TEAFCS - Building Bridges: Connecting Families and Communities

August 14-16, 2013

Focused Program Sharing

Presented by Amy Ressler
Montgomery County, District 9

“Chef Plate and Professor BLT Make a Healthy Pizza”
A fun, energized skit to teach basic nutrition to elementary age children

Background:
This skit was originally developed by Dee Dee Mathews, retired BLT Extension Assistant in Brazos County. We first used it at the Brazos County Pizza Ranch for the nutrition “slice” (station/session during the rotation of educational presentations for the day). Dee Dee played the Chef and Amy played the host/educator (this is the character we later started calling “Professor BLT”). After DeeDee retired, a new EA-BLT took on the Chef character, but after a few years, she resigned. A Health Educator from the local health department agreed to help but wasn’t comfortable with the “crazy” chef part, so Amy started doing that part.

One year, after a small church school from Burleson County came to the Pizza Ranch, the director asked Amy to present the skit to the entire school with the kids who had been to the Pizza Ranch. The kids took turns with the host/educator part and Amy played the crazy chef, making sure to emphasize important nutrition messages. This experience was a great “full-circle” learning activity for the kids who learned it, then helped teach it. This is also another example of how one professional educator can use the skit with one or more volunteers.

When Amy moved to Montgomery County and started working with an amazing BLT-PA, Lora Jorgensen, they revised the skit to update and define specifically targeted messages. They used the skit at the county fair and at local school events. The host/educator became “Professor Lora” then Professor BLT”. This created an excellent way to tie in BLT concepts and general BLT program promotion. We are working on expanding the characters to teach information about individual food groups more in-depth with a series of sessions. We anticipate using the skits at the local Parks and Recreation afterschool and summer programs.

This skit generally takes 15-20 minutes to present. It can be sped up or slowed down to meet time demands. It works really well for short, high energy presentations like an Ag-awareness days (such as Pizza Ranch) or school field days. We usually do several presentations back-to-back, as part of a rotation schedule where the children are also participating in other activities.

Set up:
-Work table for Chef (one or two 6 or 8 ft. tables) covered with plastic, with a cutting board on the table, and a cooler with food (see list below) on one side, and box of “tricks” (see below) on the other side.

-Presentation table for Professor with an easel and “MyPlate” poster, food models (if possible) on the table to use for examples of serving sizes.
-Floor covered with plastic (or in an area where food on the floor will not cause a problem)

-Dressing up makes the skit all the more fun. If possible Chef is dressed crazy and fun with bright colors, mismatched pieces, painted on freckles and/or clown like make-up. A chef’s hat and coat or apron are also good costuming (and protects Chef from the mess). The Professor might wear a lab coat and glasses to present an “academic” look.

Supplies needed:
Chef’s table:
-Floor protection or “splat mat” of some kind
-plastic table cloth
-cutting board
-large butcher knife
-large mallet
-box of random toys and items (“tricks”) like food-shaped toys, rubber chicken, rubber cow, soft/rubber balls, Frisbee, other colorful toys, etc.
-cooler of food

Food items needed (Unfortunately the food is disposed of after the presentation because it really is not edible, food safety is a concern, etc., but this one presentation can teach very large groups of children all at once. One set of these food items can be used for several presentations)
*Pizza dough (like jiffy mix…prepared but left in dough stage, one box can be used over and over for several presentations in one day)
*Pre-cooked pizza crust, preferably whole wheat…package can be used for the whole grain label reading discussion, one crust can be reused for several presentations if you just dump the top)
*Cabbage (whole head— can be used for one up to about 3 to 4 presentations)
*Tomato (large, whole) to be used for one up to about 3 to 4 presentations
*Green Pepper (large, to whole be used for one up to about 3 to 4 presentations)
*Mushrooms (several large, whole, 4-5 for each presentation)
*Pineapple (canned, rings, 2 rings per presentation, most cans have 8 rings)
*Cheese (low fat, shredded, 8 oz bag for each presentation, or one extra-large bag for several presentations)
*Turkey pepperoni (sliced- a few slices for each presentation, one bag with last for 5-6 presentations)

Professor’s table:
-Large graphic for MyPlate, preferably with pieces that can stick on with velcro to “build” the MyPlate, or call attention to each section, as each group is discussed
-Food models to show serving sizes, some on a 9-inch plate arranged like MyPlate
-Packaging from a whole grain product (preferably the pizza crust)
-Program identifier signs (Extension and BLT)
-MyPlate handouts and a recipe for a pizza that really is healthy, for kids to take home
-CD player, boom box, iPod player…something to play peppy music as kids come in and at the end.

