

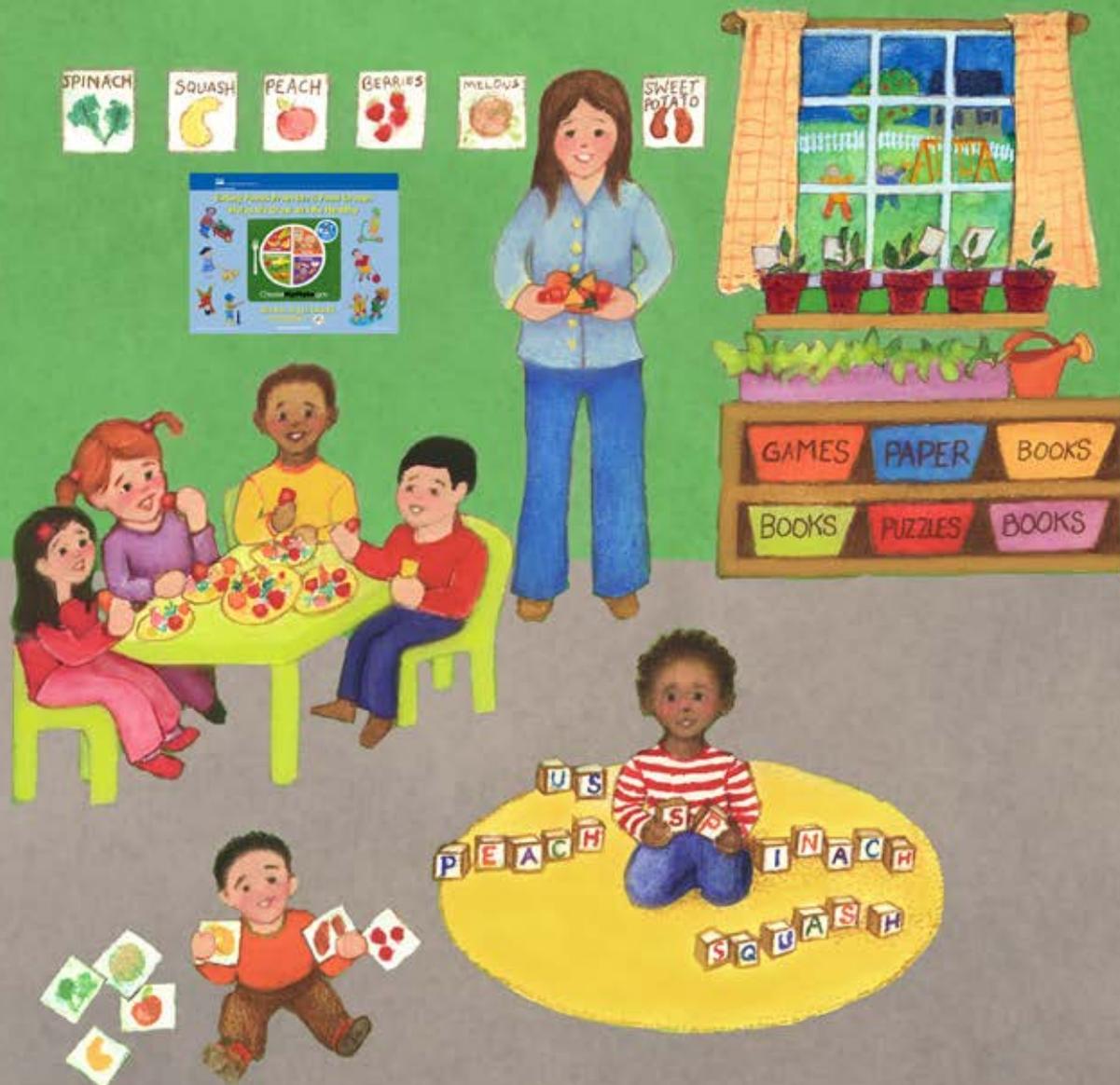


United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

Grow It, Try It, Like It!

**FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
AT FAMILY CHILD CARE**



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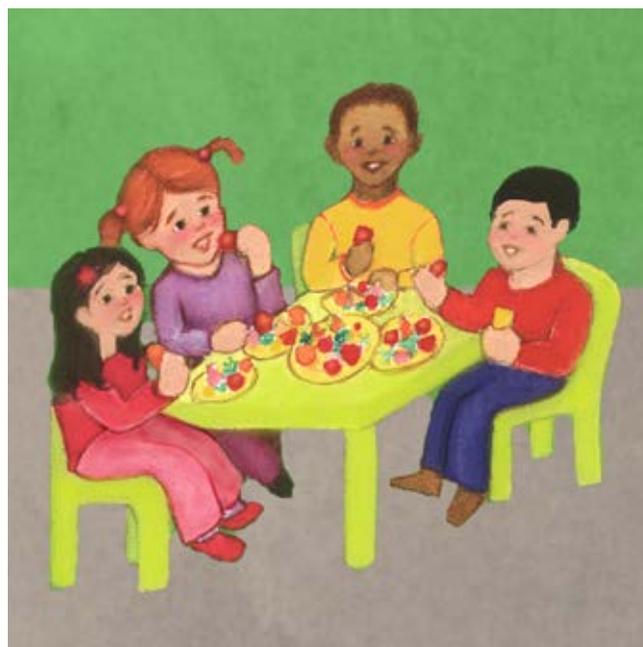
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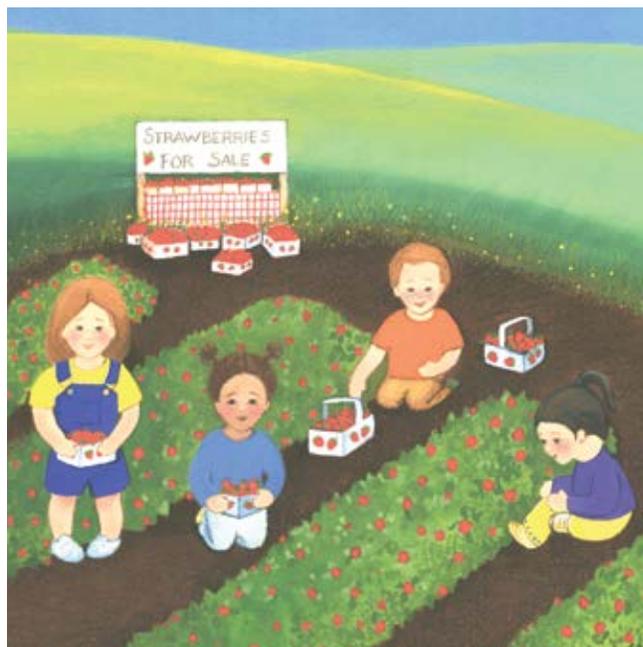
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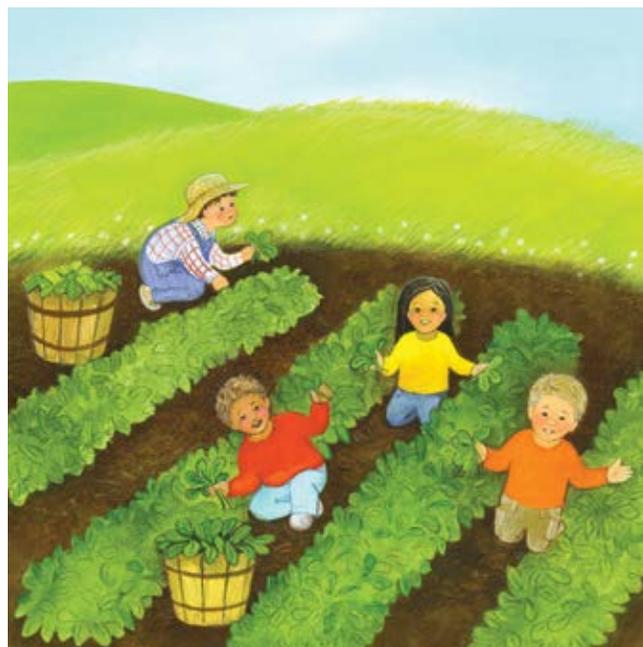
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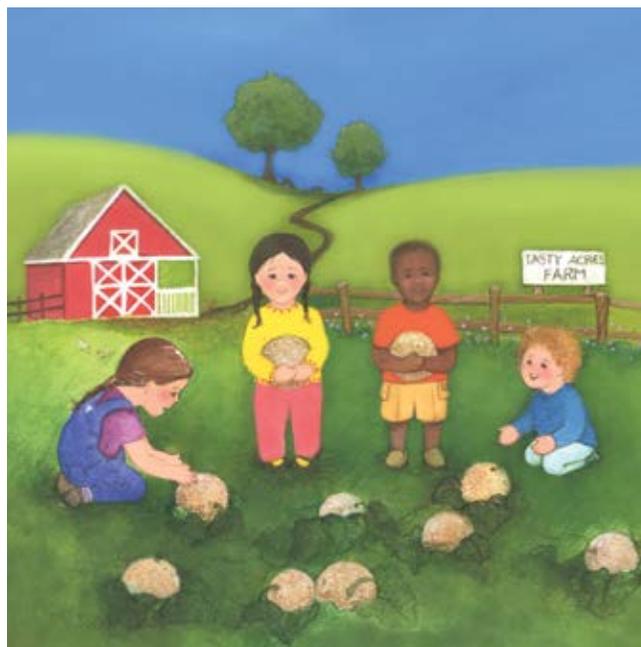
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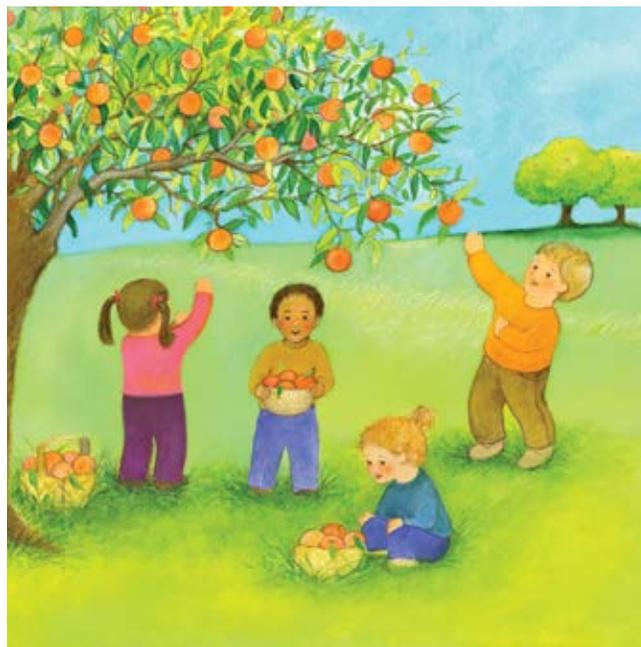
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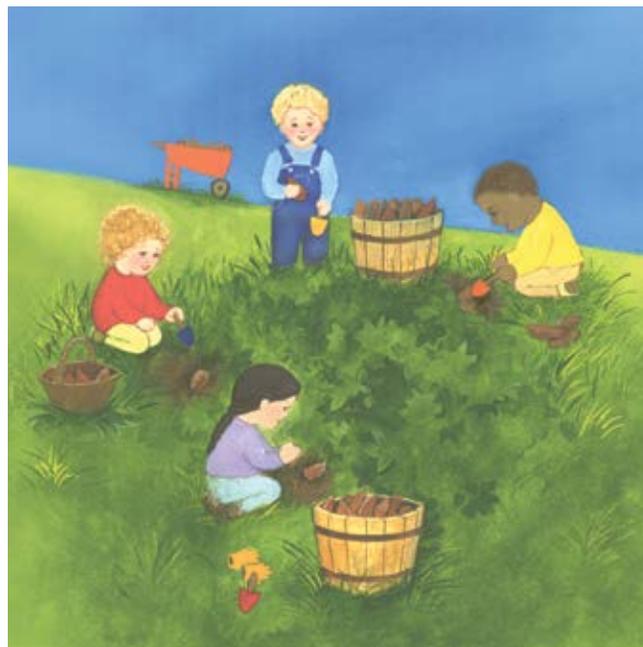
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Basics



WELCOME TO...

Grow It, Try It, Like It!

FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FAMILY CHILD CARE

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has developed *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* to assist child care providers in offering garden-themed nutrition education to children ages 3 to 5. This version of *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* is customized for ease of use in family child care home settings. FNS also offers *Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun With Fruits and Vegetables* for child care centers.

Both versions of *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* are designed to support providers in meeting the meal pattern requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Fruits and vegetables are important components of meals and snacks offered to children. Nutrition education can help providers encourage children to try new foods in positive and fun ways.

Through the activities in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*, children touch, smell, feel, and taste new fruits

and vegetables. Children also learn how fruits and vegetables grow. Planting activities help children connect the delicious food choices at the table with the farm, orchard, or garden. You do not need a large garden to do the activities in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* There are ways to grow many plants in small containers. Children can also visit area gardens or farms, or look at pictures showing how the various fruits and vegetables are grown.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES ARE PART OF A HEALTHY EATING PATTERN

Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy eating pattern for children, but most children do not eat enough vegetables and whole or cut-up fruits. The MyPlate icon (<https://www.choosemyplate.gov>) serves as a reminder to eat foods from the five food groups: Vegetables, Fruits, Grains, Protein Foods, and Dairy. MyPlate is used today instead of MyPyramid or The Food Guide Pyramid to help communicate current recommendations about healthy eating patterns. Looking at MyPlate, you'll notice that half of the plate is made up of fruits and vegetables. This is an important reminder to choose fruits and vegetables as part of meals and snacks. Through the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* units, children have the opportunity to learn about MyPlate, particularly the Fruit and Vegetable Groups. See Appendix A: The Five Food Groups (page 315) to learn more about what foods belong to each MyPlate food group.



The MyPlate icon serves as a reminder to eat foods from the five food groups.



Taking a Closer Look at *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*



Grow It, Try It, Like It! includes engaging activities that are designed to meet the following nutrition-related **behavioral outcomes** for children ages 3 to 5:

- Children will be able to identify the six fruits and vegetables featured in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*
- Children will be able to describe how fruits and vegetables are grown on plants or trees, and are harvested (picked).
- Children will taste the six fruits and vegetables in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*
- Children will be able to identify the Fruit and Vegetable Groups on MyPlate.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Grow It, Try It, Like It! provides learning opportunities that contribute to each child's individual growth and development. Carefully crafted activities develop the child's entire body and mind through:

- discussing ideas;
- learning new words;
- enjoying physical movement, like dancing and stretching;
- improving fine motor skills used in coloring and cutting;
- reading children's books;
- singing familiar music;
- doing hands-on science activities featuring plants; and
- creating arts and crafts.

While learning about fruits and vegetables, children grow, develop, and learn about themselves as well. The connections to the home provide the children's caregivers with ideas to further learning with the whole family. *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* is an easy and natural addition to any family child care setting!



How To Use *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*



Grow It, Try It, Like It! takes children on an imaginary adventure through Tasty Acres Farm, where strawberries, peaches, and cantaloupe are growing as well as spinach, sweet potatoes, and crookneck squash.

This section includes tips and resources that will be helpful when teaching the fruit and vegetable units.

Basics includes:

- A Nutrition Education Guide
- Growing Buddies: Tips for Mixed-Age Activities
- Growing Adventurous Eaters: Tips for Taste-Testing Activities
- Tips for Garden Arts and Crafts
- Make a Mystery Box or Bag
- Tips for Using the Tasty Acres Farm Map
- Tips for Using *Grow It, Try It, Like It! Cards*
- A Harvest of Books
- Parent Resources
- Assessment and Evaluation Tools

After reading through the Basics, you can get started with any of the six fruit and vegetable units. You can teach the units one after another or spread them out over the course of the year. These units do not have to be offered in any particular order. You may wish to offer the units during the growing season of each food. In-season fruits and vegetables can cost less money to buy for tasting activities and are often more flavorful. The units are organized from strawberries, a spring crop, to sweet potato, a fall crop. See our **Harvest Chart** (page 6) and **Green Thumb Guide** (Appendix B, page 318) for more information about timing and teaching the units according to each fruit or vegetable's growing season.



SNAPSHOT OF THE SIX UNITS

The six units are named for each fruit and vegetable—Strawberry Patch, Spinach Lane, Cantaloupe Corner, Crookneck Squash Row, Peach Tree Orchard, and Sweet Potato Hill.

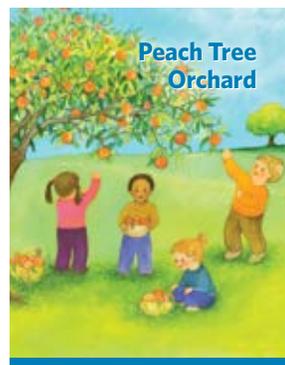
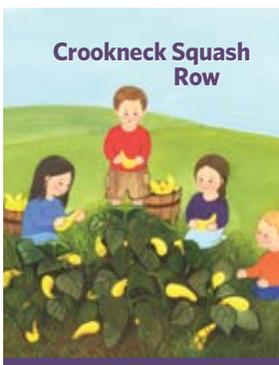
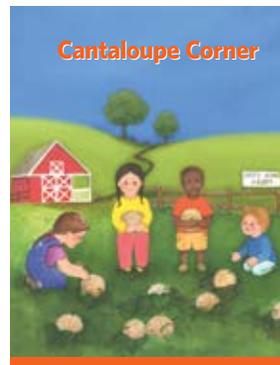
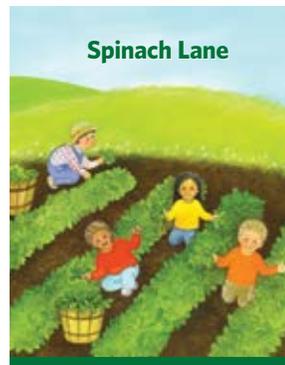
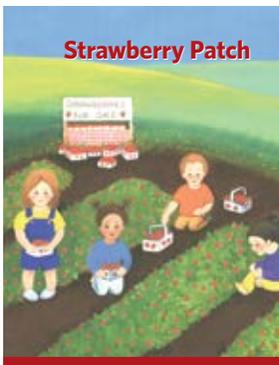
There are many features that help make the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* units engaging, motivating, and easy to use. We invite you to review the six units to see how they can best fit into your family child care home and meet the needs of the children in your care. Each unit offers connections to the garden through growing activities that can be done with or without a large garden.

DAILY LESSONS

Each unit is made up of daily lessons that specify: learning objectives, time required, and supplies and preparation needed.

Daily lessons include:

- Hands-on activities to introduce the fruit or vegetable to the children through exploration.
- Activities that feature singing, dancing, and reading.
- Nutrition education activities that include an introduction to MyPlate and the five food groups.
- Tasting opportunities to reinforce the variety of ways that each fruit or vegetable can be eaten.
- Growing activities that focus on how and where each fruit or vegetable grows.



After reading through the Basics, you can get started with any of the six fruit and vegetable units.



Grow It, Try It, Like It! Fruit and Vegetable Overview

Children learn about six fruits and vegetables in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*: strawberries, spinach, cantaloupe, crookneck squash, peaches, and sweet potatoes. In each unit, children connect the fruits and vegetables they see on their plate to the garden, orchard, or farm where the food was grown and to where it is sold. This Harvest Chart shows the best times to harvest or purchase each fruit or vegetable.

