Ms. Rodriguez read an article to her class about Michelle Obama’s Nutrition Campaign. The article says that students need to eat more vegetables and salads and fewer high-calorie foods. The campaign wants school cafeterias to eliminate ’tato tots and sodas from the menu.

Ms. Rodriguez: I think Michelle Obama’s campaign message is really good. She’s a mother like me and wants to protect the health of her children. I can’t stop my kids from eating ’tato tots at school, but I feed them healthy food for breakfast and dinner. I think it matters what you do at home. What do you think, Erin?

Erin: I don’t think eliminating ’tato tots and sodas from school lunches will help. Kids who like those foods will just eat them after school. If people are so worried about our health, they should make sure we exercise every day. We need fresh air and time to play!

Kayla: Exercise every day is a good idea too, but nutrition is really important. The campaign to stop schools from selling stuff that’s bad for us could help lots of kids who don’t eat healthy foods after school or at home. School breakfast and lunch could be the most important meals kids eat all day!

Erin: Kids will just stop getting the school lunch if it’s full of vegetables. Then they won’t eat anything at lunchtime! It’s not an effective way to get kids to eat healthy food! Kids love ’tato tots!

Kayla: Everyone knows ’tato tots have a lot of fat and salt. They aren’t nutritious. They are okay once in a while as a treat, but schools shouldn’t be serving us food that makes us put on weight or is unhealthy for us.

Erin: Who are these people anyway? Why are they messing with our lunches? I love ’tato tots. They are the only good thing the cafeteria serves.

Kayla: These people are doctors and nutritionists and parents who want to make sure American kids stay healthy.

Reader’s Theater continues on the next page.
Who should decide what we eat?

8 Erin: Doctors and nutritionists can keep their opinions to themselves. I really love ‘tato tots.

9 Kayla: You should show people who are experts more respect. Besides, we can see how much you love ‘tato tots.

10 Erin: Wait a minute: Are you saying I’m gaining weight?

11 Kayla: Well, you don’t really fit into those jeans anymore! I think you’ve eaten too many ‘tato tots.

12 Erin: Wow, that was really mean. You talk about respect but you don’t practice it.

Discussion questions:

If Erin and Kayla were to come to our school, what would they need to learn to be responsible members of our class?

Do you think ‘tato tots should be taken off the menu? Why or why not?
Day 2

Characters’ Perspectives

Ms. Rodriguez, Erin, and Kayla

Who should decide what we eat?

Directions: With a partner, talk about each statement and decide which one describes each character’s perspective. Find and highlight evidence from the Reader’s Theater text to support your answer. Then, in your own words, write Ms. Rodriguez’s perspective.

What does Erin think?

☐ Erin agrees with the campaign’s message about eliminating unhealthy foods in school.

☐ Erin thinks that nutrition is more important than exercise.

☐ Erin thinks that kids won’t eat anything if they get only vegetables.

What does Kayla think?

☐ Kayla thinks that ‘tato tots are good for you.

☐ Kayla thinks that ‘tato tots are junk food.

☐ Kayla would like to get soda and ‘tato tots off the school menu.

What do supporters of the campaign think?

☐ They are worried about unhealthy school lunches.

☐ They want to eliminate ‘tato tots but not soda.

☐ They are only worried about exercise, not school lunches.

What does Ms. Rodriguez think?

How do you know?

What do you think?

So what happened with Erin and Kayla?

Erin and Kayla started out discussing an important issue – the national Nutrition Campaign. They were having a good argument about the campaign, each expressing her own perspective and listening to her friend. A good argument is an argument in which people focus on their disagreements and try to learn from each other. They might end up agreeing or not, but at least they end up understanding each other’s perspective.

At some point, Erin and Kayla’s discussion turned into a bad argument – one that might threaten their friendship! A bad argument is one in which people stop trying to explain their thinking and even say things that might hurt each other.