THE Presentation:
Below is a rough outline of how the conversation between Chef and Professor would go. However, as we have presented the skit several times we have developed a flexible routine that is very improvisational within this script as a loose outline. Each time we present, we adapt to the audience, the time we have to present, and what we actually remember to say through the fast-paced presentation. We also have been able to hone the nutrition messages based on immediate and follow-up feedback.
As children arrive the Professor welcomes the children and asks them to sit down at least a few feet from the table. If possible Chef is hidden from view, but peeking out every once in a while, then reacting in surprise if she catches an eye.

**Professor: (Introduction)**

Welcome to the MyPlate Show, boys and girls! Today we want to share some great news with you about good nutrition. Have any of you seen this before (holds up a graphic of MyPlate)? This is an example of how to eat healthy. It’s brought to us by USDA. My name is Professor BLT and I love to teach people about eating well and making the most of the money they spend on food. BLT stands for Better Living for Texans and it is a nutrition program that helps people who don’t have a lot of money to spend.

And, I am very pleased to have a very special guest to help me today, but she’s kinda shy. So please give her some encouragement and help me welcome (said a lot like a TV announcer) Cheeeeeefffff Plaaate! (leads the children in applause)

(after some applause Chef Plate jumps out excitedly, she waves hello…Acts kinda crazy/goofy tells the kids how great and smart they look … looks for and asks professor about her knife)

Ok, everybody, I gotta warn you. Chef Plate gets a little crazy with the knife, so we all have to promise we will not use a knife like she does. We will be safe when we use knives at home!

(Professor gives Chef the knife…Chef imitates some ninja moves, complete with sound effects, and acts like she in meditation to “become one with the knife”)

Well, let’s get started talking about “MyPlate”. MyPlate is a guide for healthy eating that we get from the United States Department of Agriculture, also known as USDA. They suggest guidelines based on solid research and are required by law to review and update the information every 5 years. Recently, “MyPlate” replaced the old “MyPyramid”. Some of the messages are the same, but are even better now because they use a plate as a visual guide. So, Chef Plate is going to help us learn about my plate by helping us build a healthy pizza.

(Chef says some stuff about the importance of being healthy and eating healthy, occasionally singing and dancing as she talks about how much she loves nutrition and how much she has learned from Professor BLT)

This picture (MyPlate) gives you a good idea of how much of your plate each food group would take. But, remember this is based on a 9 inch plate (a 9 inch plate with food models that mimic the MyPlate visual is good to show the group)
(Chef might make a comment about how big the plate looks in the picture then starts singing “I like big plates and I cannot lie” but then agrees that it looks like a lot of food on that 9 inch plate, so that’s ok with her….Chef then initiates the transition to the parts of the MyPlate by saying how much she likes color and wants to talk about the colors on the poster starting with that orange one

Professor (Grains)
Okay! The first food group we will talk about is the Grains group. It is represented by the orange part of this picture, and you'll notice that it takes up about one-fourth of the plate. Grain foods are things like pasta, rice, cereal and bread. In general, people need about 6 ounces every day. One slice of bread is like one ounce. With this group it is important to try to make at least half of your grains whole grains. (She uses an empty package of a whole wheat food [whole wheat pizza crust, maybe?] to point out how important it is to read the label)

(Chef says some stuff about whole grains: tells the kids that are way too smart to be fooled by manufacturers, reminds them look for the word “whole… W-H-O-L-E…on the label ….just because it’s brown doesn’t mean is whole grain”)

What part of the pizza do you think is part of the grains group?

(Chef “makes” pizza crust…Professor plays along… Chef talks about how her mama taught her to make old fashion pizza crust…she pulls out some pre-made pizza dough and tries to throw it up in the air in a circular motion like a “real” pizza chef… tries a few times, unsuccessfully, while saying how great the pizza crust will be, then suddenly stops and tells the professor that one of the kids are getting away…professor looks away…Chef hides the dough and replaces it with a pre-made crust and continues to throw it up in the air in a circular motion, acting like she never missed a beat and as if the professor missed something when she looked away…then moves the conversation quickly to the green part of MyPlate, and wants to talk about the vegetable group)

Professor (Vegetables)
The next group Chef Plate wants to show us is the vegetable group. It is represented by the green part of the plate and it takes up a little more than one-fourth of the plate. In general people need about 2 ½ cups a day. One cup of raw or cooked vegetables or 2 cups of leafy salad greens equals a serving. Eat more red, orange, and dark green vegetables like broccoli, carrots, and salads to get more vitamins.

(Chef sings about how much she loves colorful vegetables)

What kind of vegetables can we put on our pizza?
(Professor takes suggestions from audience)

(Chef raises her hand while fidgeting excitedly and asks to put her favorite vegetable on the pizza…pulls out the cabbage….chops it wildly appearing to get a little crazy with the knife…. she talks about cabbage being a cruciferous vegetables and is thought to prevent some types of cancer, and that she doesn’t want to get sick because “ain’t nobody got time for that”)

(Professor again tells the audience to be careful with their knives at home)

What other vegetables do we need? What about some tomato pizza sauce?