HARVEST CHART		
Crop	MyPlate Food Group	Harvest Times
Strawberries	Fruit	Spring and early summer Note: Ever-bearing plants make fruits all summer.
Spinach	Vegetable	Spring and fall
Cantaloupe	Fruit	Summer
Crookneck Squash	Vegetable	Summer
Peaches	Fruit	Summer
Sweet Potatoes	Vegetable	Fall



CONNECTING WITH FARMERS MARKETS AND LOCALLY GROWN FOODS

Farm to Preschool works to connect early child care and education settings to local food producers with the objective of serving locally grown, healthy foods to young children. Farm to Preschool activities can increase children's willingness to try new foods and help them become familiar with local foods. For more information, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-preschool>.



Nutrition Education Guide

Young children have a healthy curiosity about themselves, their growing bodies, and the world around them. This curiosity leads to the early development of food habits and food preferences that can last into adulthood. Young children are not naturally eager to try new foods, but you can turn something that might be scary into a fun adventure with the activities in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Providing nutrition education activities for young children can help them learn a variety of other skills as well.

Fine motor skills:

- Hold and use utensils, like plastic spoons and forks (avoid knives).
- Pour, stir, and shake.
- Sort and plant small seeds.
- Pour things in the “right” place.
- Sort, glue, and paste.

Simple math skills:

- Measure.
- Count.
- Follow steps and put things in order.



Science concepts:

- Observe that seeds need soil, water, sunlight, and time to grow into plants.
- Predict how large a plant will grow.

Food safety and cleanliness:

- Wash hands (proper steps and when it is needed).
- Rinse fruits and vegetables with water before eating or preparing them.

Self-esteem and independence:

- Serve food through family-style dining.
- Work alone and in groups for cooking, gardening, and other activities.

Nutrition education can help build self-esteem and independence.



DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES CHART FOR GROW IT, TRY IT, LIKE IT!

Developmental Milestones	3- to 4-Year-Olds Can...	4- to 5-Year-Olds Can...
Gross Motor Skills and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore freely.• Jump.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Run with greater control.• Jump and hop with more coordination.
Fine Motor Skills (other than eating)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Snip edges of paper with blunt scissors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cut with blunt scissors.• Begin to print names, create drawings.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe color, shape, and texture of foods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask “how” and “why” questions.• Speak clearly and express themselves to others.• Learn new words by easily copying.
Learning Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name, identify, and sort objects.• Match like objects.• Understand the relationship between written and spoken words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn by doing.• Pay attention for longer periods.• Learn through songs/singing.• Follow more complex directions.
Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell you what foods they like and dislike.• Eat independently with some help.• Get distracted easily in groups.• Eat using mostly their fingers.• Use a spoon on their own.• Drink from a cup.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use a fork and spoon independently.• Eat with less mess and spills.



Growing Buddies: Tips for Mixed-Ages Activities

Grow It, Try It, Like It! is designed for children ages 3–5, but there are ways to include the older or younger children in your care as well.

- **Provide a wide range of activity choices.** Throughout the units you will notice mixed-age group tips under the activities. Use these suggestions to provide all children with age-appropriate learning activities. The field trip ideas are appropriate for all ages, if there are enough adults to supervise.
- **Use the opportunities throughout *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* to promote teamwork and playing fair.** Encourage children to help each other and solve problems together.
- **Consider the ages of the children in your family child care home when setting up activities.** Safety is important. Scissors that are used by school-aged children should be stored out of the reach of toddlers. Materials that are safe and appropriate for younger children can be arranged in easy-to-reach bins or containers.
- **Adapt taste-testing and food preparation activities.** Change the size and texture of foods to prevent younger children from choking (see Appendix F: Choking Prevention, pages 327–329, for details). Older children can help more with preparing the foods.
- **Focus on individual or small group activities.** Divide the children into groups based on their ages.

Raising Adventurous Eaters

Tasting foods is an important part of *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* For some activities, the food tasting is suggested to occur at snack or mealtime rather than as part of the activity. Having the opportunity to taste the same food on many different occasions helps young children grow into adventurous eaters. Trying new foods may lead to healthy habits that can last a lifetime. Use the tips on the next page to have a successful taste-testing experience.



TIPS FOR TASTE-TESTING ACTIVITIES



- **Prepare To Grow.** Before trying a new fruit or vegetable, involve children in nutrition education activities by using a Mystery Box or Bag. This allows children to touch and describe the feeling of the fruit or vegetable before they see it. Learn more about the Mystery Box or Bag on pages 11-12. Another easy way to build excitement about fruits and vegetables is to read popular children's books about fruits and vegetables. See pages 15-16 for a sample booklist.
- **Sow Seeds of Success.** Teach children the guidelines of hand washing and polite food tasting (Appendixes C and D, pages 324-325). Children may be more willing to try a food if they know it is okay to spit it out rather than swallow it. Model how to politely decline to taste a food or use a napkin to remove the food from your mouth. Never force a child to eat a food. Children are more likely to enjoy eating a new food when it is their own choice. Remember, patience works better than pressure.
- **Be Still, Little Seed.** For safety's sake, have the children eat while seated, not walking around. Moving while eating can increase the risk of choking (see Appendix F: Choking Prevention, pages 327-329).
- **Offer Bites, Not Bushels.** Offer small tastes of a food at first. Children can be overwhelmed by a large amount and may even refuse to try a food if they think they must eat it all. Be prepared to offer more if a child wants it.
- **Show How You Grow.** Children learn by watching you. Join in and taste the new fruits and vegetables with the children.
- **Keep Growing.** Encourage the children's families to talk about the foods tried at family child care and to serve the new foods at home as well. Suggest that families eat together when possible. Young children are encouraged to try more foods when families prepare and eat foods together.
- **Make Tasting Fun.** Provide stickers or buttons to celebrate children who try a new food. You can find "Make Today a Try-Day!" stickers on the Team Nutrition website at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/make-today-try-day-stickers>.
- **Know the Growing Season.** Fresh, in-season fruits and vegetables usually taste best and cost less. See the Harvest Chart on page 6 to learn when the fruits and vegetables in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* are in season. Frozen or canned foods can be used when fruits and vegetables are out of season.
- **Choose the Time To Grow.** Offer new foods when children are hungry, such as at the start of a meal. Offer only one new food at a time. Offering too many new foods at once can be overwhelming.
- **Seed and Re-Seed.** Plan to offer the same food many different times. It may take up to 10 tries for a child to accept a new food.



Tips for Garden Arts and Crafts



Garden arts and crafts add wheelbarrows of fun to the fruit and vegetable units of *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Young artists will enjoy making these produce-focused projects.

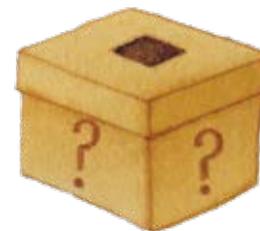
- Each arts and crafts activity is written with a specific fruit or vegetable in mind, but don't let that limit you. Branch out and get creative! Any fruit or vegetable can be used as a theme for these and other great craft projects.
- Feel free to adjust the activities to match the skills of the children. The children will need your help doing the activities.
- Create a storage bin of supplies (e.g., cardboard, disposable trays, paper bags, newspapers and magazines, envelopes, and outdated stationary) to keep costs low. Encourage families to contribute items.

Make a Mystery Box or Bag

Below are instructions for making a Mystery Box or Bag. You can make a simple version, but the Mystery Box or Bag may become so popular with children that a more durable, reusable style is needed. Follow the "durable" directions if you wish to make a box or bag that can be cleaned and used repeatedly.

Mystery Box: Simple

Make a simple mystery box by placing a large cardboard box (18 inches x 12 inches or larger) on its side. Cut a hole in the top side of the box large enough for a child to slip a hand and arm through without getting stuck, but small enough so you can't see inside (about 4 inches wide). Drape a cloth over the open side to prevent children from looking into the box. If desired, decorate the box.



Mystery Box: Durable

MATERIALS NEEDED:

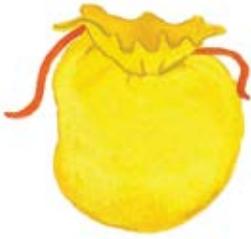
- Box with a fitted lid or large, non-transparent plastic container with lid (e.g., large ice cream tub)
- Clean tube sock
- Duct tape, glue gun, or other means of attaching sock to opening
- Scissors

Note: Make sure the box or container is large enough to hold a crookneck squash or cantaloupe or the largest item you will place in it. Also check that there are no sharp edges.

Cut a hole in the lid that is large enough to easily slip your fisted hand through. This opening should be large enough for your hand and a child's hand to slip together into the opening should a child want you to feel inside the box with him or her.



Cut off the toe of the tube sock to make a length of tube 8 inches or longer. Pull the cut end of the sock through the opening and securely tape or glue the cut edge of the sock around the opening of the hole. You should be able to slip your hand through the open end of the tube sock, through the lid, and into the box.



Mystery Bag: Simple

To make a simple mystery bag, use a large strong paper bag or non-transparent plastic bag. After putting the mystery item in the bag, use a rubber band or string to gather the opening of the bag just large enough for a child to slip a hand and arm through without getting stuck. A simple drawstring bag may also work.

Mystery Bag: Durable

MATERIALS NEEDED

- A laundry bag with drawstring or a clean pillow case that has a hem
- One 18-inch shoe string
- Fabric markers or appliques for decoration

If using a pillow case, make two small cuts, ½-inch in length, on both sides of the seam near the stitching of the hemmed opening. Insert the shoe string into the pillow case and thread through the hemmed edge until it reaches the other slit. Gather the string and tie the ends together. Decorate pillow case or bag, if desired.

TIPS FOR USING THE MYSTERY BOX OR BAG

- Before you use the Mystery Box or Bag, introduce it to the children. If it has been a long time since the Mystery Box or Bag was last used, reintroduce it to the children.
- Out of sight of the children, place the fruit or vegetable in the Mystery Box or Bag. Seat the children in a semicircle on the floor and ask them to remain seated. Take the Mystery Box or Bag to a place in the room where the children can see it and you. The child feeling inside the Mystery Box or Bag should be able to speak softly to you without the others hearing.
- Tell the children that everyone will have a chance to describe to you what they feel in the Mystery Box or Bag. Give examples of description words such as smooth, soft, bumpy, heavy, or light to help them understand the kind of observations to share with you.
- One at a time, ask each child to come to the Mystery Box or Bag. Have each child feel inside the Mystery Box or Bag without looking inside it. If a child is afraid, feel inside the Mystery Box or Bag with the child. Remind children to keep their ideas and guesses a secret until everyone has had a turn at the Mystery Box or Bag.
- While at the Mystery Box or Bag, ask each child to describe quietly what he or she feels. Have the children use words similar to the words suggested in the Words To Grow section in each unit. If a child has a hard time talking about the fruit or vegetable, have the child guess what is inside and whisper his or her guess to you. Write their answers on a piece of paper if you wish.
- After everyone takes a turn, take the Mystery Box or Bag to the group of children. Remove the fruit or vegetable. Show it to the children. Talk about the fruit or vegetable using the questions suggested in each unit.



Tips for Using the Tasty Acres Farm Map

A map of Tasty Acres Farm is included with the lessons. One side of the map is in color and the other side is in black and white. Display the color map during the lessons to show the children what they will be learning about. The black-and-white version may be photocopied if you'd like to give each child a copy. As you complete the units, let the children color and decorate the section of the farm map that shows the fruit or vegetable they are learning about.

TIPS FOR THE TASTY ACRES FARM MAP

- **The map is reusable.** You can color and erase using dry-erase markers and erasers.
- **The map can be a placemat.** Photocopy and laminate a map for each child.
- **The map can record your adventures.** Coloring the map as you go through the activities is a great way to show what the children have learned about. Post the map on an information board where families will see it. Share images of the map on social media.



Tips for Using *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Cards

The *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Cards include pictures of the six fruits and vegetables discussed in the units. There are pictures of the prepared, ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables as well as pictures of the fruits and vegetables growing. Some ways to use the cards are outlined below.

FARM TO PLATE MATCHING GAME (I.E., MEMORY)

1. Shuffle the cards.
2. Lay them in 3 rows, face down.
3. Flip over any two cards.
4. If the two cards turned over are of the same fruit or vegetable, keep them. For instance, if one card is peaches on a plate and the other is a peach growing on a tree, then the cards are a match. They are both about peaches. Keep the cards and take another turn.
5. If the cards don't match, turn them back over. It is now another player's turn.
6. Remember what was on each card you turn over and where it was. Watch and remember during the other players' turns as well.
7. The game is over when all the cards have been matched.

Note: This game can be used for mixed-age groups, and the older children can help the younger children. This game is best for groups of 2 to 3 children.

MYPLATE NAMING AND SORTING

1. Separate out the six cards showing the foods ready to eat. You will use these for the game and not the growing cards.
2. Show a card to the group and ask them to name the food.
3. Ask them if the food belongs to the Fruit Group or the Vegetable Group. Help them if they need it.

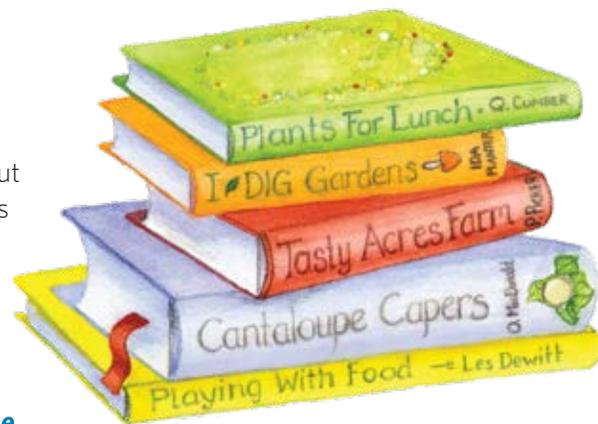


*Growing and ready-to-eat versions of the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Cards.*



A Harvest of Books*

Within the lessons, you are encouraged to read books about fruits and vegetables out loud to children and ask questions related to the stories. Below are examples of books about fruits and vegetables and trying new foods. You can also find other selections in your library that can be used to start a similar discussion.



And the Good Brown Earth

- By Kathy Henderson
(Candlewick Press, 2004)

Discover MyPlate Emergent Reader: Vegetables

- By USDA Food and Nutrition Service (2018)

Discover MyPlate Emergent Reader: Fruits

- By USDA Food and Nutrition Service (2018)

A Harvest of Color: Growing a Vegetable Garden

- By Melanie Eclare
(Ragged Bear, 2002)

Bitter Bananas

- By Isaac Olaleye
(Boyd's Mills Press, 1994)

Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z

- By Lois Ehlert
(HMH Books for Young Readers, 1996)

Edible Numbers

- By Jennifer Vogel Bass
(Roaring Book Press, 2016)

Farmers Market

- By Paul Brett Johnson
(Orchard Books, 1997)

From the Garden:

A Counting Book About Growing

- By Michael Dah
(Picture Window Books, 2004)

Little Critter: A Green, Green Garden

- By Mercer Mayer
(HarperCollins, 2011)

Growing Vegetable Soup

- By Lois Ehlert
(HMH books for Young Readers, 1990)

I Love to Eat Fruits and Vegetables

- By Shelley Admont
(Inna Nusinky-Shmuilov, 2014)

I'm a Seed (Hello Reader! Science level 1)

- By Jean Marzollo
(Cartwheel, 1996)

I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato

- By Lauren Child
(Candlewick Press, 2000)

Little Sweet Potato

- By Amy Beth Bloom
(Katherine Tegen Books, 2012)

*Mention of these materials is not an endorsement by the United States Department of Agriculture over other materials that may be available on this subject.





MyPlate and You

- By Gillia Olson
(Capstone Press, 2011)

Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!

- By Candace Fleming and G. Brian Karas
(Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2002)

Olivia Plants a Garden

- By Emily Sollinger
(Simon Spotlight, 2011)

Oliver's Vegetables

- By Vivian French
(Hodder Children's Books, 1995)

Potatoes (What's for Lunch)

- By Claire Llewellyn
(Children's Press, 1998)

Pumpkin Circle

- By George Levenson
(Tricycle Press, 2002)

Pumpkin Fiesta

- By Caryn Yacowitz
(HarperCollins, 1998)

Round the Garden

- By Omri Glaser
(Scholastic, 2001)

Silvia's Spinach

- By Katherine Pryor
(Readers to Eaters, 2014)

Sophie's Squash

- By Pat Zietlow Miller
(Schwartz & Wade, 2013)

The Cantaloupe Cat

- By Jan Yager
(Hannacroix Creek Books, 1998)

The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher

- By Molly Bang
(Aladdin, 1996)

The Perilous Pit

- By Orel Protopopescu
(Simon & Schuster, 1993)

The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree

- By Gail Gibbons
(HMH Books for Young Readers, 1988)

The Turnip

- By Jan Brett
(G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers, 2015)

The Two Bite Club

- By USDA Food and Nutrition Service (2013)

The Ugly Vegetables

- By Grace Lin
(Charlesbridge Publishing, 2009)

Up, Down, and Around

- By Katherine Ayres
(Candlewick, 2008)

We're Going to the Farmer's Market

- By Stefan Page
(Chronicle Books, 2014)

* Mention of these materials is not an endorsement by the United States Department of Agriculture over other materials that may be available on this subject.



Parent Resources



PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES TO RAISE HEALTHY EATERS

Parents, caregivers, and child care providers can influence how children feel about foods and drinks. In other words, they play a role in the development of what foods and drinks children prefer. When families and child care providers share consistent nutrition messages with children, they are more likely to develop healthy eating habits. For this reason, *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* includes activities you can do at family child care and tools to help you share information with families.

On the next page, you will find a sample letter about *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* that you can provide to parents. You can also include the handouts on Hand Washing (Appendix D, page 325) and Polite Food Tasting (Appendix C, page 324). Additionally, each unit contains a parent newsletter related to the fruit or vegetable the children you are teaching.



Grow It, Try It, Like It!

FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FAMILY CHILD CARE

Dear Family:

We are beginning an exciting food tasting and gardening adventure! We'll be exploring new fruits and vegetables over the next several weeks or months. Your child will learn where food comes from and taste new fruits and vegetables.

What Fruits and Vegetables Are We Going To Explore?

- Strawberries
- Spinach
- Cantaloupe
- Crookneck Squash
- Peaches
- Sweet Potatoes

What Are We Going To Learn?

- How these foods grow;
- How these foods fit into a healthy eating pattern;
- How we can eat these foods;
- How these foods look, feel, taste, and smell; and
- How these foods are prepared.

How Are We Going To Learn It?

We will learn through: arts and crafts, songs, reading, seed planting, and food tasting.

Food Safety and Manners

As we try new foods, the children are also learning other healthy habits. You can help by practicing hand washing and polite food tasting at home. Review the attached handouts together.

How Can You Be Involved?

Please ask your child what he or she is learning about. As we move through each unit, you will receive news about our food adventures, recipes to try at home, and more!

Sincerely,

Your Child Care Provider





Grow It, Try It, Like It!

FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FAMILY CHILD CARE

Assessment and Evaluation Tools

You can use some simple evaluation tools to see how your use of *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* is changing your nutrition practices and children's knowledge, attitudes, and preferences for fruits and vegetables. Consider sharing the results with your Sponsoring Organization, State agency, parents, and community partners. Fill in the sample information below with your findings after completing the units and assessments.

