

Lesson Plan: Health Hero Training Academy

Materials Needed

- Paper (several sheets)
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Child-safe scissors
- Glue stick
- Pictures of various foods (healthy and unhealthy). You can print these from the internet, cut them from magazines, or draw them. Examples: apple, banana, broccoli, carrot, fish, candy, chips, soda, cookies. (About 15-20 pictures total)
- Two containers or marked areas on the floor/table (e.g., two baskets, two circles drawn on paper).
- A paper plate
- Pillows, blankets, and chairs for building a small fort
- Optional: A small bell or chime
- Optional: A pre-made "Health Hero Certificate" to fill out

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- **Identify** and sort foods into "healthy" (Go Foods) and "less healthy" (Slow Foods) categories.
- **Demonstrate** several simple, fun physical exercises.
- **Explain** in their own words why rest and sleep are important for staying healthy.

Curriculum Alignment

This lesson aligns with early childhood health and wellness standards, focusing on:

- **Health Promotion:** Understanding that personal choices (food, exercise, rest) affect health.
- **Physical Development:** Developing gross motor skills through movement activities.
- **Scientific Inquiry:** Classifying objects (foods) based on their properties (healthy vs. unhealthy).

Lesson Activities

Introduction: Welcome to the Academy! (5 minutes)

1. **Engage:** Start by saying, "Welcome, new recruit, to the Health Hero Training Academy! A Health Hero is someone who has super strength, super energy, and a super brain. But they don't get their powers from magic—they get them from taking great care of their bodies! Today, we are going to complete three missions to earn our official Health Hero title."
2. **Connect:** Ask the student, "What do you think a hero needs to be strong and healthy?" Guide the conversation toward three key areas: eating good food, moving our bodies, and getting enough rest.

Mission 1: Fuel The Hero - The Food Sort (10-15 minutes)

1. **Instruction:** Lay out the food pictures. Label one container or area "Go Foods" (foods that give us energy to play and learn) and the other "Slow Foods" (foods that are okay sometimes, but too many will slow our bodies down).
2. **Activity:** Explain the difference. "Go Foods are like fuel for a superhero's jetpack! They help us run, jump, and think. Slow Foods are like sticky mud; a little is okay, but too much makes it hard for our bodies to move and feel good."
3. **Application:** Have the student pick up one food picture at a time. Ask, "Is this a Go Food that will give our hero energy, or a Slow Food that we should only have as a special treat?" Let them place the picture in the correct container. Discuss their choices gently. For example, "Yes, broccoli is a Go Food! It has vitamins that help our bodies fight off germs." or "You're right, cookies are a Slow Food. They are delicious but have a lot of sugar that doesn't give us long-lasting energy."

Mission 2: Move The Hero - Animal Power Moves (10 minutes)

1. **Transition:** "Great work, recruit! Now that our hero is fueled up with Go Foods, it's time to train our muscles. Let's learn some Animal Power Moves to get strong!"
2. **Activity & Engagement:** Call out different animals and have the student perform a corresponding movement. Encourage creativity and big movements.
 - **Frog Jumps:** Squat down low and leap forward.
 - **Bear Crawls:** Walk on hands and feet.
 - **Crab Walk:** Sit down, place hands and feet on the floor, lift hips, and walk sideways.
 - **Cheetah Run:** Run in place as fast as you can.
 - **Giraffe Stretch:** Stand on tiptoes and stretch arms as high as possible to reach the leaves on a tall tree.
3. **Discussion:** After a few minutes, ask, "How does your body feel? Do you feel your heart beating faster? That's your body getting stronger!"

Mission 3: Recharge The Hero - Building a Sleep Fort (15 minutes)

1. **Transition:** "Wow, what a workout! Every Health Hero knows that after using all that energy, they must recharge. The best way to recharge our bodies and brains is with sleep. Our final mission is to create the perfect recharging station: a Sleep Fort!"
2. **Creative Activity:** Use pillows, blankets, and chairs to build a small, cozy den. This hands-on task makes the concept of rest tangible and fun.
3. **Instruction & Assessment:** Once inside the fort, talk in a calm voice. Ask, "Why is it important for a Health Hero to rest and sleep?" Listen to their ideas and add simple explanations: "That's right! When we sleep, our brains sort all the things we learned, our muscles repair themselves and get stronger, and our bodies get ready for a new day of adventures."

Conclusion: Graduation Ceremony (5-10 minutes)

1. **Review & Creation:** Emerge from the fort. Give the student a paper plate and crayons. Say, "As your final test, create a Health Hero meal on this plate. Draw at least three 'Go Foods' that you would eat to get your energy."
2. **Assessment:** Have the student present their plate and explain why they chose those foods. This serves as a summative check of their understanding.
3. **Celebration:** Declare that they have passed all the missions. "Congratulations! You have learned how to fuel, move, and recharge your body. You are now an official Health Hero!" Present them with their "Health Hero Certificate" (if using) and give them a round of applause.

Differentiation

- **For Extra Support:**
 - During the food sort, start with only 4-5 very distinct cards (e.g., apple vs. candy bar) before adding more.
 - Verbally prompt the movements for the animal exercises and do them together.
 - Provide stencils or pre-drawn food shapes for the paper plate activity.
- **For an Extra Challenge:**
 - Ask the student to explain *why* a food is a "Go Food" (e.g., "Milk has calcium for strong bones.").
 - Have the student invent their own "Power Move" and name it.
 - Expand the final activity by having them plan a full day's menu for a Health Hero, including breakfast, lunch, and dinner.