(Chef looks through her box of tricks, throws a few things out randomly, then acts sad, because she doesn’t have any pizza sauce, but then gets excited because she thinks of an idea to make pizza sauce…she pulls out a tomato and “makes” pizza sauce by chopping it once or twice, then smashing it with a rubber mallet to make it “saucy”. At the same time she talks about how colors in vegetables are like vitamins in vegetables, and vitamin A & C are really good for you and lycopene is awesome, etc., she loves the color red)

We need more colors…what other vegetables can we put on the pizza?

(Chef adds additional vegetables….green pepper, you can smell the vitamins…white mushrooms, hard to get vitamin D and B vitamins… and says some more stuff about how great vegetables are…how beautiful it is to have lots of color… piles everything on the crust…says she wants more color and ask Professor to tell her about the red part of MyPlate)

Professor (Fruits)
Next we need to add some fruit. Fruits and vegetables together should take up half of your plate. In general, people need about 2 cups of fruit every day. One whole medium size fruit, like a banana, apple, or orange, is equal to one cup size serving. Fruits are represented by the red part of the MyPlate icon and takes up a little less than one-fourth of the plate.

What kind of fruit can we put on the pizza?

(Professor takes suggestions from audience…pineapple usually comes up)

(Chef throws more things randomly from the box of tricks, maybe a toy pineapple, then finds some real pineapple in her cooler…takes out two pineapple rings and holds them up to her eyes and peeks through the middle, like they are glasses, and says something like “I can see how sweet fruit is…kind of like nature’s dessert”… chops and
possibly smashes the pineapple…adds pineapple to the pizza and says stuff about the vitamins in fruit and great things about fruit)

**Professor (Dairy)**

Now we need to add some dairy food. It is represented by the blue circle to the side of the plate. Dairy foods are things like milk, yogurt and cheese. In general, people need about 3 cups a day. So, one cup of skim or low fat milk, or 1 ½ ounces of cheese equals a serving. Remember it is important to make low fat and fat free choice with this group.

What part of the pizza is from the dairy group?

*(Professor takes suggestions from audience…chef wants yogurt, but agrees to cheese and asks again how many servings are needed, then gets excited and tries to put all three cups on the pizza. Professors stops her)*

Remember that because it doesn’t take as much cheese to make a serving, you just need to put a little bit on the pizza to keep it healthy.

*(Chef sprinkles just a little bit…Professor tells her she can put more than that…Chef sprinkles a little more, Professor tells her she can add more…she sprinkles again…then Chef suddenly tries to put the whole bag on the pizza, but stops short of “too much”…very proud of herself, chef says some stuff about how calcium helps makes strong bones and teeth…professor smiles and moves on calmly)*

**Professor (Protein)**

Finally, we have the Protein group. It is represented by the purple section and takes up about one-fourth of the plate. Protein includes food like meat, chicken, and fish, as well as nuts, seeds, dry beans, and eggs. In general, people need about 5 ½ ounces each day and lean choices are the best options. Again, lean and low-fat choices are best in this group. For an idea of how to tell how many ounces are in a protein food, think about a hamburger patty being the size of the palm of a woman’s hand, or a chicken breast about the size of a deck of cards.

What kind of protein food will go on our pizza?

*(Professor takes suggestions from the audience as Chef pulls out random items from her box…rubber chicken that squeaks…rubber cow that squeaks…. she finds the pepperoni [preferably turkey pepperoni with a “less fat” logo on the package so Chef can ask if that’s a good thing and Professor can reiterate the importance of cutting fat from the diet]…then Chef says some stuff about “cutting the fat” [chops the pepperoni*
slices like crazy] and talks about how protein builds strong muscles and lean chicken and beef are awesome…flexes her muscles and makes an intense face)

(Chef asks how they are going to remember all this stuff. Professor tells them about the website to find just how much food each student needs to eat, has the students repeat it a few times: www.choosemyplate.gov)

Professor (Physical Activity and conclusion)
(Chef exclaims with excitement, maybe even becoming emotional and teary-eyed and tells everyone that her pizza is the most beautiful thing ever…. and recaps each of food groups and why they are good for you… talks about how she wishes she could eat the whole thing but it has so many calories)

It is important to balance the calories with physical activity. Pick activities that you like to do and do it for at least 10 minutes to add up to a total of 60 minutes every day. What kind of activities do you like to do?

(Professor takes suggestions… Chef imitates as many exercises as she can…then will say that everyone needs to get some physical activity right now…and we need to come up with an idea.)

