

Students explore fruits and vegetables of a variety of colors through art, classroom lessons, and tasting opportunities.

Objective

Emphasize the importance of a varied diet and motivate students to increase their consumption of colorful fruits and vegetables.

The Event

As part of coursework or after school, students create a colorful mural using photos or drawings of fruits and vegetables. Students can incorporate these images into a rainbow, painter's palette, prism, or other creative design that highlights the many colors of fruits and vegetables. The mural can then be displayed in the school cafeteria to remind everyone to "eat their colors."

To create an interactive event, hold "Color Days" schoolwide throughout the year, where activities revolve around the colors of certain fruits and vegetables. These events can be integrated into the calendar, tying colors and fruits and vegetables to certain observances (for instance, green for St. Patrick's Day). Events can feature a tasting of the fruits and vegetables that match the designated color and theme of the day. Consider inviting students to wear clothes in the "color of the day," or challenge them to see how many fruits and vegetables of the designated color they can name or identify in a display.

Planning

Gather a group to help plan the activities. Consider involving the art teacher, school nutrition services staff, and the parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO) for coordinating the Color Day tastings and mural display. Teachers can integrate lessons about fruit and vegetable variety into their existing coursework.

Determine who should participate. These activities are especially well-suited for kindergarten and lower elementary school students. Consider whether or not to invite older elementary school students to participate in the tastings.



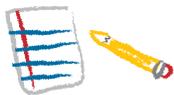
Team Up Success



School

- Encourage the school principal and other staff to contribute artwork to the mural and participate in Color Day activities with the students.
- Consider planting a school garden that will yield fruits and vegetables of a variety of colors (see page 56 for a school gardening event).
- Enter the names of staff who participate in the Color Day tasting events into a drawing for a “rainbow fruit and vegetable basket” filled with produce of every color.

Classroom



- Kindergarten teachers can use Team Nutrition’s *Discover MyPlate: Lesson 3: Eat Your Colors* (see appendix, page 94) to tie the event into educational content on the five senses, color sorting, math, reading, and more.
- First and second grade teachers can use Team Nutrition’s *Serving Up MyPlate: Level 1* curriculum (see appendix, page 94), which invites students to write a short story about a day in the life of their favorite fruit or vegetable.
- Third and fourth grade teachers can use the Detective Veggie Dice in Team Nutrition’s *The Great Garden Detective Adventure: Lesson 4* (see appendix, page 95) to teach children about eating a variety of vegetables.
- Fifth and sixth grade teachers can use Team Nutrition’s *Dig In!: Lesson 3: Healthy From the Ground Up* materials (see appendix, page 95). These materials invite classes to prepare a rainbow bean salsa and create a comic strip about how eating a colorful variety of vegetables helps you play hard.

Cafeteria



- Collaborate with your school nutrition director on how to implement the Color Day tasting activities. Ask the director to highlight colorful fruits and vegetables on the school menu.
- Display the colorful mural in the school cafeteria to remind everyone to “eat their colors.”
- School nutrition directors can offer training for school nutrition services staff on ways to offer, prepare, and present fruits and vegetables. Team Nutrition’s *Fact Sheets for Healthier School Meals* (see appendix, page 100) include handouts titled “Jazz Up Your Menu with Fruits,” “Vary Your Vegetables,” and “Serve More Dry Beans and Peas.” The *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (see appendix, page 100) can help in planning how much food to buy for the correct number of servings you will need.

Team Up for Success (cont'd)



Community

- Ask local grocery stores to donate circulars for students to use in their mural of colorful fruits and vegetables. Inquire about donations of fresh fruits and vegetables to use in tasting activities or to create rainbow fruit and vegetable baskets to use as prizes.
- Invite a local chef to demonstrate for students the preparation of colorful, healthy foods, such as the Purple Power Bean Wrap from the *Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbooks* (see appendix, page 99).



Media

- Take photos of the cafeteria mural and post them on the school's Web site or in the newsletter.



Home

- Send a letter to students' families (see appendix, page 90) explaining the activity and encouraging them to help the students bring in pictures of fruits and vegetables from fliers, magazines, or coloring books to use in their artwork.
- Send 8- to 10-year-old students home with the *Fuel up with Fruits and Veggies* activity sheet (see appendix, page 104) to further encourage them to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Create a parent handout by consulting *Tips, Advice, and Guidance for Moms of Elementary School Children* (see appendix, page 100).
- Send home colorful fruit and vegetable recipes from the *Recipes for Healthy Kids Cookbooks* (see appendix, page 99), such as the Crunchy Hawaiian Chicken Wrap, Confetti Soup, and Rainbow Rice.

Schools **IN** Action

Country View Elementary School in **Winfield, KS**, hosted an *Eat the Rainbow* event. More than 400 students and parents sampled a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables and voted on their favorite from each color group. The winning foods included cantaloupe (orange), pineapple (yellow), blackberries (blue/purple), dried cranberries (red), and kiwi (green).

Students at **Beech Bluff Elementary School** in **Jackson, TN**, drew fruits and vegetables and identified the items they drew using fun adjectives like “brain-boosting bananas” and “A+ apples.” The school held a contest to select the winning pictures, which were displayed along the cafeteria lunch line. Winning students also received goody bags that included pedometers, jump ropes, and activity books related to health and fitness.

At **Carson Elementary School** in **Cincinnati, OH**, students, staff, parents, and volunteers came together to paint a mural featuring physical activity and good nutrition. The Nutrition Council and teachers facilitated classroom nutrition activities, along with taste tests of vegetables and flavored waters (fresh lemon, orange, cucumber, and mint). During recess, Action for Healthy Kids members and volunteers led students in organized playground games.