*"Our family child care has been helping children learn about fruits and vegetables using *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* During the past few months, the children have received _____ hours of nutrition education. They have also had the opportunity to taste the fruits and vegetables they learned about. On average, _____ (number) out of _____ children were willing to taste the fruit or vegetable in each unit. Children have also become more aware of where fruits and vegetables come from. After our *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* activities, _____ out of _____ children could identify strawberries, spinach, cantaloupe, crookneck squash, peaches, and sweet potatoes."*

Provider Survey: Complete the first self-assessment (pages 20–21) before you start using *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Then, complete the second self-assessment (pages 22–23) after you have finished the units. Fill in the sample talking points below with your findings after completing the curriculum and assessments and keep for your records.

- Children tried _____ (number) fruits and vegetables as part of tasting and food preparation activities.
- The number of children who could identify the featured fruits and vegetables increased from _____ to _____ out of _____ children.





Grow It, Try It, Like It!

FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FAMILY CHILD CARE



Provider Survey

BEFORE YOU START USING *GROW IT, TRY IT, LIKE IT!*

Complete this survey before you start using *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Start by showing the children the *Grow It! Cards* (included with the booklet) one child at a time. Ask each child if he or she can identify the fruit or vegetable on the card by saying, "Do you know what fruit or vegetable this is?" Record the number of children who can correctly identify the fruit or vegetable on the card. Question 7 relates to this specific activity. If you have misplaced your *Grow It! Cards*, you may download new ones at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-homes>.

Your Name: _____

Child Care Program Name: _____

Date: _____

1. I currently provide nutrition education to the children at my child care home:

Each week
 Once a month
 A couple times a year
 Never

2. I do gardening activities with children at my child care home:

No
 Yes
 In the past, but not anymore

3. My knowledge of nutrition is:

Excellent
 Good
 Fair
 Poor

4. My knowledge of gardening is:

Excellent
 Good
 Fair
 Poor





Grow It, Try It, Like It!

FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FAMILY CHILD CARE

5. In the past 6 months, I have served the following foods to children as part of snacks or meals: (select all that apply).

- Strawberries
- Spinach
- Cantaloupe
- Crookneck squash
- Peaches
- Sweet potatoes

6. The children at my child care home eat the fruits and vegetables offered at snacks and meals:

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- None of the time

7. The number of children at my child care home who can identify the fruits and vegetables on the *Grow It! Cards* is:

Strawberries: _____ out of _____ children

Spinach: _____ out of _____ children

Cantaloupe: _____ out of _____ children

Crookneck squash: _____ out of _____ children

Peaches: _____ out of _____ children

Sweet potatoes: _____ out of _____ children

8. Children at my child care home can identify MyPlate and the five food groups when asked:

- Rarely or never
- Sometimes
- Always

Some questions were adapted from the *Go NAP SACC: Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care*, 2nd edition. Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Accessed June 15, 2017, at <https://gonapsacc.org>.





Grow It, Try It, Like It!

FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FAMILY CHILD CARE



Provider Survey

AFTER COMPLETING GROW IT, TRY IT, LIKE IT!

Fill this out after you have taught the lessons.

Your Name: _____

Child Care Program Name: _____

Date: _____

1. I currently provide nutrition education to the children at my child care home:

Each week
 Once a month
 A couple times a year
 Never

2. I do gardening activities with children at my child care home:

No
 Yes
 In the past, but not anymore

3. My knowledge of nutrition is:

Excellent
 Good
 Fair
 Poor

4. My knowledge of gardening is:

Excellent
 Good
 Fair
 Poor

5. In the past 6 months, I have served the following foods to children as part of snacks or meals: (select all that apply).

Strawberries
 Spinach
 Cantaloupe
 Crookneck squash
 Peaches
 Sweet potatoes





Grow It, Try It, Like It!

FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FAMILY CHILD CARE

6. The children at my child care home eat the fruits and vegetables offered at snacks and meals:
- All the time
 - Most of the time
 - Some of the time
 - None of the time

7. The number of children at my child care home who can identify the fruits and vegetables on the *Grow It! Cards* is:

Strawberries: _____ out of _____ children

Spinach: _____ out of _____ children

Cantaloupe: _____ out of _____ children

Crookneck squash: _____ out of _____ children

Peaches: _____ out of _____ children

Sweet potatoes: _____ out of _____ children

8. Children at my child care home can identify MyPlate and the five food groups when asked:
- Rarely or never
 - Sometimes
 - Always

9. Check the units you taught from the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* curriculum (check all that apply):
- Strawberry Patch
 - Spinach Lane
 - Cantaloupe Corner
 - Crookneck Squash Row
 - Peach Tree Orchard
 - Sweet Potato Hill

10. Using *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*, the children have received _____ (number) hours of nutrition education.

11. Children tried _____ (number) fruits and vegetables as part of tasting and food preparation activities from *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*

Some questions were adapted from the *Go NAP SACC: Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care*, 2nd edition. Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Accessed June 15, 2017, at <https://gonapsacc.org>.





Grow It, Try It, Like It!

FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FAMILY CHILD CARE



Grow It, Try It, Like It! Score Card



Photocopy the Score Card for Preschoolers (page 25) and reuse for multiple taste tests. Help the children fill out the score cards after you complete each of the tasting activities provided in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Track the results. Note the number of children who are willing to taste the offered fruit or vegetable and the number of children who choose not to participate.

When completing the score cards, help the children draw the fruit or vegetable they tried, then have the children color the face icon that best represents how they felt about the taste. The smiley face means the child likes it, the straight line face means the child thinks it was okay, and the face with a frown means that the child did not care for it this time.





Grow It, Try It, Like It!

FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FAMILY CHILD CARE

Score Card for Preschoolers

Child's name: _____

Name of food tasted: _____

Drawing of fruit or vegetable tasted:



How did it taste?



I liked it!



It's okay.



Maybe next time.





Team Nutrition Resources



If you would like to download electronic versions of the materials in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*, visit the Team Nutrition website (<https://teamnutrition.usda.gov>). You are welcome to make copies of any of the materials in this curriculum without further permission.

Printed Team Nutrition materials are available, as supplies last, to schools, child care providers, summer meal sites, State agencies, and sponsors that participate in the USDA Child Nutrition programs via an online order form.

To inquire about bulk orders, please send an email to teamnutrition@fns.usda.gov.



Strawberry Patch



STRAWBERRY

SPINACH

CANTALOUPE

SQUASH

PEACH

POTATO

APPENDIXES

WELCOME TO

Strawberry Patch at Tasty Acres Farm!

Red, ripe, sweet, juicy strawberries are sure to delight young children. Through the activities in this unit, children will explore these flavorful fruits, experiencing how strawberries look, feel, smell, and taste. Strawberry plants are perennial. This means if you plant one now, it will come back next year and years following. Strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside.

Leave time to tempt the taste buds with strawberry tasting activities. Growing at Home materials encourage families to include strawberries in cooking, conversations, and fun and games.



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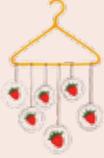
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Strawberry Activity Chart

DAY 1 45 minutes	DAY 2 45-55 minutes	DAY 3 35-40 minutes	DAY 4 40-50 minutes	DAY 5 40-50 minutes
MYSTERY BOX OR BAG	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY
<p>What's This? It's "Berry" Mysterious</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Strawberries Start as Seeds</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Make a Pretend Strawberry Patch</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Plant a Strawberry in a Jar</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>I Like You Berry, Berry Much</p> <p>20-25 minutes</p> 
TASTING ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY	CRAFT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY
<p>Strawberry— A Look Inside</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Strawberry Mini Parfait</p> <p>10-15 minutes</p> 	<p>Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Strawberry Style</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Tasty Acres Mobile</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Meet Strawberry's Fruity Friends</p> <p>10-15 minutes</p>
CRAFT ACTIVITY	CRAFT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY	READING ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY
<p>Painted Pots</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Large Strawberries</p> <p>15-20 minutes</p>	<p>Waffle With Strawberries</p> <p>10-15 minutes</p>	 <p>10-20 minutes</p>	<p>Berry Bounce</p> <p>10 minutes</p>
	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY			
	<p>"Strawberry Says"</p> <p>10 minutes</p> 			





Introduction to Strawberry Patch Activities

Check with local farms and farmers markets to find out when strawberries are in peak season. Usually, strawberries are a spring and early summer crop. Seeing strawberries growing in the field makes a great farm field trip for preschoolers. If a farm is not nearby, visit a produce stand or farmers market to see fresh strawberries. Your local grocery store may also have fresh strawberries in the produce aisle.

The strawberry lessons in this unit are arranged by day to teach over the course of 5 consecutive days. If possible, do the growing activities and enjoy homegrown strawberries. Growing and watching a plant grow can be an enjoyable activity for children.

WORDS TO GROW

New Words To Use When Teaching About Strawberries

Fruit	Berry
Heart	Seed
Flower	Inside
Outside	Summer
Red	Spring

ACTIVITY LENGTH

Most activities require only 10–15 minutes.

CREDITING TIPS

Some activities in this unit include children eating strawberries. Check for food allergies before serving. If you plan to serve strawberries as part of a reimbursable meal or snack for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), check the minimum serving sizes for each age group (Appendix G, page 330). There are also Crediting Tips with some of the recipes. If you plan to serve those as part of a reimbursable meal or snack, refer to the Crediting Tips for guidance.

For information on purchasing the correct amount of strawberries, see USDA's Food Buying Guide at <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov>.

LUNCH AND SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS

	Ages 1–2	Ages 3–5
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz eq	1 ½ oz eq
Vegetables	⅓ cup	¼ cup
Fruits	⅓ cup	¼ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.

SNACK MEAL PATTERNS

Select 2 of the 5 components for snack

	Ages 1–2	Ages 3–5
Milk	½ cup	½ cup
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz eq	½ oz eq
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.



Getting To Know Strawberries

Fresh, juicy strawberries are typically a crowd pleaser, especially when they are in peak season! If you or the children you care for are new to strawberries, this unit of *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* will give you many reasons to love this fruit. Strawberries are a great source of nutrients that help your body grow and be healthy.

GROWING GUIDE

Strawberries are best grown in the spring, when the ground is ready. Strawberries are stolon plants (Appendix H: *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Glossary, page 331). This means that seedlings from the strawberries will send out runners, or daughter plants. Strawberries require 6–10 hours of sunlight per day. Raised beds are a good option for growing strawberries.



KITCHEN TIPS

- Wash fruit before serving.
- Cut the fruit into smaller pieces for younger children.

HOW SHOULD I STORE STRAWBERRIES?

Store unwashed strawberries in the refrigerator for 3–5 days. Strawberries can be frozen whole for about 2 months.

SIX SIMPLE WAYS TO SERVE STRAWBERRIES

1. Strawberry Lady Bugs—Cut the tops off of the strawberries and cut them in half lengthwise. With your fingers, gently push 3–5 mini chocolate chips into each half to create the ladybug’s spots.
2. Fresh strawberries cooked into hot oatmeal.
3. Chilled soup—puree 3 cups strawberries with 1 cup of orange juice (100%).
4. Sliced and tossed in green salads for a sweet treat.
5. Layered with low-fat or fat-free yogurt, or cottage cheese.
6. Blended in fruit smoothies.



Strawberry

Please provide a print copy (or email a digital copy) of Growing at Home to families before, during, or after completing the Strawberry activities. These handouts and recipes are a great way to keep families informed about what their children are learning during the day.

Content from this handout can also be displayed on a family bulletin board or shared on your website.

In addition to the ideas above, text, tweet, or share daily strawberry lesson highlights with the families.



MESSAGES FOR FAMILIES

DAY ONE

- Today your child tasted a fresh strawberry. #GrowIt

DAY TWO

- Today your child tasted a strawberry parfait. We are sending home the recipe. #GrowIt

DAY THREE

- Today we danced to a fun song about strawberries. Ask your child to show you the moves. #GrowIt

DAY FOUR

- Today we read a book that had fruits and vegetables as part of the story. Ask your child to describe his or her favorite part. #GrowIt

DAY FIVE

- Today your child learned about the MyPlate food groups. Ask your child which food group strawberries are in. #GrowIt



PREPARATION TIME

10 minutes

MAKES

1 serving

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and cutting board to cut the strawberries into pieces.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	75
Protein	3 g
Carbohydrate	14 g
Total Fat	1 g
Saturated Fat	0.5 g
Cholesterol	3 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	110 mg
Sodium	38 mg
Dietary Fiber	2 g

Optional ingredients are not included in nutrient analysis.

Strawberry Mini Parfait



INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup strawberries, cut, ½-inch pieces
- ¼ cup yogurt, low-fat, vanilla
- ⅛ cup whole grain-rich cereal (*optional*)
- 1 5-ounce cup, clear, plastic
- Spoon and napkin

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Seat each child at a table with supplies.
2. Show the child how to layer the ingredients into the cup. For each cup: add ¼ cup of strawberries, then ¼ cup yogurt, followed by another ¼ cup of strawberries. Top each cup with ⅛ cup of cereal (*optional*).

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help rinse the strawberries.
- Layer the ingredients.



Day 1

Getting To Know Strawberries

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

What's This? It's "Berry" Mysterious

Page 36

15 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Strawberry—A Look Inside

Pages 37–38

15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Painted Pots

Page 39

15 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH
15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review Make a Mystery Box or Bag instructions, as needed (Basics, page 11).
- Wash, dry, and reserve at least one strawberry per child; keep berries out of sight.
- Put a clean, fresh strawberry in the Mystery Box or Bag.
- Make copies of Growing at Home, one set per child (pages 33–34), or draft an email for families.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.
- Have the children wash their hands before and after activity (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).

MIXED-AGES TIP

If a marble is used, supervise the children while they hold it. Marbles can be a choking hazard for young children.

WORDS TO GROW

Fruit	Heart
Seeds	Strawberry
Rough	Sweet
Light (weight)	

MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

What's This? It's "Berry" Mysterious

Use the Mystery Box or Bag to create interest and excite their sense of touch. Have the children feel the outside of the strawberry in the box or bag before revealing the "mystery" item to all.

OBJECTIVES

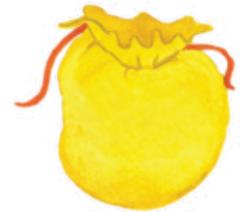
The children will be able to:

- Identify a strawberry as a lightweight, heart-shaped red fruit with a cap of green leaves; and
- Describe the outside appearance and smell of a strawberry.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Fresh strawberries with green leaves attached
- Mystery Box or Bag
- Paper and pencil or pen
- Napkins
- Marble (optional)



INSTRUCTIONS

- Introduce the Mystery Box or Bag, or reintroduce it if you have used it before (Basics, page 11).
- One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box or bag with the child.
- Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he or she feels and guess what it is.
- After everyone has guessed, show the strawberry to the children. Give each child a strawberry on a napkin to look at, touch, and smell.
- Note the children's guesses that were close (round, squishy, a berry, food) or correct (strawberry).
- Talk about the strawberry. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.
 - Is the strawberry a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - What shape is it? (Shaped like a heart)
 - What color is the cap of the leaves? (Green)
 - How do the seeds on the outside of it feel? (Rough like sand in the sandbox)
 - Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell sweet like a flower)
 - Is it light or heavy? (Light like a marble; let the children feel a marble)
 - Has anyone ever tasted a strawberry? (Yes or no).
 - How does a strawberry taste? (Sweet)



TASTING ACTIVITY

Strawberry—A Look Inside



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Wash and gently dry the strawberries.
- Assemble materials. Keep the knife in a safe place until ready to use.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

Engage all the senses! The children see and feel the inside of a strawberry, then smell and taste it.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the appearance, smell, and taste of a strawberry; and
- Tell that all of a strawberry can be eaten, except the stem and leaves.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Strawberries, at least one for each child
- Sharp knife (for adult use only)
- Blunt-tip scissors
- Plates and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children gather around the strawberries and cutting board. Review with children how to be safe around sharp knives: only adults use them, children keep their hands away, and do not touch sharp knives.
- Review with children what was learned about strawberries already. If this is your first activity, tell the children that you have some strawberries to share today.



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to model enjoying the strawberries with the children.

WORDS TO GROW

Red **Smooth**
Juicy **Sweet**
Cool

- Tell the children strawberries grow on the ground. We have to wash the outside very well to remove soil before we cut it open. Tell the children that you have already washed the strawberries.
- Cut strawberries in half, place on a plate, and give one to each child. Review choking prevention tips (Appendix F) and modify the size and shape of the strawberries as needed for younger children.
- Lead the children through the questions below and ask additional questions if you like.
 - What color is the outside of a strawberry? (Red)
 - What does the inside of the strawberry look like? (lighter red, some white)
 - How does the inside feel? (Cool and smooth)
 - How do the cut strawberries smell? (Sweet or earthy)

TIME TO TASTE!

- Invite children to taste the strawberry. Remind the children not to eat the stem or leaves.
- Be a healthy role model! Enjoy a strawberry with the children.
- Continue the activity, asking:
 - How does the strawberry feel in their mouth? (Smooth and juicy, seed side may feel rough)
 - How does the strawberry taste? (Sweet)



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Painted Pots

The children paint and/or color strawberries on clay pots.

OBJECTIVE

The children will be able to:

- Enjoy a craft while learning about strawberries; and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Clean, dry terra-cotta pots (about 6 inches high; can be found at a hardware store), one for each child OR one large pot, painted as a group project for the garden
- Pencils
- Oil pastels (available at art supply stores)
- Strawberry *Grow It! Cards*
- *Optional:* Acrylic paint and brushes, for painting pots ahead of time
- Smocks or large bibs to protect the children's clothing, (*optional*)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show the strawberry *Grow It! Cards* to the children and keep them on display.
- Review with the children the shape (heart shaped) and color (red) of strawberries.
- Give a pot to each child.
- Using a pencil, help each child draw a strawberry or strawberry patch design on the pot.
- Note: Oil pastels are permanent so it is best to draw the image with a pencil first.
- Help the children use the oil pastels to color the strawberry they outlined on their pot.
- Ask the children to think of uses for the pots they just created. Some ideas include:
 - Use it as a container garden at the family child care site (if a large pot is decorated by the group);
 - Give it to a family member filled with strawberry-scented potpourri;
 - Use it at home; or
 - Other ideas the children suggest.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Paint a base color on the pots with acrylic paint, if desired.
- Arrange for adult volunteers to participate and help the children paint (*optional*).

MIXED-AGES TIP

If adult volunteers are not available, *Grow It! Buddies* can help younger children make a pot. *Grow It! Buddies* can write the word strawberry on the pots.



