Mainstreaming Integrated Assessment Models by embedding behavioural change and actor heterogeneity, and increasing their outreach to citizens, communities and industrial actor

CHOICE Food Explorers
Course 2: How can we choose food well?
Educator guide and speaker notes

Funded by
the European Union

Sustainable food choices · for children aged 8–12 · guides: Leon (Austria) and Eleni (Greece)

First draft, 29 October 2026 · CHOICE project (Horizon Europe, GA 101081617), Task 7.3

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1. The course at a glance

Item	Course 2
Big question	How can we choose food well?
Age and group	Children aged 8–12; a class of about 24, working in pairs or 6 groups of 4.
Duration	Core lesson: 45 minutes. Extended version: 3 lessons of 45 minutes, within one or two weeks.
Guides	Leon (Vienna, Austria) and Eleni (Athens, Greece).
Linked CHOICE pilots	Austria: climate footprint information for shoppers. Greece: green labels in an online grocery shop.
Three key messages	Eat the rainbow. Choose seasonal and local. Look for small footprints.
What you need (core)	Projector and the deck; class-made food cards and plates (activity 2A) and planet label cards and mats (2C), made in an earlier lesson or as homework; a quarter A4 sheet per child for the mission card (“Made by class” activity X3). Each child’s Explorer Passport (“Made by class” activity X1).
Extra for the extended version	Two paper plates and a split pin per child (2B); paper for stall signs, product cards and play money, bags or baskets (2D); the course video.
How the slides work	20 picture-led slides, with one think-pair-share question in each section. Orange “Stop and do” slides are activities; in the core lesson, skip the ones marked Extended.

Before the lesson

- Read the speaker notes and decide whether you will read them aloud or tell the story in your own words.
- Make sure the food cards and plates (2A) and the planet label cards and mats (2C) are ready, or plan 5 extra minutes for each.
- Remind children to bring their Course 1 mission card for the mission check.
- Write the mission text on the board (“Made by class” activity X3).
- Extended version: collect paper plates and split pins, and write your country’s seasonal list on a sheet.
- Have the children’s Explorer Passports ready (from Course 1); they fill in the Course 2 page at the recap.

2. Learning objectives

By the end of the course, children can:

- explain that food choices affect both their health and the planet, and name people who influence these choices;
- describe a balanced, colourful plate with the main food groups;
- explain what seasonal and local food is and why it is often a good choice;
- explain that foods have different climate footprints, and that beans, lentils and most other plant foods have small ones;
- describe how planet labels in the Austrian and Greek CHOICE pilots help shoppers;
- make one planet-smart food choice with their family (mission).

In the extended version, children also:

- make a seasons wheel for their own country;
- use season, origin, planet label and price to make and explain choices in a role-play.

3. Core lesson plan (45 minutes)

The core lesson uses all 20 slides and the two Core activities. The video is not part of the 45 minutes: show it at the start of the next lesson or share it with families.

Minutes	Slides	What happens	Materials
0–4	1–2	Welcome; meet Leon and Eleni; mission check from Course 1.	Course 1 mission cards
4–9	3–5	Section 1, What is a food choice?; think-pair-share on slide 5.	–
9–14	6–8	Section 2, Healthy food: the right fuel, the food group team, eat the rainbow.	–
14–21	Stop and do A	**Build-a-plate** (Core): pairs build a balanced, colourful lunch plate.	Class-made plates and food cards
21–23	9	Think-pair-share: how many colours were on your plate?	–
23–28	10–13	Section 3, Seasonal and local; think-pair-share on slide 13.	–
28–32	14–16	Section 4, Planet-smart choices: food footprints, protein heroes, planet labels.	–
32–39	Stop and do C	**Planet label sort** (Core): sort food cards into green, yellow and orange.	Class-made cards and mats
39–41	17–18	Think-pair-share: design a planet label; four smart choices.	–
41–45	19–20	Recap of the three key messages; mission “Planet-smart choice”; children fold their mission card and copy the title; they finish it at home. Children fill in their passport page (1 min).	Quarter A4 sheets, Explorer Passports

If you run short of time: keep the mission check to two children, and shorten the think-pair-share on slides 13 and 17 to “turn and tell your partner” (30 seconds each).

4. Extended version (3 × 45 minutes)

The extended version adds the video, the seasons wheel and the market stall role-play. The three lessons can be on any days within one or two weeks.

