Food Group Sorting Cards

Ages 4–9 · Name: _____

How to use

Before playing, draw a picture of each food in the box on its card. An adult or older buddy can draw for younger children. Children can draw the food any way they picture it.

For children who can't read yet, an adult reads each card's name and hint aloud. Children can point to the zone or pile, or answer with a drawing instead of words.

Print both pages. An adult cuts the cards apart (or older kids cut with child-safe scissors).

Sort the cards onto the Food Group Sorting Mat, or into six piles: Vegetables, Fruits, Protein Foods, Dairy, Whole Grains and Healthy Fats.

Some foods fit in two groups. If a child can explain their choice, count it.

Apple Crunchy, red, green or yellow	**Bok choy** Leafy green with white stems	**Oatmeal** Warm breakfast bowl
Eggs Scrambled, boiled or fried	**Yogurt** Thick and creamy, made from milk	**Avocado** Green inside, big pit
Black beans Small, shiny and dark	**Mango** Sweet and orange inside	**Popcorn** Popped corn kernels (not for children under 4)
Tofu Soft white blocks made from soybeans	**Carrots** Orange root	**Milk** Pour it in a cup

Peanut butter Spread it thin	**Tomato** Red and juicy, with seeds inside	**Raisins** Dried grapes
Whole-wheat tortilla Wrap it around beans	**Fish** Swims, has fins	**Olives** Small, green or black
Paneer A fresh cheese used in Indian cooking	**Lentils** Tiny and flat, many colors	**Chickpeas** Round beans used to make hummus
Quinoa Tiny seeds, cooked like rice	**Broccoli** Looks like little trees	**Sunflower seeds** From a giant yellow flower

These are picture cards, not food. If you add real foods to the game, ask families about allergies first and wash hands. For children under about 4, skip whole nuts and seeds, popcorn, raisins, raw carrot sticks and thick spoonfuls of nut butter, and cut food into pieces no larger than ½ inch (American Academy of Pediatrics; CDC).

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Answer key — Food Group Sorting Cards

Food	Group(s)
Apple	Fruits
Bok choy	Vegetables
Oatmeal	Whole Grains
Eggs	Protein Foods
Yogurt	Dairy
Avocado	Healthy Fats
Black beans	Vegetables or Protein Foods
Mango	Fruits
Popcorn	Whole Grains
Tofu	Protein Foods
Carrots	Vegetables
Milk	Dairy

Food	Group(s)
Peanut butter	Protein Foods or Healthy Fats
Tomato	Vegetables
Raisins	Fruits
Whole-wheat tortilla	Whole Grains
Fish	Protein Foods
Olives	Healthy Fats
Paneer	Dairy
Lentils	Vegetables or Protein Foods
Chickpeas	Vegetables or Protein Foods
Quinoa	Whole Grains
Broccoli	Vegetables

Food	Group(s)
Sunflower seeds	Protein Foods or Healthy Fats

Beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas are listed with vegetables and with protein foods. Nuts, seeds and nut butters are protein foods and also a whole-food source of healthy fats. Either answer is correct. Tomatoes are cooked and eaten as vegetables, but a botanist calls them fruits; count either answer if a child explains it. Avocados and olives are fruits to a botanist, but the 2025–2030 guidelines name them as healthy-fat foods. If a child says 'fruit' and explains why, count it.