Day 2

Strawberry: Where Do You Come From and How Do We Eat You?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Strawberries Start as Seeds

Page 41

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Strawberry Mini Parfait

Pages 42-43

10-15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Large Strawberries

Page 44

15-20 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Strawberry Says"

Page 45

10 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Strawberries Start as Seeds

The children see and touch strawberry seeds and learn what seeds need to grow into plants.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how a strawberry grows from a seed into a plant that produces strawberries; and
- Describe the resources needed to grow strawberries.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- A packet of strawberry seeds or one fresh strawberry per child
- Clear plastic cup
- Child-size magnifying glasses
- Ruler
- Strawberry *Grow It!* Cards

INSTRUCTIONS

- Tell the children that they will learn about how strawberries grow. Show the children the strawberry seeds on the strawberry or in the packet. If using seeds from a packet, tell the children the seeds are just like the ones from the outside of the strawberry. Pass the seeds around in a clear plastic cup (strawberry seeds are little).
- Let the children touch the seeds and look at them through the magnifying glass.
- Explain that strawberry seeds grow in the soil. Strawberry seeds are planted at least 12 inches apart (check the back of the seed packet for variations in this spacing). Show this length with the ruler.
- Explain that the sun and water help the strawberries grow into plants. White flowers bloom on the stems of strawberry plants. Where the flowers bloom, strawberries will grow. Check the back of the seed packet for the length of growing time.
- Show the children the *Grow It! Card* of strawberry plants growing in the field.
- Explain that strawberries are picked when they are plump, shiny, and bright red. Show photo of the freshly picked strawberries from the *Grow It! Cards*.
- Explain that the farmer picks and sends ripe strawberries to a grocery store or a farmers market. That is where people buy strawberries to take home to eat. Show the *Grow It! Card* of the strawberries on the plate.
- Tell the children that since strawberries all become ripe at the same time of year, people have found ways to keep strawberries for use year around. One way is to freeze the strawberries.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

WORDS TO GROW

Seeds

Soil

Magnify

Sun

Water

Space

Plants



Strawberry plants in the field



Freshly picked strawberries





ACTIVITY LENGTH
10–15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize ingredients.
- Wash, remove the green leaves, and cut the strawberries into ½-inch pieces.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.



TASTING ACTIVITY

Strawberry Mini Parfait

The children make a simple strawberry mini parfait. They explore the feel, smell, and taste of strawberries.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Taste strawberries in a combination food, Strawberry Mini Parfait; and
- Make a simple snack with strawberries.



MATERIALS NEEDED

For each child:

- Strawberry Mini Parfait (recipe, page 43)
- 1 plastic cup (5 ounces)
- Spoon and napkin

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children gather around and review what was learned about strawberries already.
- Tell the children that strawberries are a fruit that grow on plants above the ground.
- Ask some of the following questions:
 - Are strawberries a fruit or vegetable? (Fruit)
 - What color is a strawberry? (Red)
 - Where do strawberries grow? (In the soil, on a farm)
 - Have you ever picked a strawberry? (Yes or no)
 - Where are strawberries shipped after they are picked? (To stores and farmers markets).
 - Conclude the activity by telling the children that they are going to help you make and taste a strawberry parfait.
 - Gather children around the table and follow the recipe instructions to prepare the parfait.



RECIPE

Strawberry Mini Parfait



PREPARATION TIME

10 minutes

MAKES

1 serving

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving (¼ cup of yogurt and ½ cup fruit) provides ½ oz equivalent meat alternate and ½ cup fruit. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and cutting board to cut the strawberries into pieces.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	75
Protein	3 g
Carbohydrate	14 g
Total Fat	1 g
Saturated Fat	0.5 g
Cholesterol	3 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	110 mg
Sodium	38 mg
Dietary Fiber	2 g

Optional ingredients are not included in nutrient analysis.

INGREDIENTS

For each child:

- ½ cup strawberries, cut, ½-inch pieces
- ¼ cup yogurt, low-fat, vanilla*
- ⅛ cup whole grain-rich cereal* (*optional*)
- 1 5-ounce cup, clear, plastic cup
- Spoon and napkin

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Seat each child at a table with supplies.
2. Show the child how to layer the ingredients into the cup. For each cup: add ¼ cup of strawberries, then ¼ cup yogurt, followed by another ¼ cup of strawberries. Top each cup with ⅛ cup of cereal (*optional*).

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help rinse the strawberries.
- Layer the ingredients.

*Choose yogurt and cereal that meets CACFP sugar requirements (see Appendixes J and K, pages 334–335).





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15-20 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize the materials.
- Make a sample of the large strawberry decorated to show the children as an example.

CRAFT ACTIVITY

Large Strawberries



The children will create large strawberries out of construction paper.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the shape and color of strawberries; and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Red construction paper, 1 piece for each child
- Strawberry *Grow It! Cards*
- Black paint or ink pad
- Blunt-tip scissors
- Green construction paper (*optional*)
- Tape or glue (*optional*)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show the strawberry *Grow It! Cards* to the children and keep on display.
 - Talk with the children about how a strawberry looks.
 - Review the shape (heart) and color of a strawberry (red).
- Show the children a sample picture of a large strawberry with black dots as seeds.
- Help the children cut large strawberry shapes out of construction paper.
- Cut leaves for the strawberry and tape or glue to them to the top of the fruit (*optional*).
- Let the children decorate the strawberry with fingerprint “seeds” using a black ink pad or black paint.



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Strawberry Says"



"Strawberry Says" is the Tasty Acres Farm version of a popular children's game.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move and stretch during a group game;
- Follow instructions from a peer or adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Optional:* Shirt, badge, or other accessory for the leader to wear that lets everyone know he or she is the Farmer.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit in a circle or stand in a group.
- Choose one person to be the Farmer (leader).
- The Farmer orders the other children to do all sorts of different and fun things, the funnier the better!
- But, the Farmer's orders are only to be followed when they start with "Strawberry says."
- When someone follows an order that doesn't begin with "Strawberry says," that child is out of the game. However, make sure to keep the children moving even if they are "out." Ask the children to stand off to the side and do different movements to pick strawberries. For example, children can march through the field, jump, reach, or squat towards the ground to find the strawberries, skip home from the field, etc.
- Repeat until only one person is left. That person is the winner and can be the Farmer in the next round.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Clear or designate an open space for children to move about during the activity.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Make a Pretend Strawberry Patch

Page 47

15 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Strawberry Style

Pages 49-50

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Waffle With Strawberries

Pages 51-53

10-15 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Make a Pretend Strawberry Patch



The children make a pretend strawberry patch and learn the parts of the plant.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how strawberries grow from a seed into a plant that produces strawberries; and
- Experience making a pretend strawberry patch.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Brown piece of paper, about 5 x 4 feet in size
- Strawberry Blackline Master, one copy per child (Fun Extras, page 70)
- Strawberry Plant Parts, one copy per child (Fun Extras, page 71)
- Strawberry *Grow It! Cards*
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils (Green, yellow, and red)
- Blunt-tip scissors
- Reusable adhesive or double-stick tape
- Glue sticks

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Review with the children that strawberries grow from seeds planted in the ground. The seeds need the soil, water, sun, and time to grow into a strawberry plant.



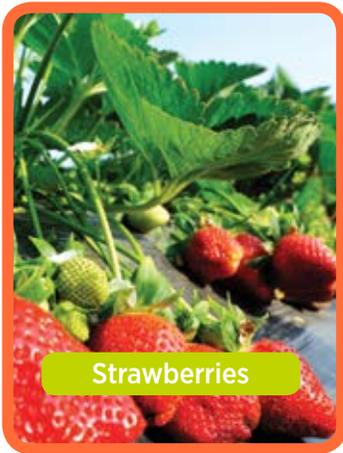
ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Post the brown paper in an easy-to-reach place such as a wall or bulletin board.
- Make one copy per child of the Strawberry Plant Parts (Fun Extras, page 71).
- Organize the supplies at the table(s).





- When the plant is big enough, flowers called blossoms grow on the plant. The blossoms fall away and buds (See Appendix H: *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Glossary, page 331) grow where the flowers were. The strawberry buds grow into strawberries and start to turn from green to red. The strawberries are ripe and ready to pick when they are red and shiny from top to tip. The farmer picks and sends the strawberries to stores or farmers markets. That is where we buy strawberries to take home to eat. Sometimes you can pick your own berries at the farm.
- Tell the children that they are going to make a pretend strawberry plant. Then the class is going to make a pretend strawberry patch with all the plants they create.
- Show the children the strawberry *Grow It! Cards* and the strawberry plant parts. Ask the children to color the parts of the strawberry plant on their sheet. The leaves are green, the blossoms are yellow and white, the buds are green, the small unripe berries are red at the tip and white at the stem, and the large ripe strawberries are red. Help any children who need assistance.
- Help the children cut out, or cut for them, the colored strawberry parts. As each part of the strawberry plant is taped or glued to the plant, talk about how the plant grows strawberries. Explain that plants can have all of these different parts at the same time because a plant can make many strawberries.
- Help the children tape the plants on the brown paper to make a strawberry patch.

Optional Activity: Visit a local strawberry patch or farm during berry-picking season. Pick strawberries with the children.

VARIATION

If desired, make this a week-long activity by following the instructions below.

- **Day One:** Help the children post the colored plant leaves on a wall or bulletin board.
- **Day Two:** Help the children add the blossoms to the plants.
- **Day Three:** Help the children add the buds to the plants.
- **Day Four:** Help the children put the small strawberries on the plants.
- **Day Five:** Help the children put the large ripe strawberries on the plants.

Each day, have the children notice how the strawberries are growing in size. “Harvest” the strawberries from the plants at the end of the week.





MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm

STRAWBERRY STYLE

The children sing about growing and eating strawberries and act out motions to this familiar tune.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Sing and act out motions to familiar tune; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Strawberry lyrics to “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” (page 50)
- Large space for the children to move about

INSTRUCTIONS

- Lead the children in singing these new words to the tune “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” and demonstrate the suggested motions or make up new ones.
- Encourage the children to move about as they are singing.
- Explain that skipping, wiggling, stretching, running, jumping, and playing actively every day helps us to feel good and stay healthy.



ACTIVITY LENGTH
10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Become familiar with the words and motions of the song.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can take turns leading the song.





Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Strawberry Style

1ST VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some strawberries, EIEIO! *(Pretend to hoe ground around plants using large vigorous motions)*
With a plant, plant here and a plant, plant there,
Here a plant, there a plant, everywhere a
strawberry plant! *(Pretend to hoe ground around plants using large vigorous motions.)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

2ND VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some strawberries, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry a flat of strawberries)*
With a berry, berry here and a berry, berry there,
Here a berry, there a berry, everywhere a strawberry! *(Squat to ground and pretend to point at strawberries)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

3RD VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some strawberries, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry a flat of strawberries)*
With a pick, pick here and a pick, pick there, *(Pretend to pick and carry strawberries)*
Here a pick, there a pick, everywhere a strawberry pick.
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

4TH VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some strawberries, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry a flat of strawberries)*
With a sweet bite here and a sweet bite there, *(Pretend to eat strawberries)*
Here a bite, there a bite, everywhere strawberry bites. *(Pretend to eat strawberries)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*



TASTING ACTIVITY

Waffle With Strawberries

Discuss strawberry facts with the children and try a new strawberry recipe together.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how strawberries are grown, harvested, and eaten;
- Taste strawberries on a waffle; and
- Describe many different ways to eat strawberries.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Toaster
- Whole-grain waffles
- Fresh strawberries (3 cups)
- Spoon
- Plates, forks, and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10–15 minutes

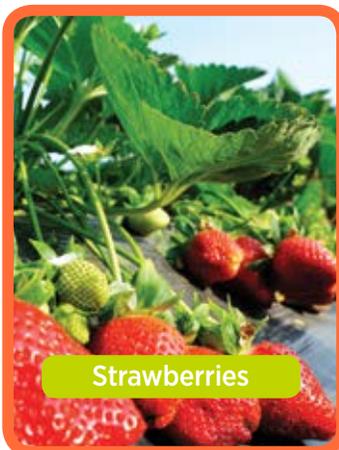
WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize ingredients and materials.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the waffle with strawberries. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the waffle with strawberries with the children.



Strawberries



Strawberries

INSTRUCTIONS

- Gather the children and lead a discussion about strawberries.
- Use the strawberry *Grow It! Cards* to show strawberries growing, and ready to eat.
- Tell the children that strawberries are a fruit that grow on plants above the ground.
- Ask some of the following questions:
 - Are strawberries a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - What shape is a strawberry? (Heart shape)
 - What color is the leaf cap on top? (Green)
 - What color is the outside of a strawberry? (Red with seeds)
 - How do the seeds make it feel? (Rough)
 - What color is the inside of a strawberry? (Lighter red, some white)
 - What does the inside of the strawberry feel like? (Smooth)
 - Where do strawberries grow? (In the soil, on a farm)
 - Do strawberries grow on plants above or below the ground? (Above the ground)
 - Are the plants close to or far from the ground? (Close)
 - What do strawberries look like when they are ready to pick? (Plump, shiny, and bright red)
 - Where are strawberries shipped after they are picked? (To stores and farmers markets)
- Remind children that strawberries can also be frozen after they are picked so that families can enjoy strawberries year round.
- Have the children name some of the ways that strawberries can be eaten (as a topping on waffles, in a salad, as a snack, etc.)
- Conclude the activity by telling the children that they are going to help you make and then taste a waffle with strawberries.
- Gather children around the table and follow recipe instructions to prepare the waffle with strawberries.



RECIPE

Waffle With Strawberries

INGREDIENTS

- 3 waffles, whole grain-rich, frozen (at least 35 grams each)
- 3 cups strawberries, fresh, cut into ½-inch pieces
- Plates, forks, and napkins (one per child)

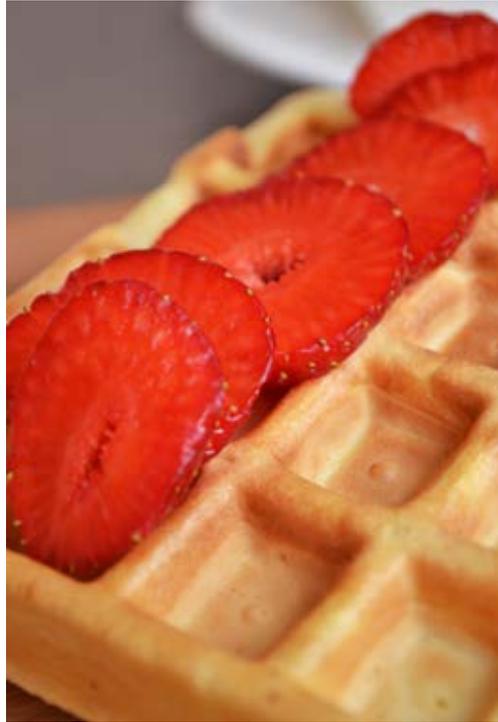
INSTRUCTIONS

1. Follow the package instructions to prepare the toaster waffle.
2. Serve half of a waffle to each child with ½ cup of the strawberries. Help younger children cut up the waffle.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help rinse the strawberries.
- Spoon the strawberries on the waffle.



PREPARATION TIME

5 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving (½ waffle and ½ cup of strawberries) provides ½ oz equivalent grains and ½ cup fruit. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and cutting board to cut the strawberries into pieces.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	68
Protein	2 g
Carbohydrate	13 g
Total Fat	2 g
Saturated Fat.....	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	1 mg
Calcium	38 mg
Sodium	100 mg
Dietary Fiber	2 g



Day 4

Strawberry: How Do You Grow?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Strawberry in a Jar

Pages 55-56

15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Tasty Acres Mobile

Page 57

15 minutes



READING ACTIVITY

Page 58

10-20 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Strawberry in a Jar

The children plant a strawberry starter plant in a container and find out what these small plants need to grow and produce strawberries.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe what is needed to grow strawberries; and
- Experience planting a strawberry starter plant.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- A strawberry jar (urn-shaped container with openings or pockets on sides) or a plastic container at least 8-inches deep and 8-10 inches in diameter
- Ever-bearing strawberry starter plants
- Potting soil
- Scoop
- Garden hose with sprinkler nozzle or watering can
- Gardening gloves (*optional*)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Take the children and the strawberry starter plants outside. Explain that today they will plant small strawberry plants in a soil-filled container.
- Point to the sun. Ask the children how the sunlight feels on their skin (warm).
- Explain that the light and warmth of the sun helps strawberry plants grow large enough to produce strawberries.
- Show the children the potting soil. Let the children touch the soil.
- Ask the children how the soil feels (wet or dry, hard or soft). Ask the children how the soil smells (trees, woods, earthy). Explain that strawberry plants grow in soil. Have the children help scoop soil into the container.
- Run some water from a hose or pour some from a container and let the children touch it. Ask how it feels (wet). Explain that water helps plants grow. Explain that water for plants usually comes as rain. Juicy foods like strawberries need lots of water, so farmers and gardeners use sprinklers or watering cans in addition to rain to make sure plants have plenty of water.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Check with your local cooperative extension office or local nurseries for varieties of ever-bearing strawberries suited to your growing zone.
- Assemble the pot, potting soil, and water source outside or indoors over a waterproof tarp or trash bag.
- Determine, before filling with soil, the best spot to place the pot; large pots filled with soil and plants are heavy to move.



Green Thumb Guide

Check with your local Cooperative Extension for varieties of strawberries that thrive in your area. Ever-bearing strawberries produce berries all spring and summer. Ask about types that grow well in containers.



- **Strawberry**

Jar: Purchase one plant per pocket plus three for the top opening.

- **Containers:** Purchase one plant for a container 8 to 10 inches in diameter. For larger containers, allow 8 inches between plants. Strawberry plants in containers will live for one season.

- **Garden:** Strawberries planted in outdoor gardens will return the next year.

Note: Birds love strawberries too! You may need to cover your plants with special net covers to prevent the birds from eating the berries before you do.

For strawberry jar:

- Fill jar with potting soil until reaching the first openings of the jar.
- Gently remove the plants from their pots and ease through the first level or row of pocket openings. Spread the roots with care and cover with soil. Water enough to moisten soil but not drench. Continue to fill pot with soil to the next openings, plant more starter plants, and repeat, ending with three starter plants in the top center of the pot. Water the plants.

For a container:

- Fill the containers $\frac{2}{3}$ full of potting soil. Remove the starter plants from their pots and gently loosen roots. Place the starter plants in the center of a single container or 8 inches apart in larger containers. Cover the roots with soil and water to moisten but not drench.

For a garden:

- If there is enough space, plant strawberry starter plants in a sunny garden spot and space 8 inches apart.



