

New CookShop Curriculum sets the table with MyPlate

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by Zac Hall

For this school year, the Food Bank's CookShop Classroom for Elementary School curriculum is getting a fresh new makeover!

We always strive to improve our hands-on CookShop nutrition education program so that the more than 30,000 participating New York City children, teens and adults get the best possible education about how to cook and eat healthfully.

Our new [CookShop Classroom for Elementary School](#) curriculum focuses on integrating nutrition and food exploration into everyday, routine activities for children – if kids talk and think about new foods and food choices on a daily basis, it gets easier to keep thinking about and making healthy choices.

First things first: Where does food come from? Our new curriculum starts at the farm, so that children know exactly where their food comes from before it lands in a supermarket aisle or their refrigerator. Students also discuss common food sources in New York City (like farmers markets, grocery stores and bodegas) so they can make healthful food choices anywhere they find food.

This year's curriculum will also focus on school meals, using the foods that kids are already familiar with in the school setting as an extra learning tool. . Students will identify the healthy foods on their breakfast and lunch plates, discuss their farm roots and learn about their nutritional benefits, so that their everyday food experiences become learning experiences.

Speaking of plates: Our new curriculum stars the USDA's new nutrition icon, MyPlate. MyPlate encourages people to think about building a healthy plate at meal times. Each educational unit of CookShop features one MyPlate food group: fruit, vegetables, whole grains, legumes (and other plant proteins) and low-fat dairy products. The best part: after learning about these foods' benefits, the kids prepare and taste delicious and nutritious recipes with them. Yum!

We are excited to start reaching a new wave of New Yorkers with our message of healthy cooking and eating! Check back throughout the year for first-hand stories from our students, teachers and Food Bank staff.