

## EAT A RAINBOW Lesson Plan

by Martha Alexander



### Preparation and Overview

**This lesson was designed for middle school children but can easily be adapted for other grades.**

Each teacher (Garden club member) is assigned to bring in various vegetables and fruits of one color to share with students. Each teacher does research (See Resources) on the nutrients and benefits in the foods of their color. Each teacher wears the color assigned for that lesson.

Each teacher first asks what plants and veggies of a certain color the kids can think of. Then they ask if they know any benefits of these fruits and veggies. The teacher then reveals the items of that color they have brought and gives details of how they are important for our health. Then they focus one main idea for students to remember and share with others. For example, Red fruits and veggies are good for the heart.

### Supplies:

Many different colored fruits and vegetables

Bowls, spoons, forks

Large mixing bowls, serving spoons

Salad dressing

**Introduction:** By the lead teacher

Today we are going to **EAT A RAINBOW** of fruits and vegetables and learn why that is important. What does that mean, “to eat a rainbow” of fruits and vegetables? (Answers vary)

What colors are in the rainbow? ROYGBIV? (Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet)

The CDC says only 13% of Americans gets enough fruits, but only 9% of us get a sufficient amount of vegetables.

Research has shown that a colorful diet is a great way to boost your health and vitality. But how can you be sure that you're getting all the vitamins, minerals, and nutrients that your body needs to thrive? We'll show how adding color to your plate could add years to your life and life to your years!

And remember your **ABC's; Always Be Counting the** different fruits and veggies you eat. You should aim for 20-30 different ones per week.

Why is it good for the planet to eat low on the food chain? (Takes less land to grow vegetables directly than to grow vegetables and feed them to animals which also take land, and then eat the meat.)

All fruits and vegetables provide fiber for digestion and fight off cancer and heart disease. Why is fiber good? (Discuss maintaining regular digestion and elimination)

While others are talking, we slowly make up a fruit salad and set out veggies and ranch dip for students to get after they correctly give the **code**. The code is about the colors and their main effect on the body.

### **Blue and purple.**

What fruits and veggies do you know that are blue or purple? (Answers vary)

Blueberries, blackberries, grapes, beets, eggplant, some purple chard, red cabbage, plums, some carrots, figs, raisins, prunes, red onions, purple potatoes and cauliflower. Purple cabbage is a superfood and has more antioxidants than any other food per dollar. (Show them as you mention them.)

Blue and purple fruits and vegetables have been studied extensively for their **anticancer and antiaging properties**.

The phytochemicals in berries repair damage from stress and inflammation.

Who likes blueberries? The anthocyanins in blueberries (hold them up) and blue foods help with memory and the brain may help reduce the risk for heart disease, and type 2 diabetes, as well as support healthy weight maintenance and a normal inflammatory response.

Remember:

**The code they must say in order to receive their snacks is in bold below:**

**Blue and Purple is for memory and brain function.** (Point to head and have kids point to their heads, and repeat, “Blue foods are for the brain.”) Tell them that if they have an upcoming test tomorrow, they should have blueberries tonight.

**Orange and yellow are for healthy eyes and heal wounds** (Immune Sys.) (Point to the eyes along with the kids to emphasize this)

**Red fruits and veggies make a healthy heart.** Also prevents cancer, good for skin (Have kids point to their hearts and say, “Red food are good for the heart.”)

**Green** is for immunity (prevent disease) and **builds strong bones.** (Have kids say greens build strong bones as you all make a pumping fist in front of your body.

After each teacher gives the information on their color, the lead teacher should reinforce that they know the colors and main effects by working your way down the body, blue brain, orange eyes, red heart, green bones.

## **Resources**

<https://foodrevolution.org/blog/eating-the-rainbow-health-benefits/>

[https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-reb-ext\\_onelaunch&ei=UTF-8&hsimp=yhs-ext\\_onelaunch&hspart=reb&p=Eat+a+rainbow+for+children&type=0\\_1023\\_102\\_1098\\_110\\_240\\_403#id=1&vid=a1efb038580076dec05f1995de7caeea&action=click](https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-reb-ext_onelaunch&ei=UTF-8&hsimp=yhs-ext_onelaunch&hspart=reb&p=Eat+a+rainbow+for+children&type=0_1023_102_1098_110_240_403#id=1&vid=a1efb038580076dec05f1995de7caeea&action=click)

PCRM.org/kids <https://www.pcrm.org/news/blog/eat-rainbow>