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Tasty Acres Mobile

The children make a mobile of strawberries.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

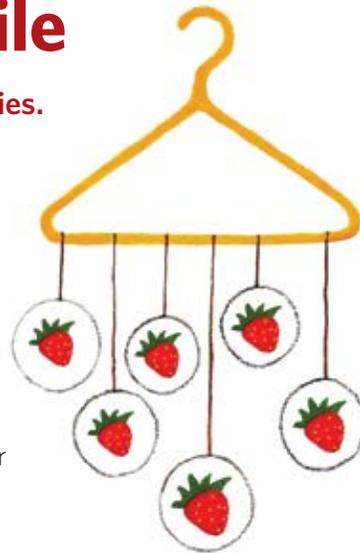
- Engage with strawberries in a fun way; and
- Develop strength and fine motor skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Drawings of strawberries (pages 68–69)
- 4-inch circles cut from white construction or poster board-weight paper, five per child
- Plastic hangers for each child
- Pieces of string cut 6-, 8-, 10-, 12-, and 14-inches long, one set of each length per child
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Blunt tip scissors
- Hole punch

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show the children a picture of a strawberry.
 - Talk with the children about what a strawberry looks like.
 - Review with the children the shape (heart) and color of strawberry (red).
- Give five paper circles with holes pre-punched to each child.
- Show the children how to position the circle with the hole at the top before beginning to draw.
- Have the children draw pictures of strawberries on their circles of paper.
- Option: Have the children draw favorite foods made with strawberries on some circles or on the back of their circles.
- Pass out five pieces of string in varying lengths to each child. Help the children thread the string through the hole at the top of their pictures. Tie the string to the picture securely. Then tie the strings with the pictures onto the plastic hangers. Help the children balance their mobiles.
- As the mobiles are assembled, talk with the children about how strawberries look, feel, and taste.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

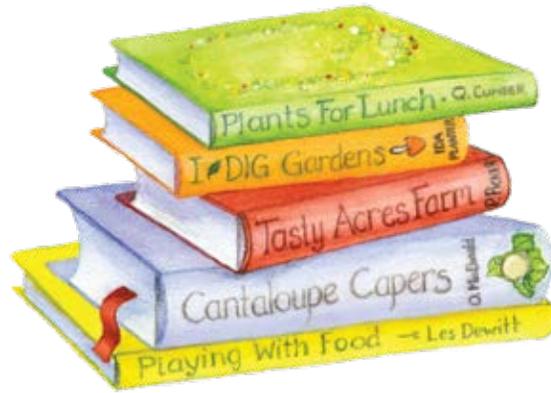
- Organize the materials.
- Cut and organize sets of string in the various lengths.
- Cut circles of paper and punch a hole in each circle $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in from an edge.





ACTIVITY LENGTH
10-20 minutes

Reading Activity



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Clear a space for the children to sit around you.
- Choose a book from the Harvest of Books list (Basics, page 15).
- Borrow the book you select from a library or purchase it.
- You can also use other books related to fruits and vegetables that may already be available to you.

Read story books to the children that are about growing and/or eating fruits and vegetables. Listening to such stories can encourage children to adopt positive behaviors that can last a lifetime, like trying new fruits and vegetables.

OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to:

- Describe the fun and interesting stories about fruits and vegetables that were read to them.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Books from a library or purchased books
- Space for the children to sit

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit around you as you read the book.
- Ask the children to listen for the names of fruits and vegetables as the story is read. If possible, have the children act out parts of the book to encourage movement during story time.

- Ask the children which fruits and vegetables were named in the story and what happened to them. For example,
 - Where were the fruits and vegetables grown?
 - What happened to the fruits and vegetables after they were picked?
 - Who ate the fruits and vegetables?
- Add other questions that relate to the story.



MIXED-AGES TIPS

- Hold the baby on your lap while reading to other children.
- Give the baby a fruit board book.
- Have *Grow It! Buddies* read to younger children.



Day 5

Introducing MyPlate

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

I Like You Berry, Berry Much

Pages 60–62

20–25 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Meet Strawberry's Fruity Friends

Pages 63–64

10–15 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Berry Bounce

Pages 65–66

10 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

20 minutes;
25 minutes if optional
coloring activity
conducted

FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

I Like You Berry, Berry Much



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review the foods and activities shown on the poster.
- Display the *MyPlate Poster*.
- *Optional:* Make copies of the MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child.

Introduce the children to the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. The children will learn that strawberries and other berries are part of the Fruit Food Group.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Say that strawberries are part of the Fruit Group;
- Say that eating fruits like strawberries helps keep us healthy;
- Say that being physically active every day helps us feel good;
- Say that eating foods from the different food groups each day helps us grow and be healthy; and
- Name a food from each of the five food groups.

MATERIALS NEEDED

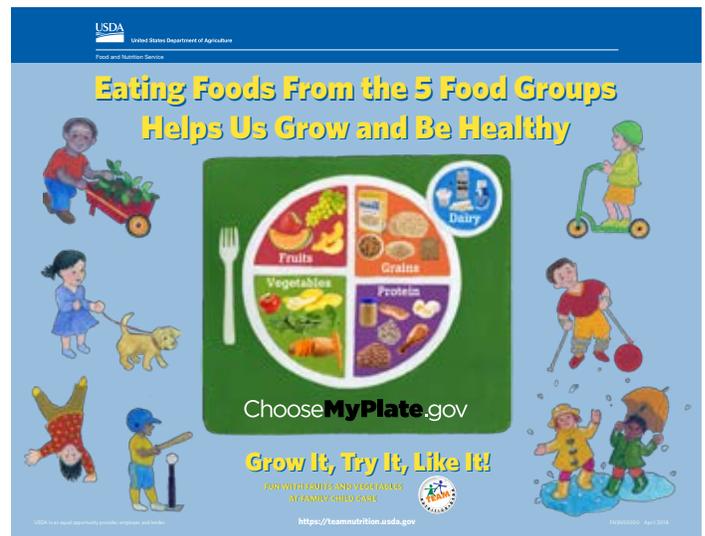
- *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*
- *Optional:* MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child



INSTRUCTIONS

Learning the Food Groups

- Seat the children in a semicircle on the floor in view of the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*.
- Tell the children that today they are going to learn about ways to be healthy and have fun every day. Tell the children that the best part is they already like to do what helps them be healthy: they like to eat a variety of foods and they like to play.
- Show the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster* to the children. Ask the children to tell you what they see on the poster. Accept all correct answers, such as food, specific foods by name, children playing, specific activities by name, etc.
- Explain that MyPlate shows the five food groups a person should eat from each day. Each food group has its own color. Point to the different sections as you discuss. The Fruit Group is red, the Vegetable Group is green, the Grains Group is orange, the Dairy Group is blue, and the Protein Foods Group is purple. Eating foods from each food group helps us to grow and be healthy. Explain that strawberries are a part of the Fruit Group.



The Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster shows foods from the five food groups.



GRAINS

- Tell the children that foods made from grains are in the Grains Group represented by the orange-colored section on MyPlate. Point to the food group on the poster and state that grain foods like bread, cereal, rice, and pasta give us energy to play.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a food in the orange section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Grains Group also give us energy to play.
- Children this age may not know what a grain is. Tell them grains come from plants such as wheat, oats, rice, and corn. Grains are used to make foods like cereal, bread, tortillas, and pasta.



VEGETABLES

- Tell the children that many foods from plants are in the Vegetable Group and are represented by the green section of MyPlate. Point out the carrot on the poster. Ask the children to name this vegetable (carrot). Ask the children to name the color of carrots (orange). Explain that eating orange vegetables, like carrots, can help them to be healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a vegetable in the green section, and name the vegetable. After each child names a vegetable, repeat the name of the vegetable and state that (the vegetable named) and other foods from the Vegetable Group also help keep us healthy.





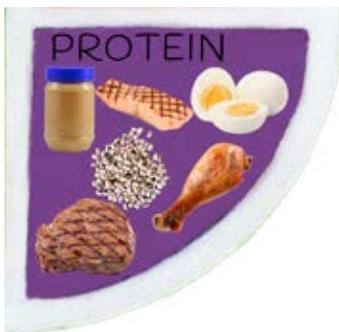
FRUITS

- Tell the children that some foods from plants are in the Fruit Group represented by the red section. Point to the strawberry shown on the poster and state that strawberries help keep us healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a fruit in the red section, and name the fruit. After each child names a fruit, repeat the name of the fruit and state that (the fruit named) and other foods from the Fruit Group help keep us healthy.



DAIRY

- Tell the children that milk and foods made from milk are in the Dairy Group represented by the blue section. Point to the milk and yogurt on the poster and state that milk and yogurt help us build strong bones.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the blue section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Dairy Group also help us build strong bones.

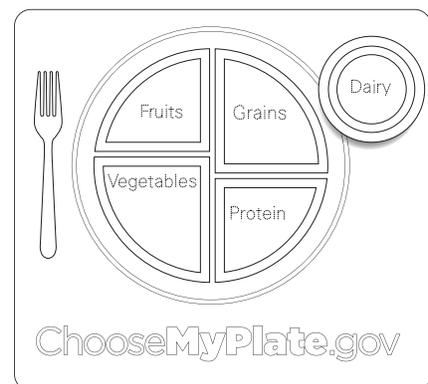


PROTEIN FOODS

- Tell the children that foods from animals and some plants are in the Protein Foods Group represented by the purple section. Point to the meat, fish, egg, beans, and peanut butter on the poster and state that these foods help our muscles grow.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the purple section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Protein Foods Group also help our muscles grow. (Note: if only foods that come from animals are selected, point out a food from plants and name it. If only foods from plants are selected, point out a food that comes from animals and name it).

OPTIONAL COLORING ACTIVITY

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Distribute a copy of the MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333) to each child.
- Ask the children to color the Fruit Group section of MyPlate red and draw and color a strawberry near it. Help the younger children who may not know their colors yet.
- With older children, have them copy the dot-to-dot outline of the word "Fruits."



TASTING ACTIVITY

Meet Strawberry's Berry Friends



The children taste the difference between strawberries and raspberries (or other types of berries you choose).

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Compare strawberries to other berries; and
- Describe many different ways to eat strawberries.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Strawberries and raspberries, or other type of berries, such as blackberries or blueberries (fresh or frozen and thawed), one of each type per child
- Small cups and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10–15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Rinse with cold water and gently dry fresh berries or thaw frozen berries. Note: Frozen raspberries may lose their shape or become mushy when thawed.
- Cut berries into bite-sized pieces and place into small cups for each child.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.
- Modify the size of the berries depending on the age of the child (see Appendix F: Choking Prevention, page 327).



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to model enjoying the berries with the children.

WORDS TO GROW

Raspberry	Blueberry
Small	Medium
Large	Frozen
Blackberry	Thaw

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about strawberries.
- Encourage answers such as how and where strawberries grow; how they look, feel, smell, and taste; and other information covered in the unit.
- Show the children the fresh (or frozen, thawed) strawberries and raspberries.
- Tell the children that raspberries are similar to strawberries, but different in shape.
- Let the children know that they are also going to find out if the berries taste different from one another.
- Ask the children what is similar about these two berries? (Color—red)
- Ask the children what is different about these two berries? (Size, taste, flavor, etc.)

TIME TO TASTE!

- Give each child a cup with samples of each berry to taste.
- Invite the children to feel, smell, and then taste the different berries. Note both are juicy and taste sweet.
- Be a healthy role model! Enjoy some berries with the children.
- As the children are eating, ask:
 - What other types of berries have you eaten before? (blueberries, blackberries)
 - What ways can berries be eaten? (Give suggestions such as such as on cereal, in fruit or vegetable salads, plain or with yogurt, etc.)



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Berry Bounce



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Display the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster.

Berry Bounce is a fun activity to get children moving.

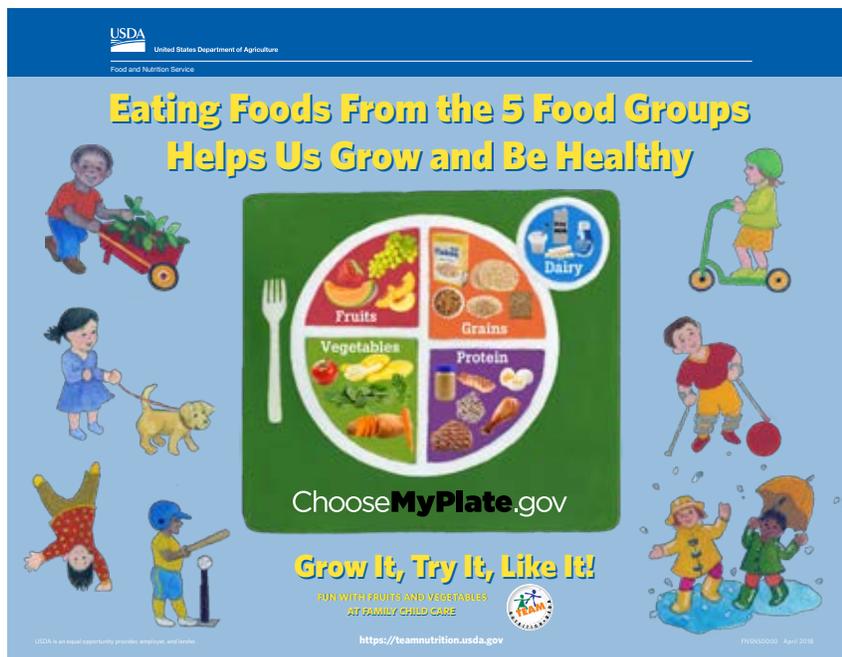
OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Enjoy physical activity in a fun and new way; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster



Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster



INSTRUCTIONS

- Point to the various activities depicted on the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. Ask the children to tell you why it is important to be physically active and play every day (it helps you be strong and healthy, and it is fun). Tell the children that today they will learn to be active in a way that reminds them of the strawberries they just tasted.
- Ask the children to extend their arms out to the side and spread apart from each other so that no child is able to easily touch another child's fingers. When children are spaced around the room, ask them to lower their arms and listen carefully. Ask the children to think about strawberries and raspberries. Ask the children to decide silently which berry they liked best today. Tell the children that after you count to 3, they will bounce in place like their favorite berry using one of two motions (demonstrate each motion).
 - Strawberry: Place the arms, crossed at the wrists, on the top of the head with the hands extended out like little green leaf caps.
 - Raspberry: Place each hand, palm side down, on the top of the opposite shoulder (right hand on left shoulder, left hand on right shoulder) with the arms crossed in front of the chest and elbow pointed out like little bumps on a raspberry.
- Give the children a few seconds to decide upon their favorite berry, then say, "1, 2, 3...bounce!"
- Have the children bounce in place for 1-2 minutes.
- Conclude the activity by telling the children it is fun to be physically active by doing a Berry Bounce.

NOTE TO CAREGIVER

Active play and movement are important for every child's growth and development. Although they may seem to be active and energetic, most children do not get the amount of physical activity they need for good health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children get 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.



Fun Extras



Strawberries

Strawberries Growing in a Garden



Strawberries

at Farmers Market

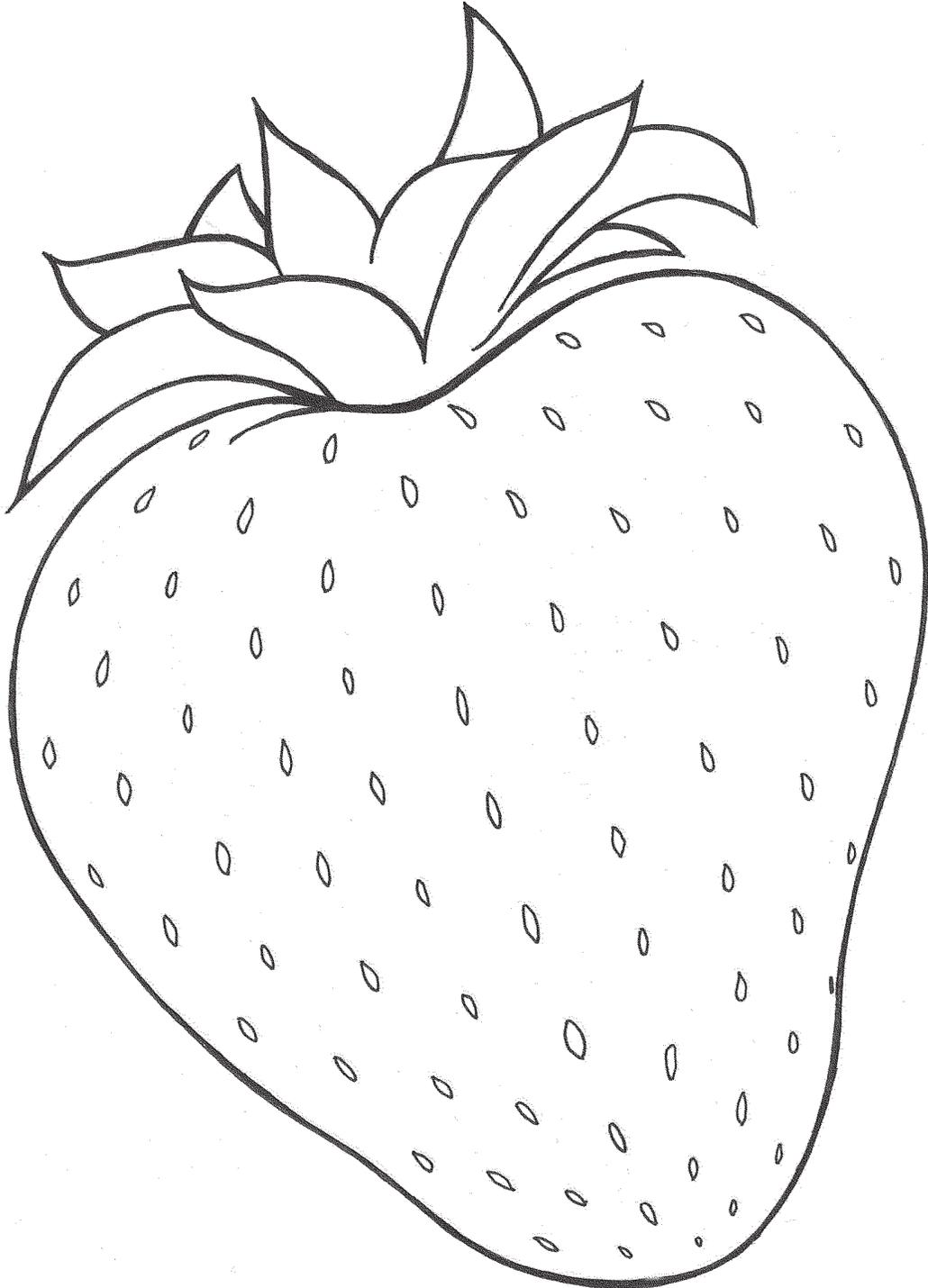


STRAWBERRIES
3.75



Strawberry

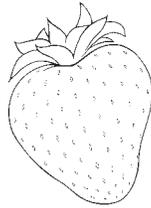
Blackline Master



Strawberry Plant Parts



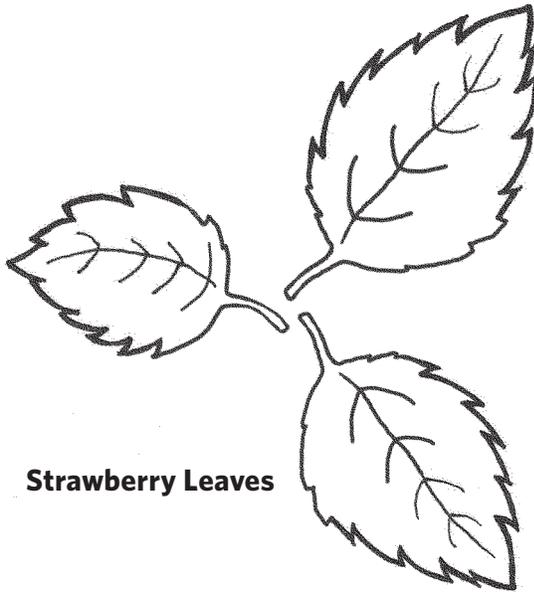
Strawberry Leaves



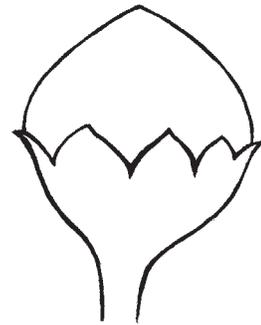
Small Strawberry



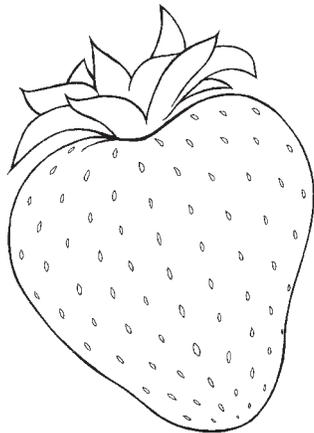
Strawberry Bud



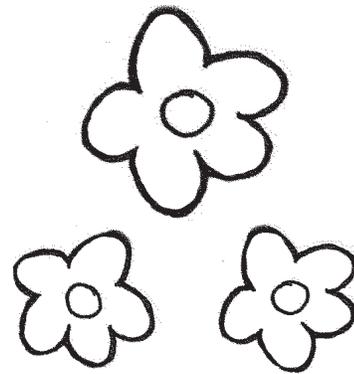
Strawberry Leaves



Strawberry Bud



Large Strawberry



Strawberry Flowers (Blossoms)



Color the Strawberries

Dear Family:

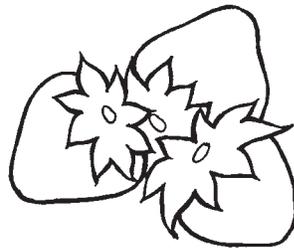
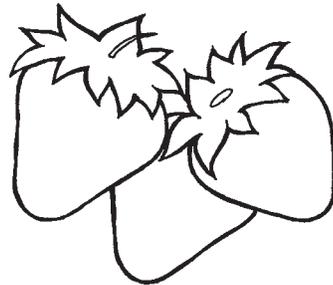
Your child has been learning about how strawberries look and feel. Have your child color the strawberries pictured below with a red crayon, marker, or finger paint. The leaves can be colored with green. Help your child use a black marker, crayon, or paint to make the seeds on the strawberries.