Lesson 1 – Food choices and healthy food

Minutes	Slides	What happens	Materials
0–4	Video	Show the Course 2 video as an opener. Ask: what did you notice?	Video
4–8	1–2	Welcome; meet the guides; mission check from Course 1.	Course 1 mission cards
8–14	3–5	What is a food choice?; think-pair-share.	–
14–20	6–8	The right fuel; the food group team; eat the rainbow.	–
20–32	Stop and do A	**Build-a-plate**: make the plates and food cards, then build a lunch plate.	Paper plates, blank cards, pencils
32–35	9	Think-pair-share: how many colours were on your plate?	–
35–45	Stop and do C	Make the planet label cards and mats (activity 2C, part 1) for Lesson 3. Do not give the answers yet.	Blank cards, coloured paper

Lesson 2 – Seasonal and local

Minutes	Slides	What happens	Materials
0–3	–	Quick recap: what are the three food choices we talked about?	–
3–9	10–11	Every food has its season; strawberries in December?	Deck
9–31	Stop and do B	**My seasons wheel**: each child makes a wheel for their country and turns it to today.	2 paper plates and a split pin per child
31–34	12	Local food.	–
34–36	13	Think-pair-share: what is in season here right now? (use the wheels)	Seasons wheels
36–45	Stop and do D	Prepare the market: stall teams make signs and product cards (season and origin); shoppers make play money.	Blank cards, paper

Lesson 3 – Planet-smart choices

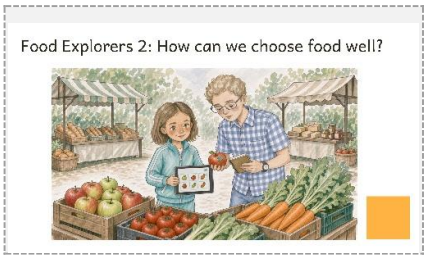
Minutes	Slides	What happens	Materials
0–6	14–16	Food footprints; protein heroes; planet labels.	Deck

Minutes	Slides	What happens	Materials
6–13	Stop and do C	**Planet label sort**: sort the cards made in Lesson 1 and check with the key.	Class-made cards and mats
13–17	17–18	Think-pair-share: design a planet label; four smart choices.	–
17–20	Stop and do D	Stall teams add a planet colour dot to each product card.	Product cards
20–38	Stop and do D	**Market stall role-play**: two rounds with a role swap; shoppers explain their choices.	Stalls, play money, mission slips
38–41	19	Recap: read the three key messages together. Fill in the passport page and sign or “stamp” it.	Explorer Passports
41–45	20	Mission “Planet-smart choice”; children make their mission card (activity X3). Suggest watching the video again at home.	Quarter A4 sheets

5. Speaker notes for every slide

Each slide has the slide picture on the left and the notes on the right. **SAY** is a script you can read aloud or retell in your own words. **ASK** gives questions for the class, **DO** tells you what to do, and **NOTE** is background for you, not for reading aloud. Times are for the core lesson. Orange rows are “Stop and do” activities; full instructions are in the “Made by class” instructions.

Opening



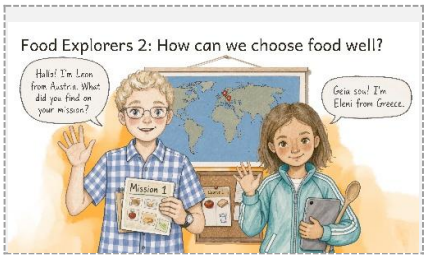
Text on slide:

Food Explorers 2: How can we choose food well?

Slide 1 · Title

⏱ Core: 1 min

SAY Welcome back, Food Explorers! In the first course we discovered where our food comes from. Today we find out how to choose food that is good for us and good for our planet. Two new friends will guide us today.



Text on slide:

Hallo! I’m Leon from Austria. Geia sou! I’m Eleni from Greece.

Slide 2 · Meet the guides + mission check

⏱ Core: 3 min

SAY Leon lives in Vienna, the capital of Austria. He is a real label detective: in the shop he reads every label. Eleni lives in Athens, in Greece. She helps her dad order the family’s groceries online and loves cooking. In both countries, the CHOICE project works with shops that show shoppers how their food choices affect the climate.

DO Mission check: ask who brought their mission card from Course 1, and hear two or three foods.

ASK Where did your foods come from? Which travelled the furthest?

