast or lunch at a cafe?" "What did you see people doing in the cafe? Who cooked the food? Who ate the food? Who brought the food and took the payment at the end?"**
5. Support children who have a hard time answering the questions about restaurants/cafes. **"Some of the people that work in the cafe are the chef, ho prepares the food, the server, who brings the food. The people who come to eat at the cafe are "the customers."**
6. **"How can we work together in this cafe?"**
7. Give suggestions for how children can work together if needed. Help define roles of chef, wait staff, and customers.
8. **"One person can prepare the food, cook the food, and put it on the plates."**
9. **"Another person can prepare the drinks, take the customers their food and drinks, and take the payment."**
10. **"A third person and fourth person can order food and drinks, eat the food, and pay the wait staff."**
11. Each group will do different things to get the area ready for the Community Cafe.
12. For the first group, ask, **"What do we need in the kitchen area for the chef to do their job? Once you plan and decide what is needed, how can you work together to gather the items and place them in the kitchen area?"**
13. Listen and engage with children as they work together to get the area ready for a Community Cafe.
14. Other groups can do one of the following preparations: remove items that would not belong in a cafe, prepare the dining area with the sets of dishes, make a large sign for the Community Cafe, etc.

