

ACTIVITIES FOR “THE ULTIMATE LUNCHROOM”

THEME: *What if we could reinvent the school lunchroom? What would make it nutritious, educational, an event, and part of the daily conversation?*

OBSERVATION: For one week, have the students make a list of what was served each day in the school cafeteria. Speak to the lunchroom staff to determine how the food arrived at the school: frozen, canned, processed, fresh. Note the color of the cooked foods. Write a one word description of the taste. Compare the tray on the top to the tray below. Which would you rather eat? Why? Which looks more like what your school serves? Which do you think is more nutritious? Draw a picture of your favorite lunch. Discuss which selections are healthier. Through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act the USDA is phasing in new standards for school meals to improve children’s nutrition.



THE ULTIMATE LUNCHROOM: Listen to the Tom Chapin song “The Ultimate Lunchroom.” There are ideas mentioned in the song that it might be fun to try. Would you like to pick your lunch from the garden? Would it feel like home to eat on real plates? Would you like it if yummy smells were coming out of the kitchen? What is “the culture of try”? Would you like to eat with your teachers? How about eating something different every day? Learning about the food on your plate, and where it comes from?

RAINBOW DAY: Rainbow Day was started in Boulder, CO as a way to introduce the salad bar into schools and encourage students to “eat their colors.” On Rainbow Day, students are challenged with the task of creat-



ing a “rainbow” on their tray out of the fruits and vegetables offered at the salad bar. When they have finished eating their rainbow, they receive a sticker or other small reward to encourage healthy eating habits. Students can only receive the sticker after eating everything they chose. Visit www.thelunchbox.org to download a student activity guide.

ACTIVITIES FOR “THE ULTIMATE LUNCHROOM” (continued)

KEBOB DAY: Food is always more fun to eat on a stick. Kids are more likely to eat new and different foods if they are involved in the process of



preparing the food. See if you can arrange a Kebob Day at your school. Cut up many varieties of colorful vegetables and fruits, and purchase skewers. Make bowls of various dips available. Allow the students to make their own colorful kebob snacks.



COMPOSTING: After you hold Rainbow Day or Kebob Day (but any day would work), there will be many food scraps that would normally be thrown into the garbage. This is a good time to introduce the concept of composting. Composting is the way that nature recycles. Composting reduces the amount of garbage and creates nutrient rich material for planting. Learn which items can and cannot be composted. Prepare bags contain-

ing a variety of items: cereal box, soda can, flowers, metal food container, coffee grounds, a cracker, plastic food container, old piece of foil, tea bag, magazine, dry leaves, ribbon or gift bow, egg shells, junk mail, fruit peels, plastic shopping bag, empty container of bug spray or oil-based paint, leather, tissues, glass jar, hair. Make index cards marked: Plastic, Metal, Paper, Hazardous Waste, Food, Yard Waste and Other. Ask the students to sort the items. Which can be composted? Recycled? Talk to the school administration about implementing a school-wide composting program, where kids will have a hands-on role.



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