Section 1 – What is a food choice?

Text on slide:

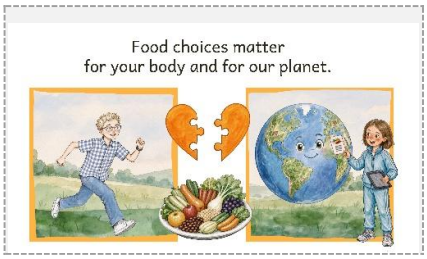
Every day you make many food choices.

Slide 3 · Choices every day

⏱ Core: 1½ min

ASK What did you have for breakfast this morning? Who decided what was on the table?

SAY Partly your parents or carers, but in many ways you too! Every day we all make food choices: what to eat for breakfast, what to pick at lunch, whether to grab an apple or a biscuit as a snack. These decisions may feel small, but they matter a lot.



Text on slide:

Food choices matter for your body and for our planet.

Slide 4 · Good for you, good for the planet

⏱ Core: 1½ min

SAY Food choices affect our health: some foods give us energy, help us concentrate and make our muscles strong. They also affect the planet. Growing, transporting and packaging food use energy and resources, and some foods need much more water, land and fuel than others. Think of every meal as a small vote. Making better choices does not mean giving up the foods you love. It means being a little more curious and discovering new foods you might love even more.

Text on slide:

What food choice did you make today? Who helped you choose?

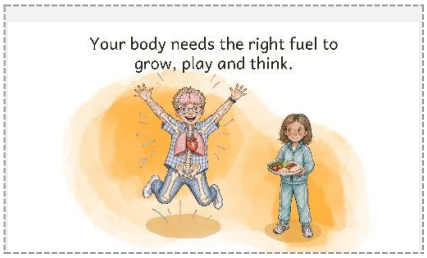
Slide 5 · Think, pair, share

⏱ Core: 2 min · Think-pair-share

DO Think alone (30 seconds), talk with your partner (1 minute), then hear 2–3 pairs. Listen for the people who influence choices: parents, school cooks, friends, adverts, shops.

SAY Children can influence what their family chooses too, by asking questions and suggesting ideas.

Section 2 – Healthy food



Text on slide:

Your body needs the right fuel to grow, play and think.

Slide 6 · The right fuel

⏱ Core: 1½ min

SAY Your body is amazing. Right now, without you even thinking about it, your heart is beating, your lungs are breathing, your brain is taking in everything around you and your bones are slowly growing. All of that takes energy, and that energy comes from food. Like a car, your body needs the right fuel, and it works best with the right mix of foods.

Text on slide:

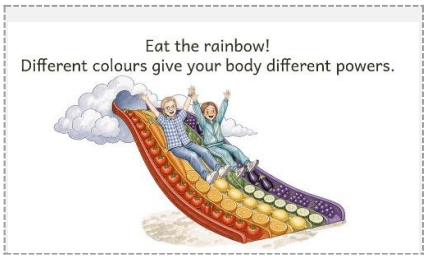
Each food group has a job. Together they make a team.

Slide 7 · The food group team

⏱ Core: 2 min

SAY Fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamins and minerals that help protect us from illness. Grains like bread, rice and oats give us energy. Proteins help our muscles grow and repair: we find them in eggs, beans, lentils, nuts, fish and meat. Dairy foods like milk, yoghurt and cheese help build strong bones and teeth. No single food contains everything the body needs. The key is variety.

NOTE *Talk about "everyday foods" and "sometimes foods". Avoid calling any food good or bad, and avoid any talk about body weight.*



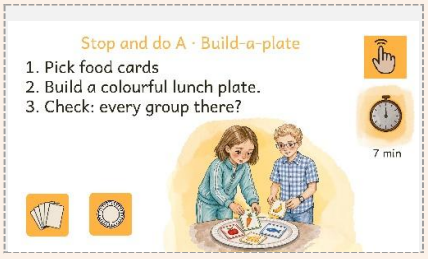
Text on slide:

Eat the rainbow! Different colours give your body different powers.

Slide 8 · Eat the rainbow

⏱ Core: 1½ min

SAY Every colour on your plate is like a different superpower. Eating many colours, textures and flavours is the best way to stay healthy and full of energy. In Austria and Greece there are many tasty, healthy foods to explore: fresh Greek vegetables and olive oil, hearty Austrian breads and dairy products. Healthy eating can also be delicious eating!