Match the Strawberries

Dear Family:

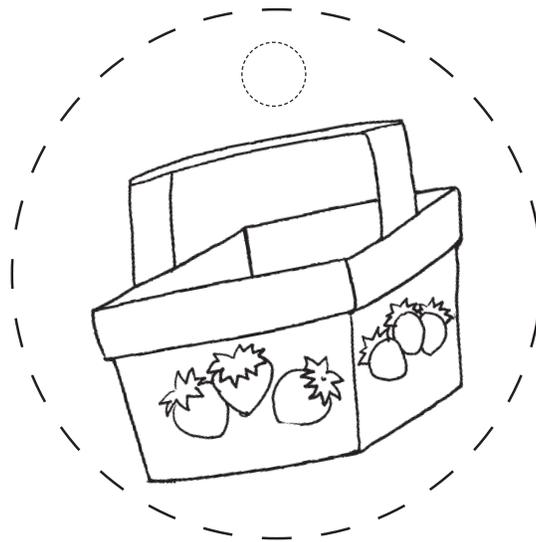
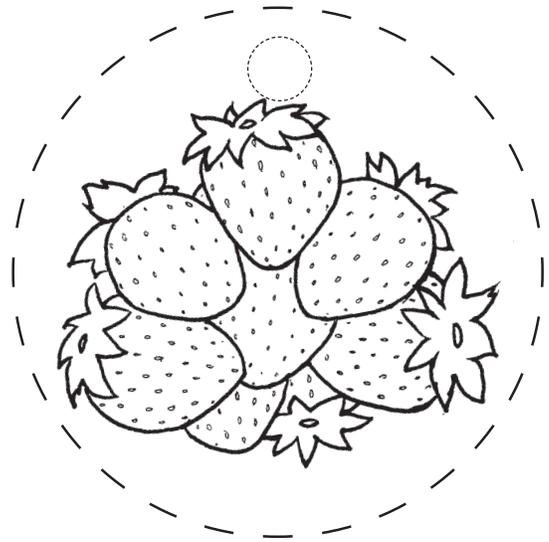
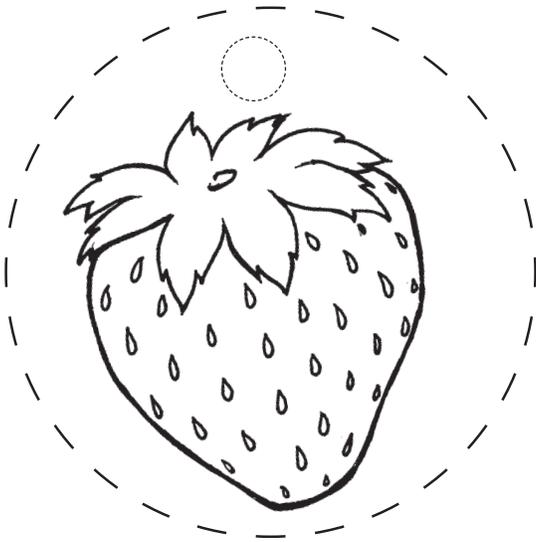
Your child has been learning what strawberries look like. Ask your child to look closely at the berries on this page. Have your child find the two pictures of strawberries that look alike. Ask your child to put a circle around the identical strawberries and draw a line from one match to the other. Talk about what makes these two pictures the same. What makes the other pictures of strawberries different?



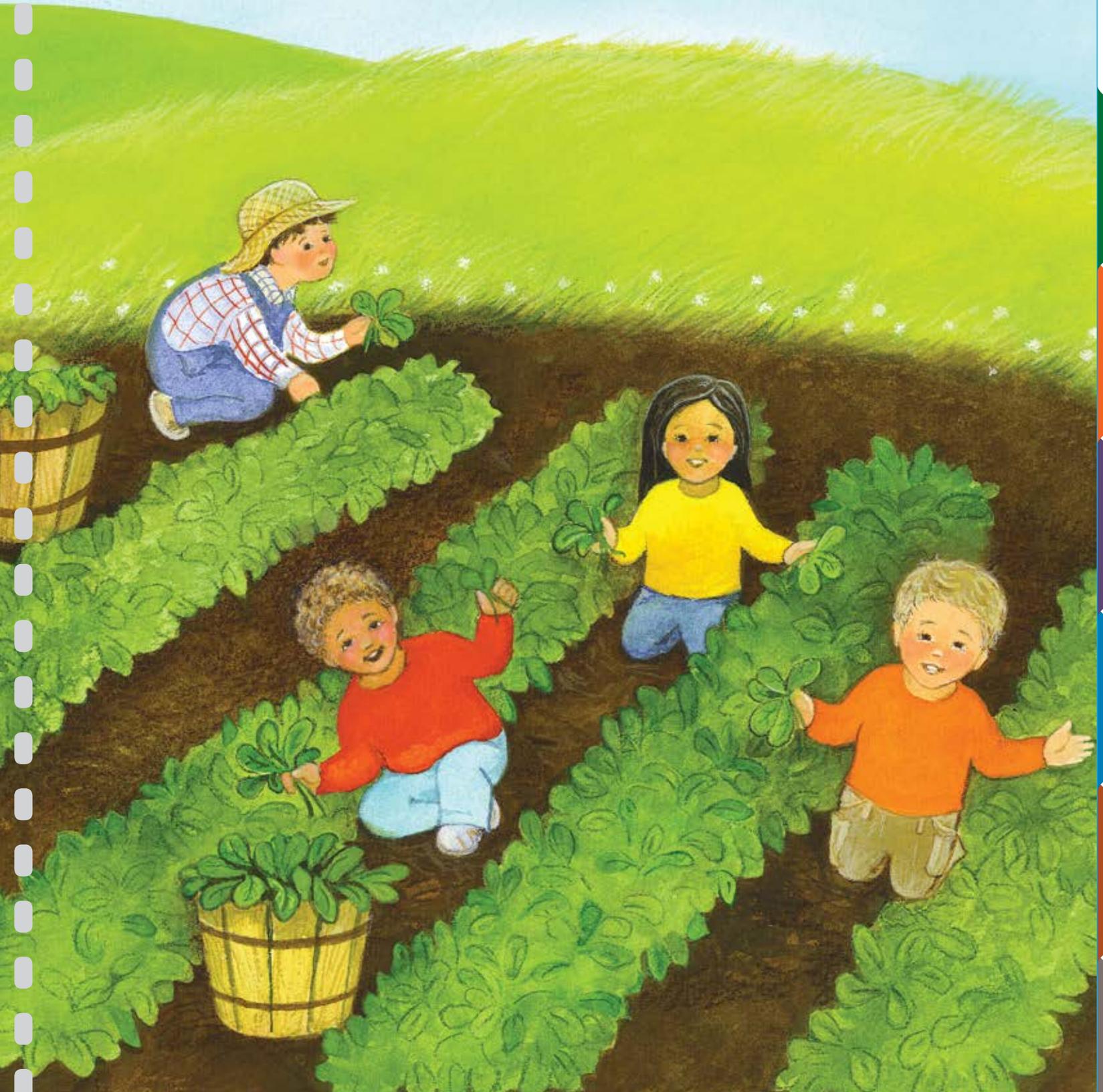
Strawberry Fun Badge

Dear Family:

Help your child make their own “berry” special badge. Have your child color the badges with crayons, paint, or markers. Help your child glue the pictures to a piece of thin cardboard such as an empty cereal box or file folder. When dry, cut out each badge and trim the cardboard around the badge. Place a piece of double-stick tape on the back of the badge and attach to clothing. Or punch a hole in the top and thread a string or yarn through to make a necklace.



Spinach Lane



SPINACH

CANTALOUPE

SQUASH

PEACH

POTATO

APPENDIXES

WELCOME TO Spinach Lane at Tasty Acres Farm!



Spinach is a dark-green, leafy vegetable. Through the activities in this unit, children will explore spinach, experiencing how spinach leaves look, feel, smell, and taste.

Spinach grows quickly, and hands-on planting activities will help children learn that seeds produce these flavorful plants. Grow some spinach and have a harvest. See how bunches of spinach go from the farm to the store and farmers market. Leave time to tempt the taste buds with spinach dips, salads, and more tasty options. Children also have many opportunities to try spinach throughout the unit. Growing at Home materials allow families to share in the sweet rewards.

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- FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY
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Spinach Activity Chart

DAY 1 55-60 minutes	DAY 2 50-60 minutes	DAY 3 50 minutes	DAY 4 50-65 minutes	DAY 5 45-55 minutes
MYSTERY BOX OR BAG	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY
<p>One Touch, One Guess</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Spinach Starts as Seeds</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Plant a Spinach Seed in a Cup</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Plant Spinach Outdoors</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Leafy Green Vegetables</p> <p>20-25 minutes</p>
CRAFT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY	OPTIONAL ACTIVITY	OPTIONAL ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY
<p>Spinach Leaf Print</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Spinach Flowers</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Grow a Seedling in a Bag</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Make a Seed Tape</p> <p>15-20 minutes</p>	<p>Active Spinach Stretch</p> <p>10 minutes</p>
TASTING ACTIVITY	CRAFT ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY	CRAFT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY
<p>Quick Quesadilla</p> <p>25-30 minutes</p>	<p>Garden Stones</p> <p>20-30 minutes</p>	<p>Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Spinach Style</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Stamped Wrapping Paper</p> <p>10 minutes</p> 	<p>Spinach Egg Bake</p> <p>15-20 minutes</p> 
	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY	READING ACTIVITY	
	<p>"Spinach Says"</p> <p>10 minutes</p> 	<p>Spinach Salad</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	 <p>10-20 minutes</p>	





Introduction to Spinach Lane Activities

Check with local farms and farmers markets to find out when spinach is in peak season. In most areas, spinach is a spring and early summer crop. Seeing spinach growing in the field makes a great field trip. If a farm is not nearby, visit a produce stand or farmers market to see fresh spinach. Your local grocery store may also have fresh spinach.

The spinach lessons in this unit are arranged by day to teach over the course of 5 consecutive days. If possible, do the planting activities and enjoy homegrown spinach for several weeks. It is an easy vegetable to grow and can be planted in a garden bed or container. Planting and watching a plant grow can be an enjoyable activity for children.

ACTIVITY LENGTH

Most activities require only 10–15 minutes.

CREDITING TIPS

Some activities in this unit include children eating spinach. Check for food allergies before serving. If you plan to serve spinach as part of a reimbursable meal or snack for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), check the minimum serving sizes for each age group (Appendix G, page 330). There are also Crediting Tips with some of the recipes. If you plan to serve those as part of a reimbursable meal or snack, refer to the Crediting Tips for guidance.

For information on purchasing the correct amount of spinach, see USDA's Food Buying Guide at <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov>.

WORDS TO GROW

New Words To Use When Teaching About Spinach

Vegetables	Green
Leaves	Smooth
Stems	Bumpy

LUNCH AND SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz eq	1 ½ oz eq
Vegetables	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Fruits	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.

SNACK MEAL PATTERNS

Select 2 of the 5 components for snack

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	½ cup
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz eq	½ oz eq
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.



Getting To Know Spinach



Spinach is a type of leafy green vegetable, similar to chard or kale, which can be eaten raw or cooked. Spinach is easy to find in the grocery store year round and can be purchased fresh, frozen, or canned. You can purchase pre-washed, fresh spinach in bags or containers, and bunches of spinach are easy to wash at home using a colander or salad spinner.

GROWING GUIDE

Spinach is easy to grow in a lot of different parts of the United States. It prefers cooler temperatures and will grow best in the spring and the fall. For a spring harvest, plant seeds outdoors about 2 weeks before the last frost. Keep the soil moist, but avoid over watering. The spinach leaves will be ready to harvest about 40 days after planting. Plant in mid-August for a fall crop, ensuring that soil temperatures are cool enough.

HOW SHOULD I STORE MY SPINACH?

Refrigerate after harvest and use within 3-5 days. Store it dry and rinse the leaves with cold water before eating.

SIX SIMPLE WAYS TO SERVE SPINACH

1. Fresh spinach leaves added to a fruit smoothie.
2. Spinach leaves mixed with other types of lettuce leaves for a greener salad.
3. Fresh spinach leaves in a sandwich, in place of lettuce.
4. Chopped and added to vegetable soup.
5. Sautéed with lemon juice and vegetable oil for a tasty side dish.
6. Used as an ingredient in omelets, quiches, lasagna, casseroles, or on pizza.



Spinach

Please provide a print copy (or email a digital copy) of Growing at Home to families before, during, or after completing the Spinach activities. Sharing the handout and recipes is a great way to keep families engaged and informed about what their children are learning during the day.

Content from the handout can also be displayed on a family bulletin board, or shared on your website.

In addition to the ideas above, text, tweet, or share daily spinach lesson highlights with the families.



MESSAGES FOR FAMILIES

DAY ONE

- Today your child learned that spinach is the color green. #GrowIt
- Today your child tried a Quesadilla. We are sending the recipe home. #GrowIt

DAY TWO

- Today your child learned that spinach grows from seeds. #GrowIt
- Today your child learned that spinach needs soil, sun, time, and water to grow. #GrowIt
- Today your child learned that spinach grows in about 40 days. #GrowIt

DAY THREE

- Today your child tasted spinach salad! #GrowIt

DAY FOUR

- Today we read a book that had fruits and vegetables as part of the story. Ask your child to describe his or her favorite part. #GrowIt
- Today your child planted spinach seeds. #GrowIt

DAY FIVE

- Today your child learned about the MyPlate food groups. Ask your child which food group spinach is in. #GrowIt
- Looking for ways to include more veggies at meals? Try our Spinach Egg Bake <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-homes>. #GrowIt



PREPARATION TIME

20 minutes

COOKING TIME

20 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

SAFETY NOTE

To prevent choking, make sure to lightly mash up the kidney beans.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	203
Protein	14 g
Carbohydrate	26 g
Total Fat	6 g
Saturated Fat	2 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	2 mg
Calcium	157 mg
Sodium	442 mg
Dietary Fiber	6 g

Quick Quesadilla

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ¼ cups spinach, frozen, chopped (2 ¼ cups thawed and drained yields 1 ½ cups)
- 1 cup dark red kidney beans, canned, no salt added, drained and rinsed or kidney beans, dry cooked
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon chili powder
- 4 whole grain-rich tortillas, 8-inches
- 1 ½ cups mozzarella cheese, low-fat, shredded



- Nonstick cooking spray
- Forks, plates, and napkins

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thaw, drain, and squeeze excess liquid from spinach.
2. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
3. Place kidney beans in a small microwavable bowl.
4. Add garlic powder, onion powder, and chili powder.
5. Lightly mash beans by squeezing using gloved hands (at least 50% of the beans should appear whole). Be careful not to over-mash beans.
6. Heat in microwave for 1 minute. Stir with a spoon.
7. Prepare quesadillas: Place half of the tortillas on a baking sheet. Spread ¾ cup of spinach on each tortilla. Top each with ¾ cup of bean mixture and ¾ cup of cheese.
8. Place remaining tortillas on top.
9. Spray outside of filled quesadillas with nonstick cooking spray.
10. Bake for 15 minutes. Heat quesadillas to an internal temperature of 140 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds.
11. Cut each quesadilla into 6 wedges.
12. Serve 2 wedges or ½ quesadilla.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Mash the kidney beans with a fork.
- Measure the seasonings and cheese.
- Spread the ingredients on the tortillas before baking.
- Help add the top tortilla.



An Adventure Stems From Learning About Spinach

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

One Touch, One Guess

Pages 84–85

15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Spinach Leaf Print

Page 86

15 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Quick Quesadilla

Pages 87–88

25–30 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review Make a Mystery Box or Bag, as needed (Basics, pages 11–12).
- Rinse spinach leaves, at least three leaves per student. One pre-washed leaf per child for touching activity and the remainder for the Mystery Box or Bag activity.
- Place a handful of spinach leaves in the Mystery Box or Bag. Keep the rest of the leaves out of the sight of children, but have available in case “enthusiastic feelers” damage the leaves in the box and more are needed.
- Make copies of Growing at Home: Spinach, one set per child (pages 81–82), or draft an email for families. The Growing at Home resource includes the Quick Quesadilla recipe that the children will taste today.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.
- Have the children wash their hands before and after activity (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325)

MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

One Touch, One Guess

Use the Mystery Box or Bag to create interest and excite their sense of touch. Have the children feel spinach leaves in the box or bag before revealing the “mystery” item to all.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Identify spinach as a lightweight, green leafy vegetable; and
- Describe the appearance and smell of spinach.

MATERIALS NEEDED

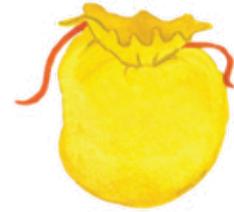
- Fresh spinach leaves
- Mystery Box or Bag
- Paper and pencil or pen
- Craft feather (*optional*)

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Introduce the Mystery Box or Bag, or reintroduce it if you have used it before (see Basics, page 11).
- One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box or bag with the child.
- Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he or she feels.
- After everyone has guessed, show the spinach to the children.
- Note the children’s guesses that were close (a leaf, a plant, lettuce, food) or correct (spinach).
- Offer each child a clean leaf of spinach to look at, touch, and smell.



