**HOW TO USE SUPERHEROES TO ENCOURAGE KIDS**

**INTO HEALTHIER EATING**

We know dieticians, nutritionists and psychologists recommend that kids should eat healthy, and the sooner the better; but catching kids early is up to the parents... and it is a challenge! If kids are our future, then today’s obesity rate and unhealthy eating habits need to be addressed inside and outside of a child’s home.

Adults need to focus on helping kids develop healthy eating habits at an early age so they can adopt good food habits as they grow older. If Superman can leap tall buildings in a single bound and Batman and Robin can protect us from villains, then think about this recent study. A study revealed the “Elmo effect” which demonstrated how using superheroes as “branding tactics” to sell junk food and other sugary products, if reversed, can also be used to promote healthy eating for kids in a fun way.

Superheroes, cartoon characters and even villains mesmerize kids… so how did the Elmo effect study work? For this study, kids were given the option to eat a cookie or an apple. The apples had Elmo stickers on them and the study found that Elmo got more kids to choose the apples over the cookies! This offers parents a powerful insight into the psychology of kids and how they are influenced. The Elmo effect was a huge success and showed how cartoon characters, mascots and superheroes can encourage kids and promote healthy eating.

Using this proven psychology, author Althea Sinclair created *The Magical Plate* digital book series with a primary focus to promote healthy eating for kids at an early age. *The Magical Plate* uses super food characters like *Fruity*, *Veggie* and *Unhealthy* to invite kids to join them as “Super Food Heroes.” Fruity and Veggie embark upon adventurous journeys to make sure kids are eating well, and to help a little boy named Unhealthy, to eat his fruits and vegetables.

While parents are reading the book to their kids, they are asked by some of the book’s characters to show Unhealthy the fruits and vegetables they have put on their own Magical Plate. This interactive activity with the book’s super heroes helps them to develop healthy eating habits. Kids will become “Super Food Heroes” if they can convince Unhealthy to eat fruits and vegetables. Kids are then encouraged to see if they can protect Unhealthy from the story’s villain, “Junk Food.”

If parents can use creative ways to engage kids into connecting healthy eating to superheroes, the battle for getting them to eat fruits and vegetables could be over.

Althea Sinclair

The Magical Plate

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**The Magical Plate Book Bio**

The Magical Plate is an E-book series where kids get to become a super food hero by joining “Fruity” and “Veggie” along with The Magical Plate. This fun book will take kids on a mystical journey. They help Fruity and Veggie with a mission of encouraging kids to begin eating their fruits and vegetables at an early age. Armed with The Magical Plate they enlist a group of garden friends to help a little boy named “Unhealthy,” who doesn’t want to eat his fruits or vegetables. But once Fruity and Veggie finally convince Unhealthy to eat better, is it possible that their mission might have a major setback? Will The Magical Plate reveal that Unhealthy has been tricked by “Junk Food,” the story’s villain? Only the kids who eat their fruits and vegetables will get to find out.

**The Authors Bio**

Althea Sinclair is a freelance author and poet, with a special interest in creating children’s books.  Growing up Althea enjoyed eating tasty foods that were mostly unhealthy choices, and as an adult she constantly battled weight and health issues.  Now Althea enjoys advocating for parents to teach kids about eating healthy at an early age, before they develop bad food habits. It has become her calling and passion to help kids and parents experience the benefits of healthy eating through *The Magical Plate* E-book series.

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