



How To Make Nutrition Come Alive! 8 Strategies to Engage Children VIRTUALLY!

1. Lights, Camera, Action!

Check the sound, lighting, camera, and make sure your clothes and background are not distracting. Most importantly – look directly into the camera so your audience will feel that you are speaking to each and every one of them! Even the slightest movement of your eyes away from the camera will distance you from your audience. Put a post-it or label near the camera lens to remind you where to look!

2. Welcome Your Audience – Invite Participation

If possible, have a second person to help introduce you and take care of any technical issues. Tell your audience exactly what is expected of them – that you want them to participate! Muting their mics but keeping their cameras on will help further engage your audience.

3. Ask Questions

You can use the features of chat, raise hands, polls, etc, but we found that having these functions on while presenting, was distracting for us and for the audience. Instead, just verbally asking questions and responding to children’s answers, even if you don’t really hear them, works well to encourage participation throughout your program. In between sections or at the end, it’s great to offer a Q+A session, where children can type their questions into the “chat” with a teacher’s help. Your moderator can help field the questions for you.

3. Show Don’t Tell

Make the best use of this visual medium by showing, not telling! Use pictures, props, images, and physical demonstrations instead of being just another “talking head”. Invite participants to show and tell, such as have a scavenger hunt where kids choose something from their own environment to share. Ex: “Show us your favorite fruit” or “Bring back a snack food and read the ingredient label to us”.

4. Get Up, Stand Up, Move Your Body!

Integrate physical activity breaks every five minutes or so. They could be dance breaks, shake-it-out breaks, or a fun body movement connected to a lesson to help kids remember even more!

5. Invite Kids on Screen – Have a Game Show!

There’s nothing that many kids like more than to have their few minutes of fame, and they love seeing each other on the screen! Use the “spotlight” feature on Zoom to showcase each speaker, contestant, or classroom. Create a game show with your lessons, have a snack contest, or do a fun take-off of a popular TV show. Zoom looks just like “Hollywood Squares” if you’re old enough to remember!

6. Bring in Your Special Skills – Have Fun!

Bring your passion into your presentation and onto the screen! If you sew, make a fun hat or costume. Sing, rap, spoken word, do it! Like to draw – create fun visuals. Like to cook – bring it on! Kids want to have fun while they learn! And, with food, there’s so many ways to make good eating great fun!

7. Extend the Learning in School and At Home

Follow up whatever you do on screen with activity sheets or handouts to help children improve their habits in class or at home. Just post the links to materials in the Chat. Use your presentation as a “trigger film” to get kids interested and use printables to extend the learning.

As an example, here’s a link to our [ToBe Fit Activity Bits](#)

- just print, cut out the cards, put in a container, and whenever kids are bored or want to take a break, reach in a pull out a card and do what it says!

8. Be Authentic – Show the Love!

The more you are yourself on camera, the more kids will relate to you*. When presenting, you can pretend you are talking to one particular child or group of children, imagine that they are physically there, right in front of you. Tell kids a bit about yourself, why you’re here, why you care.

Facts don’t necessarily change behavior, but feelings do. That’s why we love theater as an educational medium – because theater sideswipes the rational and gets to the heart and soul of a person –where decisions about health are often made. As you present, try to connect your heart with the hearts and minds of the children out there, they’ll feel you better when you show them the love!

*It helps if you can, to take a few minutes before presenting to get “present” by stretching, taking deep breaths, or meditating!

For more examples, check out “Sneak Previews” of some of our virtual programs:

[ToBe Fit, The Juggling Nutrition Magician Show - LIVESTREAM](#)

[Janey Junkfood’s Fresh Adventure! Video Story Book](#)

[FOODPLAY’s Online Nutrition Learning Package](#)

[Creativity Boot Camp: How To Make Nutrition Come Alive!](#)

Feel free to contact me with questions:

Barbara Storper, MS, RD

Executive Director, FoodPlay Productions

www.foodplay.com

Barbara@foodplay.com

413-247-5400