Nutritional project in our English Classroom


Title: Nutritional project in our English Classroom.

Abstract
Taking into account the results in the latest nutritional investigations, with Spain in head of the list of countries with more children’s obesity; our School promotes the acquisition of healthy daily habits. That’s why it is essential to put into practice different programmes and out-of-school activities that will encourage students to have a healthy life; encouraging also the practice of sports in students’ free time. As it is so important in our students’ life, we have created this NUTRITIONAL PROJECT that will be developed through our English area, and coordinated with the Primary Education Teacher.

Keywords: Healthy habits in primary education, Nutritional project, English lessons, healthy life

Título: Proyecto Nutricional desde el área de inglés.

Resumen
Consideramos la Educación Nutricional como un aspecto imprescindible en la educación integral de nuestros alumnos, ayudando a desarrollar hábitos saludables que los ayuden a llevar una vida más sana, enfatizando la práctica del deporte y la importancia de seguir una alimentación sana. Se presenta este pequeño proyecto con una serie de actividades dirigidas a alumnos de 1º y 2º de primaria (aunque pueden ser adaptadas a niveles superiores) que pueden ayudar a que colaboremos a ello desde el aula de inglés.

Palabras clave: Educación nutricional, Didáctica de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, vida sana.

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PRESENTATION

Taking into account the results in the latest nutritional investigations, with Spain in head of the list of countries with more children’s obesity; our School promotes the acquisition of healthy daily habits. That’s why it is essential to put into practice different programmes and out-of-school activities that will encourage students to have a healthy life; encouraging also the practice of sports in students’ free time.

Nutrition problems have become serious issues in present-day society. Obesity, the most common nutritional problem in Western societies affecting not only adults but also children and adolescents, has been defined by the World Health Organization as a disease.

Moreover, eating disorders like binge eating, anorexia and bulimia nervosa are spreading fast, especially among the younger generations.

It should be our duty to help our students develop good habits in health behaviours, and show them which food is good for their health and which is not. And, as it is so important in our students’ life, we have created this NUTRITIONAL PROJECT that will be developed through our English area, and coordinated with the Primary Education Teacher.

There are many do’s Children must know from the very beginning to help them discover which food helps them to grow healthy. Throughout this project children will realise the importance of assuming more responsibility for their own food choices. They will learn that it is important to eat nutritious food to have lot of energy for playing and learning. If children learn to choose food wisely, they will enjoy the benefits of healthy habits for the rest of their lives.

ACTIVITIES

To develop this project we will create a friendly and motivating atmosphere in class, so as to promote real communication among students. They can sit on the floor in a more relaxed way, as most of the activities require cooperative work and interaction among students. Although we cannot forget an important setting: the playground, where students can move freely and play outdoor games.
First, we will work on the nutritional pyramid. The nutritional pyramid may help us choose a variety of nutrients and a healthy diet. According to scientific research, our daily diet should include the food at the bottom and distribute the consumption of the rest of the food at the top of the pyramid. This way, we are supposed to consume daily: bread, pasta and cereals. Then we should eat a variety of vegetables and fruit and some food of animal and vegetable origin, such as milk, meat and eggs. Sweets and food containing fat at the top of the structure should be rationalised, in few times a month.

Now, we propose an attractive activity to introduce young learners to the concept of the food pyramid and to recognise the different food groups. It will help them understand the importance of a balanced diet to keep healthy. The different colours and shapes of the puzzle pieces will help them to work out their correct place. We can either have the children work on the floor or fix the pyramid to a wall.

a. With students arranged in groups, we will give them a puzzle piece. A student from each group will put the puzzle piece in the corresponding place. As they do so, we can ask them for the name of the food in their piece. Once the puzzle is completed, students say which food they like and which food they don't like.

b. Later on, we can explain that the pyramid shows how much we should eat of each food. It's an opportunity to introduce students to two new concepts: “a lot” and “a little”. Then, while we are naming the food items displayed on the pyramid one by one, students will tell us how much we should eat them, using the new quantity expressions.

c. Once the pyramid is complete, we can also play a guessing game. We describe one of the food pieces on the pyramid (its colour, shape, size...) for students to guess which one we are thinking about.

d. Now, it’s time to foster students’ creativity and act as if they were cooks. They will draw pictures with their ideal meal, taking into account the food pyramid.

Within this type of activities, we can practice and introduce different language items, such as:

1. **food vocabulary:** cereals group (bread, crackers, pasta, rice); vegetable group (tomato, carrot, lettuce); fruit group (strawberry, apple, orange); daily products (milk, yoghurt); meat (chicken, burger, fish); and sweets (chocolate, sweets)

2. **the meals** (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

3. **the colours**

4. **shapes** (circle, square, triangle)

5. **sizes** (big, small)

6. **quantity** (a lot, a little)

7. **habits** (I eat...I don't eat...every day)

**Healthy game.** Here we have another motivating activity. We will go to the playground to play a game dealing with healthy and unhealthy food. We will need chalks of different colours, a big die and flashcards dealing with food.

We will draw a track on the floor, and divide it into squares. Then, students will decide which squares should have a pick-up-a-card sign on them. They can decide what the sign should be and draw it using chalks. When the track is ready, they can start the game. They throw the big die in turns and move along the track. If they land on a pick-up-a-card sign they must take one of the flashcards. If that flashcard shows a picture of healthy food, they can move forwards one square; but, if it shows a picture of unhealthy food, they have to move one place backwards. The winner of the game will be the first group to reach the end of the track.

**We are little cooks!** After learning about the benefits of healthy food, and of fruit especially, we are ready for a healthy recipe: fruit salad. We will encourage students to use all the vocabulary they have learnt like the names of the fruits and colours, and prepare delicious salads with different fruits and vegetables (that must be prepared previously). They are little cooks so they will wear a white paper cook hat and apron. When they finish, they will share and taste the salads from their partners and we will give them a cook.