Title: A Mixed Bag of Nutrition

Life Skill Area: Acquiring, Analyzing and Using Information

LIFE SKILLS TAUGHT
Safe food handling
Nutrition, the Food Guide Pyramid
Geography
Acquiring, Analyzing and Using Information
Problem Solving and Decision Making
Working with Others

MATERIALS NEEDED
1. Food Guide Pyramid poster
2. Political map of the United States
3. Large bowl and spoon
4. Snack size zippy bags
5. Dried fruit: raisins, apples, apricots, plums, etc., cut into bite-size pieces
6. Nuts/peanuts/seeds: dry roasted peanuts, sunflower seeds, mixed nuts; roasted soybeans
7. Cereal/grains: small pretzels, bite-size cereal (ready-to-eat, not too sweet)
8. Optional but fun: small colorful candies such as mini M&M’s for baking, Skittles, yogurt raisins, red hots

PROCEDURES
1. Have bags or containers of food open before children arrive.
2. Wash and dry hands for food safety.
3. Have children take turns dumping ingredients into large bowl; gently stir with spoon to combine all.
4. Display all containers as reminders of what goes into a healthful snack. One at a time, hold up each bag/container. Ask children what was in each bag and where that item would fit into the Food Guide Pyramid.
5. Briefly talk about each item’s production. Examples: Raisins are dried grapes that are grown in California; Sunflowers are grown in Kansas, producing seeds that contain sunflower seed kernels; M&M’s have chocolate from the cocoa bean in South America, sugar from
sugar cane in Hawaii. Place a star on each state on the map as locations are identified.

6. Allow each child to fill his/her zippy bag from the large bowl using a spoon.

DISCUSSION
Safe food handling habits are vital for good health, as is eating a well-balanced diet. It is important to consume the appropriate number of servings from each food group each day. The goal is to be healthy and feel good. Different areas of our country and world are suitable for producing different types of crops. We are very fortunate to have available a wide variety of foods at our supermarkets. This availability requires much effort, from growing and processing the crops to transporting and selling them.

HOME ACTIVITY
Check food packaging to learn where foods are grown/processed; make a list of state and countries named. Make Food Guide Pyramid checklist or chart; keep track of all foods consumed for a week to compare to the recommended number of servings.