- Talk about the spinach. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.
 - Is spinach a fruit or a vegetable? (Vegetable)
 - What color is it? (Dark green)
 - Do the leaves feel thick or thin? (Thin)
 - How does the outside of it feel? (Smooth and bumpy)
 - Is the spinach leaf light or heavy? (Very light like a feather—let children feel the feather)
 - Is it soft or hard? (Soft like the leaf from a tree)
 - Is the stem on the spinach leaf thick or thin? (Thin)
 - Has anyone ever tasted a spinach leaf? (Yes or no)
 - When you bite or tear the spinach leaf, what color do you see inside? (Green)
 - If the children are fond of dinosaurs, ask what kind of dinosaurs might eat spinach? (Plant Eaters/Herbivores)

TIME TO TASTE!

- Conclude the lesson by inviting the children to taste the spinach leaf.
- Ask the children:
 - Is the leaf soft or chewy? (Chewy)
 - How does the spinach taste?



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the spinach with the children.

WORDS TO GROW

Vegetable	Bumpy
Green	Smooth
Leaf or Leaves	Stem
Light (weight)	





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can help a younger children make a leaf print. *Grow It! Buddies* can create a pattern from multiple leaf prints.

CRAFT ACTIVITY

Spinach Leaf Print



The children make a print of a spinach leaf and learn the parts of the plant.

OBJECTIVE

The children will be able to:

- Identify spinach as a lightweight, dark green leafy vegetable.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Plain white paper, one sheet per child
- Spinach leaves (choose bigger leaves with larger veins; baby spinach may be too delicate for this activity)
- Crayons or colored pencils in shades of green
- Spinach *Grow It! Cards*

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show a drawing of a spinach leaf (page 119) or spinach *Grow It! Cards* to the children. Talk with the children about what spinach looks like. Review the shape (round at one end, coming to a point) and color (green) of spinach.
- Have each child take a piece of paper. Have each child fold the paper in half; assist any children needing help.
- Ask the children to put one leaf of spinach inside the fold of the paper. Instruct the children to rub the crayon or pencil gently on the top of the paper covering the leaf. As the leaf is rubbed, the details of the leaf will appear. Assist those children who need help.
- After the leaf print is made, remove the spinach leaf from the paper. Have the children look at the leaf print and notice the stem, outline, and any veins of the spinach leaf that are visible.



Spinach Grow It! Cards



TASTING ACTIVITY

Quick Quesadilla

The children will taste a yummy quesadilla made with frozen spinach.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the appearance, smell, and taste of spinach; and
- Understand that all of the spinach can be eaten including the leaf and stem.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Quick Quesadilla (recipe, page 88)
- Package of frozen spinach (in addition to what is used in the recipe)
- Plates and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children gather around and review what was learned about spinach already.
- Tell the children spinach grows on the ground. We have to rinse the leaves to remove soil and germs before we eat it.
- Tell the children that sometimes the farmers wash fresh spinach they picked from the ground and freeze the spinach so that we can use it all year long.
- Show the children the container of frozen spinach and cut the bag or box open to reveal the spinach inside. If they want to, let the children feel or taste a small piece of the frozen spinach. Explain that it is frozen, so it may taste different than the fresh leaves they have tried before.
- Talk with the children about the frozen spinach. Ask the following questions and any additional questions if you like.
 - What color is the frozen spinach? (Green)
 - Is this the same color as the fresh spinach leaves? (Yes)
 - What does the frozen spinach feel like? (Cold)
 - Are the frozen spinach leaves bigger or smaller than the fresh spinach leaves? (Smaller)
- Tell the children that you are all going to taste a yummy quesadilla made with the frozen spinach.

TIME TO TASTE!

- Serve the Quick Quesadilla (recipe, page 88).
- Be a healthy role model! Enjoy the quesadilla with the children.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

25–30 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

WORDS TO GROW

Slice	Firm
Smooth	Cheese
Crunchy	Cold
Round	



PREPARATION TIME

20 minutes

COOK TIME

20 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

2 wedges ($\frac{1}{3}$ quesadilla) provides Legume as Meat Alternate: 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz equivalent meat alternate, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable, and 1 oz equivalent grains OR Legume as Vegetable: 1 oz equivalent meat alternate, $\frac{3}{8}$ cup vegetable, and 1 oz equivalent grains. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

SAFETY NOTE

To prevent choking, make sure to lightly mash up the kidney beans.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	203
Protein	14 g
Carbohydrate	26 g
Total Fat	6 g
Saturated Fat	2 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	2 mg
Calcium	157 mg
Sodium	442 mg
Dietary Fiber	6 g

RECIPE

Quick Quesadilla

This is a USDA standardized recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups spinach, frozen, chopped (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups thawed and drained yields 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups)
- 1 cup dark red kidney beans, canned, no salt added, drained and rinsed or kidney beans, dry cooked
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon onion powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon chili powder
- 4 whole grain-rich tortillas, 8-inches
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups mozzarella cheese, low-fat, shredded
- Nonstick cooking spray
- Forks, plates, and napkins (one per child)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thaw, drain, and squeeze excess liquid from spinach.
2. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
3. Place kidney beans in a small microwavable bowl.
4. Add garlic powder, onion powder, and chili powder.
5. Lightly mash beans by squeezing using gloved hands (at least 50% of the beans should appear whole). Be careful not to over-mash beans.
6. Heat in microwave for 1 minute. Stir with a spoon.
7. Prepare quesadillas: Place half of the tortillas on a baking sheet. Spread $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of spinach on each tortilla. Top each with $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of bean mixture and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cheese.
8. Place remaining tortillas on top.
9. Spray outside of filled quesadillas with nonstick cooking spray.
10. Bake for 15 minutes. Heat quesadillas to an internal temperature of 140 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds.
11. Cut each quesadilla into 6 wedges.
12. Serve 2 wedges or $\frac{1}{3}$ quesadilla for each child.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Mash the kidney beans with a fork.
- Measure the seasonings and cheese.
- Spread the ingredients on the tortillas before baking.
- Help add the top tortilla.



Spinach: Where Do You Come From and How Do We Eat You?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY
Spinach Starts as Seeds

Page 90
10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY
Spinach Flowers

Page 91
10 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY
Garden Stones

Pages 92-93
20-30 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY
"Spinach Says"

Page 94
10 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

WORDS TO GROW

Seeds	Soil
Plants	Sun
Water	



Spinach



Spinach

GROWING ACTIVITY

Spinach Start as Seeds

The children see and touch spinach seeds and learn how far apart to plant them.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how spinach grows from a seed into a plant that produces spinach; and
- Describe the resources needed to grow spinach.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Spinach seed packets
- Yardstick or two 12-inch rulers
- Clear cup so you can see seeds
- Spinach *Grow It! Cards*

INSTRUCTIONS

- Tell the children they will learn about how spinach grows. Show the children the spinach seed packets. Ask them what they think is inside. Tell them people can buy packets of seeds to grow spinach in soil.
- Pass the seeds around in a clear cup (spinach seeds are small). Let the children touch and count the seeds. Explain that when spinach isn't picked for food, the plants grow flowers. The spinach seeds come from the tops of these flowers.
- Explain that the spinach seeds are planted about 6 inches apart and ½ to 1 inch deep in the soil, depending on the instructions provided on the seed packet. The spinach plants need room to spread out when they grow so the rows are planted 12 to 18 inches apart. Have two children hold the rulers between them to show the distance. Have the children return to the group. If planting in a pot or small garden, explain that it's okay to have just one row, or even just one seed.
- Explain that the spinach seeds are planted in the soil in the spring. The sun and rain help them grow into seedlings above the ground. The seedlings grow into bunches of spinach. If indoors, explain that they can plant the seeds anytime, but they must water the plants and put them near a window so the plants can grow.
- Explain that while spinach plants need sun to grow they also need to be in the shade when it gets really hot.
- Use the *Grow It! Cards* to show spinach growing in a field. Spinach grows fast. The leaves are ready to be picked when they are big enough to eat and reach full maturity about 40 days after the seeds are planted. Show children what 40 days looks like on a calendar.
- Explain that the entire spinach plant may be cut off just above the ground, or leaves can be picked individually starting from the outside.
- Explain that farmers pick spinach and eat it themselves or take it to a grocery store or a farmers market to sell. That is where other people buy it and take it home to eat.



TASTING ACTIVITY

Spinach Flowers

The children create flower-shaped snacks from spinach leaves. They explore the feel, smell, and taste of spinach.



OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Tell that the entire spinach stem and leaf can be eaten; and
- Make a simple snack with spinach.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Spinach leaves, 6 to 8 leaves per child
- Low-fat ranch salad dressing or hummus
- Plates and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Explain that unless the spinach comes pre-rinsed, we should always rinse fresh spinach leaves under running water before it is cooked or eaten. Let the children know you have already washed the spinach.
- Tell the children that they are going to make a snack with spinach leaves. Give each child a clean plate with 6 to 8 spinach leaves.
- Let each child put a circle of dressing or hummus in the center of their paper plate, about the size of a quarter. Help those who need assistance.
- Show the children how to arrange the spinach leaves around the dressing to create the petals of a flower.
- After making the spinach flower, enjoy eating it. Invite the children to dip their spinach leaves in the dressing and eat them.
- As the children are eating, ask them to describe how the spinach:
 - smells (no smell or aroma similar to leaves or grass);
 - feels in the mouth (chewy); and
 - tastes (mild).



ACTIVITY LENGTH
10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- If the spinach is not pre-rinsed, thoroughly rinse spinach leaves in a salad spinner or colander and dry leaves between sheets of paper towel.
- Prepare a plate for each child with the spinach leaves on the plate.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

WORDS TO GROW

Leaves	Spinach
Flower	Dip
Petals	Stem

CACFP CREDITING TIP

There is not enough spinach provided in this activity to credit towards the CACFP meal pattern. This activity allows kids to try a small taste of spinach rather than a full vegetable portion. See our other recipes in this unit for ideas on serving spinach as part of a meal or snack.





ACTIVITY LENGTH
20-30 minutes

CRAFT ACTIVITY

Garden Stones

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Arrange for a well-ventilated spray area away from the children.



The children decorate garden stones.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Engage with spinach in a fun and creative way; and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Spinach *Grow It! Cards*
- Smooth, round stones at least 4 inches in diameter
- Acrylic paints, light base colors and green for leaves
- Paint brushes, one per child
- Paper plates for paint
- Pencil, one per child
- Can of clear, spray shellac to seal and waterproof painted stones
- Puffy paint (*optional*)—puff paints have an interesting texture
- Smocks, large bibs, or an old t-shirt for each child, if desired

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children “What is a garden?” If they do not know, explain that a garden is an area of soil where vegetables and fruits, like spinach, grow. Explain that sometimes people grow fruits and vegetables in gardens in their yards or in their communities. Fruits and vegetables also grow on farms in large areas of land called fields.



- Tell the children that garden stones are used to mark the place where different kinds of fruits and vegetables are planted in a garden because when seeds are planted in the ground, we can't see them anymore, until they start to grow. Explain that today they will make a garden stone decorated with a spinach leaf.
- Show the spinach *Grow It! Cards* to the children and keep them on display.
 - Talk with the children about how spinach looks.
 - Review with the children the shape and color of spinach.
- Give a stone to each child. Ask the children to paint the top and sides of their stone with a light-colored paint.
- While the stones dry, help the children wash the brushes. Play "Spinach Says" (page 94) while brushes and stones are drying.
- Help the children draw a large spinach leaf on the stone.
- Have them paint their leaf green. If the stone is large enough, also help them paint their initials on the stone.
- If the stones will be used outdoors, allow them to dry and then spray the stones with clear shellac to waterproof and seal. Always paint in a well-ventilated area.
- Allow stones to dry thoroughly.
- Have the children think of uses for the garden stones they made. Some ideas include:
 - Give to parents for home garden;
 - Use in a potted plant for decoration;
 - Use as a paper weight on a desk; or
 - Use in the garden at family child care.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can help younger children.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Clear or designate an open space for children to move about during the activity.

MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Spinach Says"



"Spinach Says" is the Tasty Acres Farm version of a popular children's game.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move and stretch during a group game;
- Follow instructions from a peer or adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Optional:* Shirt, badge, or other accessory for the leader to wear that lets everyone know he or she is the Farmer.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit in a circle or stand in a group.
- Choose one person to be the Farmer (leader).
- The Farmer orders the other children to do all sorts of different and fun things, the funnier the better.
- But the Farmer's orders are only to be followed when they start with "Spinach says."
- When someone follows an order that doesn't begin with "Spinach says," that child is out of the game. However, make sure to keep the children moving even if they are "out." Ask them to stand off to the side and do different movements to find and pick spinach. For example, children can march through the fields, squat to find spinach, make large sweeping motions with their arms to pick up the spinach, skip home from the field, etc.
- Repeat until only one person is left. That person is the winner and can be the Farmer in the next round.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Spinach Seed in a Cup

Pages 96–97

15 minutes



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Grow a Seedling in a Bag

Page 98

10 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Spinach Style

Pages 99–100

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Spinach Salad

Pages 101–102

15 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Spinach Seed in a Cup

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Prepare potting soil and divide into containers, one per table.
- Write "Spinach" on the wooden craft sticks.
- At the table(s), place a small paper cup, three seeds, and a plastic spoon per child.



The children plant spinach seeds in a soil-filled cup and learn what the seeds need to grow (see Appendix B, page 318, for more information on growing seedlings indoors). Children can check the cup daily to see the seeds progress. Once the plant becomes big enough, the children take their cups home.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the resources needed to grow spinach; and
- Experience planting a spinach seed.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Spinach seed packets (can be packets from Day 2)
- 5- to 6-ounce paper cups, one per child
- Potting soil
- Water for soil in a small spray bottle
- Plastic spoons or scoops, one per child
- Unsharpened pencils, with a line marking $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Waterproof pens or markers
- Wooden craft sticks for plant markers, one per child
- Table covers, if desired
- Smocks for the children (*optional*)
- Sunny location and/or fluorescent lights if planning to grow plants indoors



INSTRUCTIONS

- Help each child write his or her name on their cup.
- During the activity, help the children (or have older *Grow It! Buddies* help):
 - Fill their cups about three-quarters full with potting soil.
 - Gently tap the sides and bottom of their container with their index finger to settle but not pack the soil.
 - Poke three holes in the soil spaced around the cup. Use the marked, unsharpened pencil to make holes ½ inch deep.
 - Place a seed in each hole and gently cover the seeds with soil.
 - Lightly spray water over the top of the soil; help any children needing assistance.
 - If using wooden craft sticks as plant markers, write the name of the plant on the stick and place it in the soil close to the inside curve of the cup.
- During the activity, tell the children:
 - The seeds will grow in the potting soil just as plants grow in the earth's soil outside.
 - The seeds need soil, water, sun, and time to grow.
 - Inside, we can use lights to give plants warmth and light, just as the sun helps outside plants grow.
 - The seeds will grow first into very small plants (seedlings), then into larger plants. These larger plants, if planted outside in a garden, will continue to grow with sunlight and water. The plants will grow larger and eventually become bunches of spinach.
- Have the children set their cups in a sunny spot or under lights.
- Have the children check their cups every day to see the progress of the seeds growing into plants. Follow the care instructions on the seed packet. Water with spray bottle, as needed.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Locate a window with sunny southern or western exposure.
- Soak lima beans overnight. (See note below.)

Green Thumb Guide

Lima beans and a sunny window are used in this activity to quickly show children how seeds sprout. However, to germinate seeds for growing, dark environments work best. (Not sure what germinate means? Check the Glossary in Appendix H, pages 331–332.)



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Grow a Seedling in a Bag



This activity can be done in place of or in addition to **Plant a Spinach Seed in a Cup** (see page 96). **A Seedling in a Bag** is a great way to help children see what is happening to the seed they planted in the soil. Check daily for progress and compare to the growth of the seeds in cups.

OBJECTIVE

The children will be able to:

- Identify how seeds sprout.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Plastic bag with a zipper-style closure (1 per child)
- Absorbent paper towel, 1–2 sheets per child
- Stapler with staples
- Dry lima beans, soaked in water overnight (several beans per child)
- Masking or strapping tape
- Window with sunny southern or western exposure

INSTRUCTIONS

- Let the children help wet the paper towel well and place in a plastic bag.
- Place a row of staples across the center of the paper towel.
- Let the children help place soaked beans on top of the row of staples and seal the bag. The staples hold the seeds in place, allowing the roots to grow down and sprouts to grow up.
- Help the children tape the bags to the window, with the seed side facing the room. If possible, choose a window with sunny southern or western exposure.

NOTE: Soaking the lima beans overnight in water helps hydrate the beans and speeds the sprouting process. Lima beans will sprout fast, give quick results, and help keep the children's interest.





MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm

SPINACH STYLE

The children sing about growing and eating spinach and act out motions to this familiar tune.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Sing and act out motions to a familiar tune; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Spinach lyrics to “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”
- Large space for the children to move about

INSTRUCTIONS

- Lead the children in singing these new words to the tune “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” and demonstrate the suggested motions or make up new ones.
- Encourage the children to move about as they are singing.
- Explain that skipping, wiggling, stretching, running, jumping, and playing actively every day helps us to feel good and stay healthy.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Become familiar with the words and motions of the song.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can take turns leading the song.





Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Spinach Style

1ST VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some spinach, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry a basket of spinach)*
Plant seed here and plant seeds there,
Here seeds, there seeds, everywhere spinach seeds! *(Pretend to dig ground and plant using large, vigorous motions)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

2ND VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some spinach, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry a basket of spinach)*
With a little water here and a little water there,
Here water, there water, everywhere water, water! *(Pretend to hold a watering can and water plants walking along the rows)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

3RD VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some spinach, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry a basket of spinach)*
Pick spinach here, and pick spinach there, *(Pretend to kneel and pick spinach)*
Here a pick, there a pick, everywhere pick spinach *(Pretend to kneel and pick spinach)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

4TH VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some spinach, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry a basket of spinach)*
With a bite, bite here, and a bite, bite there, *(Pretend to eat spinach)*
Here a bite, there a bite, everywhere a crunchy bite. *(Pretend to eat spinach)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*



TASTING ACTIVITY

Spinach Salad

Discuss spinach facts with the children and have them try a simple way to eat spinach.



OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how spinach is grown, harvested, and eaten; and
- Understand that the entire spinach stem and leaf can be eaten.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Spinach leaves
- Light Italian Dressing
- Plates, forks, and napkins
- Spinach *Grow It!* Cards

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Gather the children and lead a discussion about spinach.
- Use the spinach *Grow It!* Cards to show spinach growing and ready to eat.
- Tell the children that spinach is a vegetable with thin stems that grows from the ground.
- Ask some of the following questions:
 - Is spinach a fruit or a vegetable? (Vegetable)
 - What color is spinach? (Green)
 - What helps hold the leaves up? (Stems)
 - How do spinach leaves feel? (Smooth and bumpy)
 - Where does spinach grow? (On a farm or in a garden)
 - Does spinach grow in bunches above or below the ground? (Above the ground)
 - Where can our families buy spinach after it is picked and shipped from the farm? (Grocery stores and farmers markets)
 - Have the children name some of the ways that spinach can be eaten (On a sandwich, in spinach dip, in eggs, on a pizza, or as salad with a little bit of dressing).
- Conclude the activity by telling the children they are going to taste spinach salad.
- Serve the spinach salad.