***I have idea. We can have a party to celebrate what we’ve learned about nutrition, and the best part of a party is dancing! All you need is music. Let’s dance!

(Chef talks over Professor saying basically the same thing and acting like it was her idea…They play peppy music and ask the kids to dance their way to the next place they need to be, waving goodbye to them as they exit)

***Alternative ending using army cadence:
I have an idea, we can be a MyPlate army and we could march over to the next station.

(Chef talks over Professor saying basically the same thing and acting like it was her idea)
To your feet soldiers, repeat after me:
(said in cadence- like rythym)
We eat healthy every day (repeat)
We like to eat the MyPlate way (repeat)
Grains, veggies, fruit,… dairy, protein (repeat)
We’ll be the strongest you’ve ever seen (repeat)
Sound off 1, 2; Sound off 3, 4
(Students march to the next station)

…THE END…
Thank you notes from 3rd grade students (edited slightly for understandability):

From Macy:
To: Chef Plate & Professor Lora
Thanks for telling us to eat more whole grains and my favorite part was the fruits. Thanks Chef & Professor Lora! Love Macy. And I learned more about protein thanks for helping me. And I thought about Chef’s favorite color so I wrote in orange.

From Armando
Thank you for coming to our school today. You’re funny. I like the part when Chef Plate thought up the vegetables, ha ha, it was funny! Thank you for coming.

Bailey:
Chef Plate & Professor Lora:
Thank you for coming a lot. My favorite part was when we did exercises.

From Sandra
Thanks! I learned you can use math and science while cooking. I also learned you can put a veg on a pizza. Thank you Prof, Lora, Chef Plate for coming.

Dear Chef Plate & Prof. Lora,
Thank you for coming out today and for telling me what grains were.
Love, Christa
P.S. My favorite is Vegetables.

From Angel Cruz
To: Chef Plate & Professor Lora
What I learn was about that we all talk about was that protein and other things and learned to make a pizza and thank you for coming.

Thank you!
Thank you for coming Chef Plate and Professor Lora. My class and I really appreciate you coming to our school and showing us how to make the pizza. I wish I could learn more.

Dear Chef Plate & Professor Lora,
Thank you for coming and telling us what dairy, protein, vegetables, grains and fruits was. My favorite part was when Chef Plate started to cut up the food and put it on the pizza crust.
    A large Thank You!
    From: Catie

Kristina:
I Love you!
Dear Chef Plate & Professor Lora.
I want to thank you for coming to our school. I really enjoyed your show. I really love the part when I learned about my plate and you can put fruits, vegetables. You both ROCK!

Charles B.
Thank you for teaching me a lot more about how to choose my plate. I like the part that Chef Plate chopped up the vegetables. I’ve learned that there’s a certain amount to put on your plate.
Dear Chef Plate & Professor Lora,
Thank you for coming to teach us about nutrition. I didn’t that you could put all the 5 food groups on something delicious. I loved it when were acting all silly.
   A Gigantic Thank You!
   Emily

Bradlee McKenzie
Dear: Professor Lora and Chef Plate
Thank you so much for coming to see us and my favorite part of the show is the whole grain part. I loved that part.

Dear Chef Plate, and Professor Lora.
Thank you for coming out to Porter Elimentry. My favorite part the knife. What I lernd is that I didn’t not know you can put fruits on pizza. So thank you for coming.
   From: Jason

Emily
Dear Chef Plate & Professor Lora
Thank you for coming to teach us about nutrition you made me giggle a lot. I also learned a lot about how your plate is soppose to look like. I’m going to tell my parents about it, thank you!

Dear Ms. Plate:
Thank you for using ur day to come see us. My favorite part was when you said “HEY Kid's getting away”! Soon she looked and you switched it with the crust. I thought you were really funny Ms. Plate. Professor Lora you were very funny to! I thought you guys were the best. I also like the part when you got the knife you were acting like a ninja. You were the best funny people, Awesome people! You guys were the best!
   From: Mackenzie

Angel Marie:
Chef Plate & Professor Lora
I really like how you made a heathy plate for me to learn I really like the part when you put all the good thang that you put on the pizza and I learn that you have to do exsirses 60 mins like a hour per day. I want to thank you for what you did to change my life with a lot of good food for me.
   Thank you!

Dear Chef Plate & Professor Lora
Thank you for coming and for helping us undersanding the food groups! I never know that you had to work-out for 60 mins-1 hour to keep fit!
   Professor Lora you are so great profscon and thank you! You desever to be a professor.
   Chef Plate you are so colorful and bring and I love how WILD!
   Can’t wait to tell my mom about this crazy thing called my plate and then to make that pizza.
   Taylor, 4th
   (the really tall girl in the back)