Steps on slide:

1. Pick food cards. 2. Build a colourful lunch plate. 3. Check: every group there?

Stop and do A · Build-a-plate

⏱ Core · 7 min (+5 min if the cards are made in class)

DO Pairs use their class-made plate (half fruit and vegetables, a quarter grains, a quarter protein, a glass for a drink or dairy) and food cards to build a lunch they would like to eat. They check that every part is filled and count the colours.

NOTE *Any balanced plate is correct. Level 2 (planet colours) works best after activity 2C. The plate model is our own drawing, not a copy of a national plate graphic. Full instructions: activity 2A.*

Text on slide:

How many colours were on your plate yesterday?

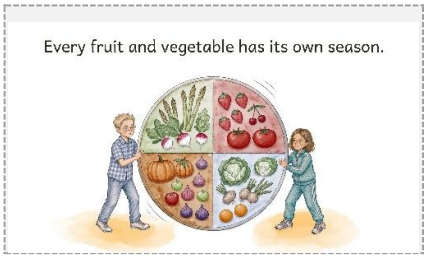
Slide 9 · Think, pair, share

⏱ Core: 2 min · Think-pair-share

DO Think, pair, share.

NOTE *Keep it light. Some children may not remember, or may have had a simple meal, and that is fine. Ask instead: which colour could you easily add tomorrow?*

Section 3 – Seasonal and local



Text on slide:

Every fruit and vegetable has its own season.

Slide 10 · Every food has its season

⏱ Core: 1½ min

SAY Some fruits and vegetables taste amazing at certain times of the year and a bit dull at others. That is called seasonality. Every fruit and vegetable has its natural season, when it grows best and tastes best. Strawberries love late spring and summer, pumpkins are best in autumn, and cabbages and root vegetables do well in winter. In Austria that might mean cherries in summer and apples in autumn; in Greece, fresh figs in August or oranges in winter.

Text on slide:

Strawberries in winter travel far or grow in heated greenhouses.

Slide 11 · Strawberries in December?

⏱ Core: 1½ min

SAY Food eaten in season grows at its own pace in the right weather. It is usually tastier and often cheaper, because there is plenty of it. Strawberries in December often come from far away, sometimes by plane, or they grow in a heated greenhouse that uses a lot of energy. Both add greenhouse gases. Eating seasonal food means working with nature, not against it.

Steps on slide:

1. Cut out your wheel. 2. Colour the foods. 3. Turn it to today!

Stop and do B · My seasons wheel

⏱ Extended · 25 min

DO Each child makes a seasons wheel from two paper plates: the bottom plate shows the four seasons with 3–4 foods each (from the list on the board); the top plate has a window cut out. A split pin holds them together. Turn the window to today's season.

NOTE *An adult pushes in the split pins. Children take the wheel home to use when shopping with their family. Full instructions and seasonal lists for each pilot country: activity 2B.*

Text on slide:

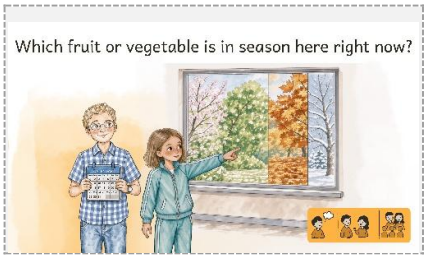
Local food is fresh and helps farmers near you.

Slide 12 · Local food

⏱ Core: 1 min

SAY Imagine two apples on a market stall. One travelled 5 kilometres from a nearby orchard, the other 5,000 kilometres from another continent. Local food is grown close to where you live. It is often fresher, and it supports local farmers, so the money stays in the region and local food traditions stay alive. Choosing local when you can is a simple, good choice.

NOTE *For most foods, transport is a small part of the climate footprint. How food travels matters more than how far: food flown by plane has a much bigger footprint than food carried by ship or truck. What we eat matters most (section 4).*



Text on slide:

Which fruit or vegetable is in season here right now?

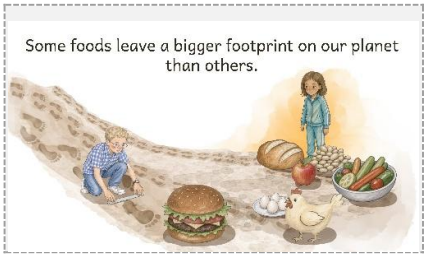
Slide 13 · Think, pair, share

⏱ Core: 1 min · Think-pair-share

DO Think, pair, share. Help with the seasonal list if children are unsure.

