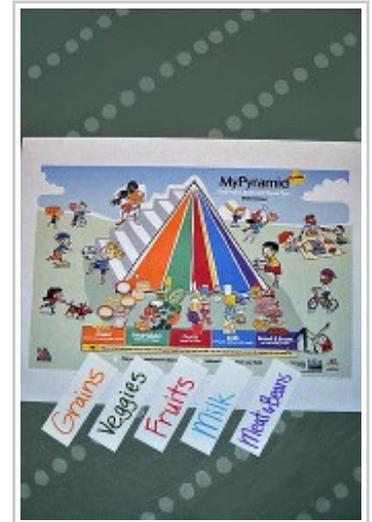


Label the Food Groups

First graders work on reading just about every single day in school, but they'll make their very best progress if they also get a chance to practice at home. Here's a way to build reading vocabulary and literacy while also boosting their nutritional knowledge with this easy and fun at-home science activity!

What You Need:

- Copy of the USDA food pyramid (try downloading from MyPyramid.gov or do a Google image search).
- Large size white envelope labels (available at any office supply store)
- Markers in colors that correspond to the pyramid
- Small Gold Stars
- Small Green Stars



What to Do:

1. Sit down with your first grader and read the food pyramid together. The pyramid shows headings and pictures for each food group. Ask her if she recognizes any words, and check to see which ones she's most familiar with.
2. Now have your child copy the names of each major category onto a label that matches the color of the category on the pyramid (for example, red for fruits, orange for grains, green for vegetables, etc).
3. Open your fridge and invite your child to browse through the food. Ask her to match the foods she sees with the food groups you just discussed. Allow her to be a scientist, identifying what she sees and even moving it around in order to separate foods by category.
4. Then pull out those labels and have her mark each major food group by area: dairy, meats, vegetables, fruits, and so on. If you have two drawers full of vegetables and fruit, have her make two labels.
5. Next time you make a meal, have her "read" the fridge for you by asking her to identify all the food groups you're using.
6. While you're cooking, request that your first grader make a menu. Compile her menus in a book, and urge your child to comment on the cuisine by using the star stickers. Every menu should end up with two sets of colored stars at the top. Three gold stars means that your first grader thinks that the meal tastes good, and three green stars means that it's very nutritious, too.