ASK Where could you buy it? At a market, in a shop, or from someone's garden?

Section 4 – Planet-smart choices



Text on slide:

Some foods leave a bigger footprint on our planet than others.

Slide 14 · Food footprints

⏱ Core: 1½ min

SAY Every food leaves a kind of footprint on the planet: the gases, land and water needed to produce it. Most plant foods, such as grains, fruit, vegetables and beans, have small footprints. Foods from animals usually have bigger ones, and beef the biggest, because cows need a lot of land and food and they release methane. This does not mean we must never eat meat. Even small changes, like eating plant foods a bit more often, help the climate.

NOTE *Avoid telling children what their family should or should not eat. Respect religious, cultural and medical diets.*

Text on slide:

Beans, lentils and chickpeas: protein heroes with a small footprint!

Slide 15 · Protein heroes

⏱ Core: 1 min

SAY Remember the protein team? Beans, lentils and chickpeas give our muscles protein, just like meat and eggs, and they have a much smaller footprint. They are also cheap and keep for a long time in the cupboard. In Greece, bean soup (fasolada) and lentil soup are traditional dishes. In Austria, lentils are part of many home-cooked meals.

ASK Which bean or lentil dishes do you know from home?

Text on slide:

In Austria and Greece, planet labels help shoppers choose.

Slide 16 · Planet labels

⏱ Core: 1½ min

SAY In Austria and Greece, the CHOICE project works with shops to help people see the footprint of their food. In Austria, more than a thousand shoppers can see the climate footprint of the products in their basket. In Greece, an online grocery shop marks foods with a smaller footprint with a green label, and customers can follow their own score over time. Scientists test which labels help people choose most easily. It is a bit like a traffic light for the planet. Leon says: “Now I can be a label detective in the shop!”

Steps on slide:

1. Take the food cards. 2. Sort: green, yellow, orange. 3. Check with the key!

Stop and do C · Planet label sort

⏱ Core · 7 min (+5 min if the cards are made in class)

DO Groups guess the footprint of 12 class-made food cards and place them on green (small), yellow (medium) and orange (bigger) mats. Read the answer key; groups move cards and talk about surprises.

NOTE *Green: lentils, beans, potatoes, apples, carrots, bread. Yellow: milk, eggs, rice, chicken. Orange: cheese, beef. Values are simplified from open data (Our World in Data, CC BY 4.0). Level 2: design your own planet label. Full instructions: activity 2C.*

Text on slide:

If you designed a planet label, what would it show?

Slide 17 · Think, pair, share

⏱ Core: 1 min · Think-pair-share

DO Think, pair, share. Ideas to listen for: colours, pictures, numbers, words like “in season” or “grown nearby”.

SAY Real scientists and shops ask the same question: which label helps people most?

Text on slide:

Four smart choices: seasonal, local, more plants, no waste.

Slide 18 · Four smart choices

⏱ Core: 1 min

SAY We have learned a lot today. Healthy eating means variety. Seasonal food tastes better and needs less energy. Local food supports farmers. More plant foods mean a smaller footprint. And one more: don’t waste food. Around one third of all food is never eaten, and that is the topic of our last course. Can a child really make a difference? Yes! You can ask questions, suggest ideas at home and choose when you can.

Steps on slide:

1. Get your role card. 2. Shop for your mission. 3. Explain your choices!

Stop and do D · Market stall role-play

⏱ Extended · 35 min (15 to make, 20 to play)

DO Four stall teams sell product cards that show season, origin, a planet colour dot and a price in play money. Shopper pairs draw a mission slip, such as “make a summer salad for four” or “plan a winter lunch with a small footprint”. After 10 minutes, swap roles. At the end, shoppers explain their choices in one sentence.

NOTE *There is no single right basket. Use invented product names only, no real brands. Full instructions and the six missions: activity 2D.*

Close

Text on slide:

Eat the rainbow. Choose seasonal and local. Look for small footprints.

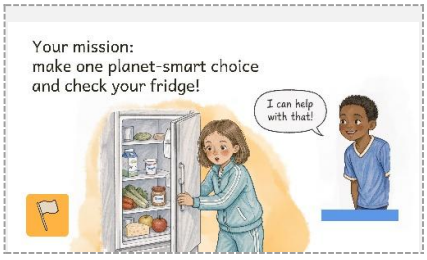
Slide 19 · What we learned

⏱ Core: 2 min

DO Read the three messages aloud together, pointing at each icon.

SAY Eat the rainbow: variety keeps us healthy. Choose seasonal and local when you can. Look for small footprints: more plant foods are good for the planet. The planet does not need a few people doing everything perfectly. It needs millions of people doing small things thoughtfully, and you are one of them.

DO Children fill in the Course 2 page of their Explorer Passport: draw the three icons and write one thing they learned. Sign the page or add a sticker as the “stamp” (“Made by class” activity X1).



Text on slide:

Your mission: make one planet-smart choice and check your fridge!

Slide 20 · Your mission

⏱ Core: 2 min

DO Children fold a mission card and copy the mission from the board (“Made by class” activity X3); they finish it at home.

SAY Your mission has two parts. First, with your family, choose one planet-smart food: something in season, something local, or a bean or lentil dish. Second, be a fridge detective: look for food that has been forgotten at the back of the fridge, and draw what you find. Bring your card to the next course, where our friend Sipho from South Africa will show us why no food should go to waste.

6. Background facts and sensitive topics

Short facts for the teacher, to answer questions and to go a little deeper with older children. They are not meant to be read aloud.

Background facts

Topic	What to know
Healthy eating (slides 6–9)	A balanced meal combines fruit and vegetables, grains, protein foods and dairy (or alternatives), with water as the main drink. The plate used in this course (half fruit and vegetables, a quarter grains, a quarter protein) is a simple teaching model, not an official national guide. Different colours in fruit and vegetables come from different natural substances, so a colourful plate usually means a wider mix of vitamins and minerals.
Seasonal and local food (slides 10–13)	Seasonal food is grown outdoors in its natural season. Out of season, it is either imported from warmer places or grown in heated greenhouses, both of which use more energy. For most foods, transport is only a small part of the climate footprint. Food flown by plane is the exception: air freight has a much bigger footprint than ship or truck transport. Seasons differ between pilot countries: in South Africa they are the other way round, and Colombia has dry and rainy seasons instead of four seasons.
Food footprints (slides 14–15)	A food's climate footprint is usually measured in kilograms of greenhouse gases (as CO_2 equivalents) per kilogram of food, from the farm to the shop. According to Our World in Data (based on Poore and Nemecek, 2018), beef has by far the largest footprint per kilogram, followed by lamb and cheese. Beans, lentils, peas, grains, potatoes, fruit and vegetables have small footprints. Beans, lentils and chickpeas (pulses) are rich in protein and fibre, and the plants add nitrogen to the soil, so farmers need less fertiliser.
CHOICE pilots in Austria and Greece (slide 16)	Austria: CHOICE tests how showing the climate footprint of products to shoppers in a large retail chain changes what they buy. More than a thousand shoppers take part. Greece: an online grocery shop marks products with a smaller footprint with a green label, and customers can follow their own score over time. In both pilots, researchers compare different labels and messages to find out which ones help people choose most easily.

Sensitive topics

Topic	How to handle it
Body image and weight	Never talk about body weight, calories or dieting, and never comment on a child's body or lunchbox. Use "everyday foods" and "sometimes foods". Avoid calling any food good, bad or junk.

Topic	How to handle it
Family diets and budgets	Children rarely buy food themselves, so keep the messages about noticing, asking and suggesting, never about judging what families eat. Respect religious, cultural, vegetarian and medical diets. When talking about meat and footprints, never suggest that families who eat meat are doing something wrong. Some families have little money for food. Do not ask children what they ate in front of the class, and make sure the mission can be done with any food, including cheap ones such as beans, lentils or seasonal vegetables.
Food allergies	The activities use cards only. If you add real food tasting, check allergies and dietary rules with parents first.
Brands, shops and money	Use invented product names in all activities; do not promote real brands or shops. In the market stall role-play, use play money only and keep prices pretend. Do not compare what different families can afford.

Sources: Our World in Data, “Environmental impacts of food production” (CC BY 4.0), based on Poore and Nemecek (2018), Science; CHOICE D6.1 Pilot description.

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Choice

Mainstreaming Integrated Assessment Models by embedding behavioural change and actor heterogeneity, and increasing their outreach to citizens, communities and industrial actors

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