ACTIVITY LENGTH
15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- If the spinach is not pre-rinsed, thoroughly rinse spinach leaves with a salad spinner or colander and dry leaves between sheets of paper towel.
- Prepare spinach salad by lightly tossing raw spinach leaves with dressing. Make enough so that each child can be offered a small portion: See crediting information on the next page if serving as part of a meal or snack.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the spinach with the children.



PREPARATION TIME

5 minutes

MAKES

1 serving

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup of spinach) provides $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of vegetables. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	11
Protein	0 g
Carbohydrates	1 g
Total Fat	1 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	7 mg
Sodium	56 mg
Dietary Fiber	0 g

RECIPE

Spinach Salad



INGREDIENTS

For each child:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of spinach, fresh
- 1 teaspoon light Italian dressing
- Fork, plate, and napkin

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Seat each child at a table with supplies.
2. Measure out $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fresh spinach leaves for each child and serve.
3. Add 1 teaspoon of light Italian dressing.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help rinse the spinach leaves under cool running water.
- Help toss the salad.



Spinach: How Do You Grow?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY
Plant Spinach Outdoors

Pages 104-105
15 minutes



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY
Make a Seed Tape

Page 106
15-20 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY
Stamped Wrapping Paper

Page 107
10 minutes



READING ACTIVITY

Page 108
10-20 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant Spinach Outdoors

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- If using a seed tape, prepare it ahead of time. Involve the children as an extra activity (see page 106).
- Prepare garden or flowerbed for planting by tilling (breaking up) and fertilizing the soil (Appendix B: Green Thumb Guide, page 318).



The children plant spinach outdoors and learn what spinach needs to grow.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the resources needed to grow spinach; and
- Experience planting spinach seeds or a spinach plant.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Spinach seeds, seed tape, seedlings, or starter plants (see Planting Options, next page)
- Garden or flowerbed
- Hoe, trowel, or large spoon (wash after)
- Garden hose with sprinkler nozzle or watering can

INSTRUCTIONS

- Take the children and the spinach seeds or seed tape outside. Explain that today they will plant spinach seeds and learn what seeds need to grow into plants.
- Point to the sun. Ask the children how the sunlight feels on their skin (warm).
- Explain that the light and warmth of the sun help spinach seeds grow into plants that will produce more spinach.



- Show the children the soil in a garden or flowerbed. Let them touch the soil. Ask them how the soil feels (wet or dry, hard or soft) and smells. Explain that spinach seeds need soil to grow into plants.
- Run some water from a hose or pour some from a watering can and let the children touch it. Ask how it feels (wet). Explain that water helps plants grow.
- Explain that water for plants usually comes as rain. Plants, like spinach, need lots of water so farmers and gardeners use sprinklers, hoses, or watering cans in addition to rain to make sure the plants have plenty of water.
- Have the children help lay the seeds or prepared seed tapes in the soil at the preferred planting depth of ½ inch, cover with soil and water. Remind the children of how far apart spinach seeds are planted (at least 6 inches apart).
- Let children know spinach grows best when you tend to it daily. It needs water to grow.



PLANTING OPTIONS

- **SEEDS:** Follow the directions on the back of the spinach seed packet to plant seeds directly into the ground.
- **SEED TAPE:** A seed tape (see page 106) ensures your seeds will be spaced appropriately and can make it easier for small hands to help plant small seeds.
- **SEEDLINGS:** If you have grown spinach seedlings indoors and hardened off the plants for outdoor planting, you can substitute the plants for the seeds. (See Appendix B, page 318 for information on hardening seedlings.)
- **STARTER PLANTS:** You can also purchase spinach starter plants at a greenhouse or nursery and plant directly into the ground. Refer to starter plants instead of seeds during the activity.

Green Thumb Guide

IS SPACE LIMITED?

Spinach grows well in a container at least 8- to 10-inches in diameter (see Appendix B: Green Thumb Guide, page 318).





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15-20 minutes

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Make a Seed Tape

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- To make the seed tape, prepare the gel ahead of time by dissolving 1 tablespoon of cornstarch in 1 cup of cold water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Once the mixture starts to boil and turns into a gel, remove from heat and allow it to cool to room temperature.



A seed tape makes planting easier when working with small seeds and makes sure seeds are spaced appropriately.

GIFT GIVING IDEA



Portion a bag of potting soil and put it in a pot. Lay the seed circle on top of the bag of soil and wrap in Stamped Wrapping Paper (page 107). Copy the back of the seed package for growing instructions, if desired.

VARIATION

MAKE A SEED CIRCLE TO PLANT IN A POT

Cut a circle of paper towel the diameter of a 15-ounce can of food. Glue one or two seeds to the center of the paper towel circle using the cornstarch gel.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Experience making a seed tape.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cornstarch
- Stovetop or hot plate
- Spinach seed packet
- Sealable plastic sandwich bag or small paintbrush
- Paper towels, inexpensive type that will breakdown in soil easily
- Ruler
- Pen
- Blunt-tip scissors

INSTRUCTIONS

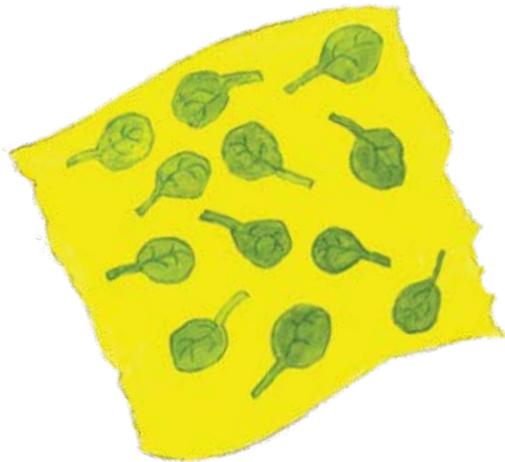
- Take three or four paper towels, fold them in half, and cut them into 1-inch strips, cutting across the perforations to create long strips. Unfold and lay the paper towel strips on a flat surface.
- Refer to the seed packet to note how far apart the seeds should be spaced. Use a ruler and pen to make marks on the towel strips at the appropriate spacing.
- Place a few spoonfuls of the gel into a plastic sandwich bag and seal the top. Snip off a corner of the gel-filled bag and squeeze a small droplet of gel on each of the marked spots. Place a seed on top of each drop of gel. The seeds will be firmly attached when the gel dries. Note: Gel can also be applied with a small paintbrush.

Young children can help mark where to place the seeds on the paper strip and place spinach seeds on gel dots.



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Stamped Wrapping Paper



The children make stamped wrapping paper with vegetable designs.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Assert individuality (designing wrapping paper that differs in color and design from other children); and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Large fresh spinach leaves to coat with paint
- Acrylic craft paint (various colors)
- Paper plates for paint
- Large sheets of light-colored paper, at least one per child
- Smocks or bibs (*optional*)
- Table coverings (*optional*)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Give each child a piece of paper.
- Show the children how to coat a leaf with paint. Press coated leaves to paper; repeat until desired pattern is created.
- Repeat stamping with different colors if desired. Use a new spinach leaf for each new color.
- Set the papers on a flat surface to dry.
- Have the children wash their hands.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize the materials.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can help younger children make stamps. *Grow It! Buddies* can create a pattern of colors and shapes.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10-20 minutes
depending on the
length of the book

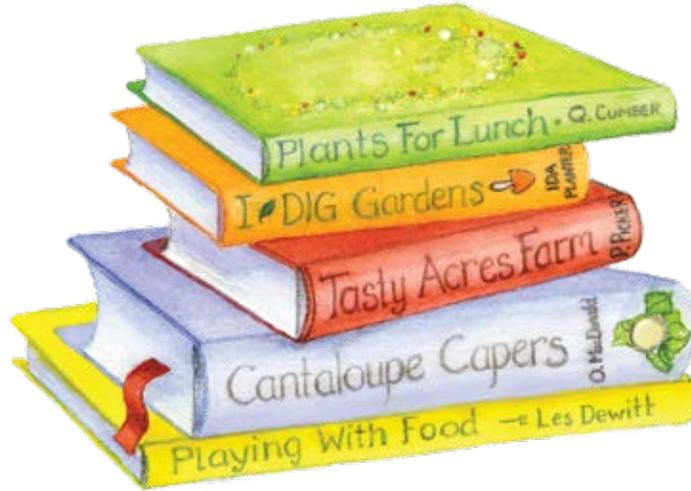
WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Clear a space for the children to sit around you.
- Choose a book from the Harvest of Books list (Basics, page 15).
- Borrow the book you select from a library or purchase it.
- You can also use other books related to fruits and vegetables that may already be available to you.

MIXED-AGES TIP

- Hold the baby on your lap while reading to other children.
- Give the baby a fruit or vegetable board book.
- Have *Grow It! Buddies* read to younger children.

Reading Activity



Read story books to the children that are about growing and/or eating fruits and vegetables. Listening to such stories can encourage children to adopt positive behaviors that can last a lifetime, like trying new fruits and vegetables.

OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to:

- Describe the fun and interesting stories about fruits and vegetables that were read to them.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Books from a library or purchased books
- Space for the children to sit

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit around you as you read the book.
- Ask the children to listen for the names of vegetables and fruits as the story is read. If possible, have the children act out parts of the book to encourage movement during story time.
- Ask the children which fruits and vegetables were named in the story and what happened to them. For example,
 - Where were the fruits and vegetables grown?
 - What happened to the fruits and vegetables after they were picked?
 - Who ate the fruits and vegetables?
- Add other questions that relate to the story.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

Leafy Green Vegetables

Pages 110-113

20-25 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Active Spinach Stretch

Pages 114-115

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Spinach Egg Bake

Pages 116-117

15-20 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

20 minutes;
25 minutes if optional
coloring activity
conducted

FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

Green Leafy Vegetables



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review the foods and activities shown on the *MyPlate Poster*.
- Display the *MyPlate Poster*.
- Wash and dry several leaves each of spinach, romaine, and green leaf lettuce; reserve a large leaf of each for display.
- Tear romaine and green leaf lettuce leaves in pieces the size of a spinach leaf, one each per child.
- *Optional:* Make copies of the *MyPlate* coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

Introduce the children to the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. The children will learn that spinach and other leafy greens are part of the Vegetable Group. They will taste the difference between romaine, green leaf lettuce, and spinach leaves.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Say that spinach is part of the Vegetable Group;
- Say that eating vegetables like spinach helps keep us healthy;
- Compare spinach to other leafy green vegetables;
- Say that being physically active every day helps us feel good;
- Say that eating foods from the different food groups each day helps us grow and be healthy; and
- Name a food from each of the five food groups.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*
- Spinach, romaine, and green leaf lettuce leaves
- Plates and napkins
- *Optional:* Make copies of the *MyPlate* coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child.

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

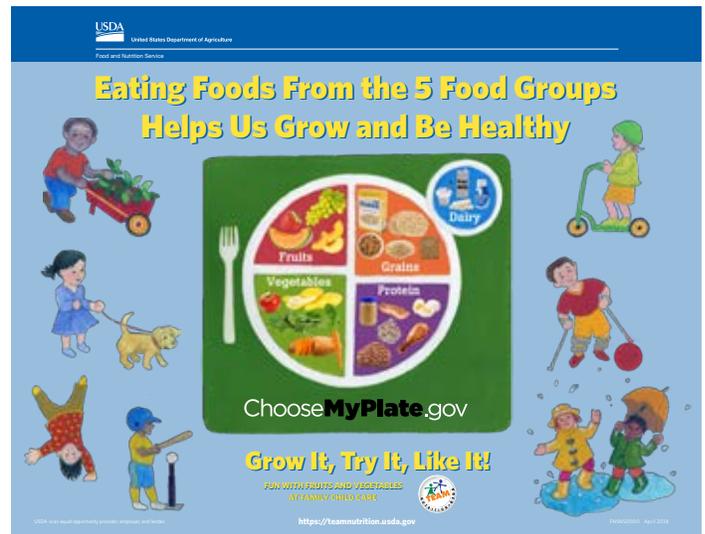
- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



INSTRUCTIONS

Learning the Food Groups

- Seat the children in a semicircle on the floor in view of the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*.
- Tell the children that today they are going to learn about ways to be healthy and have fun every day. Tell the children that the best part is they already like to do what helps them be healthy: they like to eat a variety of foods and they like to play.
- Show the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster* to the children. Ask the children to tell you what they see on the poster. Accept all correct answers, such as food, specific foods by name, children playing, specific activities by name, etc.
- Explain that MyPlate shows the five food groups a person should eat from each day. Each food group has its own color. Point to the different sections as you discuss. The Fruit Group is red, the Vegetable Group is green, the Grains Group is orange, the Dairy Group is blue, and the Protein Foods Group is purple. Eating foods from each food group helps us to grow and be healthy. Explain that spinach is part of the vegetable group.



The Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster shows foods from the five food groups.



GRAINS

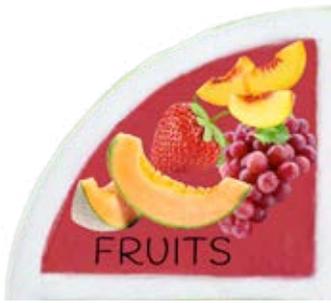
- Tell the children that foods made from grains are in the Grains Group represented by the orange-colored section on MyPlate. Point to the food group on the poster and state that grain foods like bread, cereal, rice, and pasta give us energy to play.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a food in the orange section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Grains Group also give us energy to play.
- Children this age may not know what a grain is. Tell them grains come from plants such as wheat, oats, rice, and corn. Grains are used to make foods like cereal, bread, tortillas, and pasta.



VEGETABLES

- Tell the children that many foods from plants are in the Vegetable Group and are represented by the green section of MyPlate. Point out the spinach on the poster. Ask the children to name this vegetable (spinach). Ask the children to name the color of spinach (green). Explain that eating green vegetables, like spinach, can help them to be healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a vegetable in the green section, and name the vegetable. After each child names a vegetable, repeat the name of the vegetable and state that (the vegetable named) and other foods from the Vegetable Group also help keep us healthy.





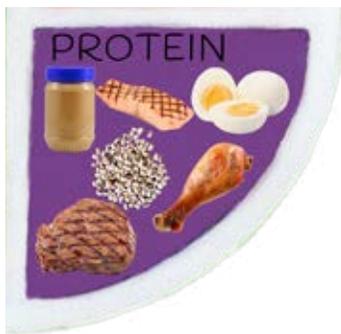
FRUITS

- Tell the children that some foods from plants are in the Fruit Group represented by the red section. Point to the strawberry shown on the poster and state that strawberries help keep us healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a fruit in the red section, and name the fruit. After each child names a fruit, repeat the name of the fruit and state that (the fruit named) and other foods from the Fruit Group help keep us healthy.



DAIRY

- Tell the children that milk and foods made from milk are in the Dairy Group represented by the blue section. Point to the milk and yogurt on the poster and state that milk and yogurt help us build strong bones.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the blue section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Dairy Group also help us build strong bones.

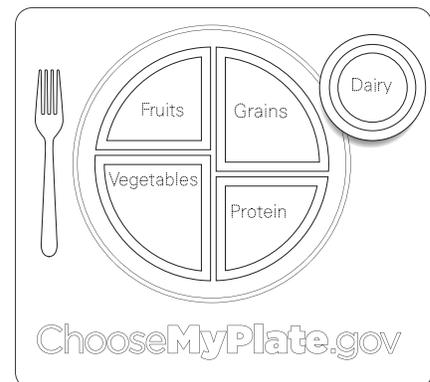


PROTEIN FOODS

- Tell the children that foods from animals and some plants are in the Protein Foods Group represented by the purple section. Point to the meat, fish, egg, beans, and peanut butter on the poster and state that these foods help our muscles grow.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the purple section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Protein Foods Group also help our muscles grow. (Note: if only foods that come from animals are selected, point out a food from plants and name it. If only foods from plants are selected, point out a food that comes from animals and name it).

OPTIONAL COLORING ACTIVITY

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Distribute a copy of the MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333) to each child.
- Ask the children to color the Vegetable Group section of MyPlate green and draw and color a spinach leaf near it. Help the younger children who may not know their colors yet.
- With older children, have them copy the dot-to-dot outline of the word "Vegetables."



TIME TO TASTE!

- Show the children the romaine and green leaf lettuce. Tell the children that these are leafy green vegetables similar to spinach.
- Give the children samples of each leafy green to feel, smell, taste, and compare to spinach.
- After tasting the samples of the three varieties of leafy greens, invite the children to feel and smell the larger leaves of romaine and green leaf lettuce. Discard the leaves at the end of the lesson.
- Ask the children to name different ways to eat vegetables like spinach at different meals and snacks. Accept all answers such as on sandwiches, in vegetable salads, in eggs, etc.



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the spinach with the children.





ACTIVITY LENGTH
10 minutes

MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Active Spinach Stretch



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Display the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster.

Spinach Stretch is a fun activity to get children moving.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move and stretch during a group activity;
- Follow instructions from an adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Space to do activity
- *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster



Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster



INSTRUCTIONS

- Point to the various activities depicted on the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. Ask the children to tell you why it is important to be physically active and play every day (it helps you be strong and healthy, and it is fun). Tell the children that today they will learn to be active in a way that reminds them of the leafy greens they just tasted.
- Ask the children to extend their arms out to the side and spread apart from each other so that no one is able to easily touch another child's fingers. When children are spaced around the room, ask them to lower their arms and listen carefully. Tell the children that stretching is an important way to be active. Ask the children to watch you show them a special stretch that celebrates spinach.
- Squat to the ground and wrap your arms around your knees, with the heels slightly raised, creating a ball shape with your body. Tell the children the stretch starts the way a spinach plant starts, with a little round seed. Slowly drop the heels and straighten the legs and extend the arms to touch the toes or reach as far toward the toes as is comfortable, ending in a forward bend from the waist with the arms and head down. Tell the children the spinach plant starts to grow and stretch out. Next, gradually roll the spine up to a standing position and raise the arms above the head. Now fan the arms out to the side, pretending the arms are the edges of the spinach leaf. Sway gently from side to side in the slight breeze that blows through Spinach Lane.
- Ask the children to do the Active Spinach Stretch with you several times. During each stretch, remind the children of the stages of how spinach grows.
- Conclude the activity by telling the children it is fun to eat spinach and other leafy greens and be physically active by doing an Active Spinach Stretch.

NOTE TO CAREGIVER

Active play and movement are important for every child's growth and development. Although they may seem to be active and energetic, most children do not get the amount of physical activity they need for good health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children get 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can help lead the stretching.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15–20 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize recipe ingredients.
- Prepare entire recipe. OR
- Set the ingredients on a table so children can help make the recipe (see *Cooking With Children*, page 117).
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the salad with the children.

WORDS TO GROW

Spinach

Eggs

TASTING ACTIVITY

Spinach Egg Bake

The children taste a new spinach recipe and talk about different ways to eat spinach.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Taste spinach in a combination food, Spinach Egg Bake, for lunch or snack.
- Describe many different ways to eat spinach; and
- Help prepare a dish with spinach (*optional*).

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Spinach Egg Bake ingredients (recipe, page 117)
- Plates, forks, and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about spinach.
- Encourage answers such as how and where spinach grows; how it looks, feels, smells, and tastes; and other information covered in the unit.
- Show the children the Spinach Egg Bake and talk about the other foods in the salad. If making the recipe as part of the activity, make it at this point.
- Serve the children Spinach Egg Bake at any meal.
- As the children are eating, ask:
 - What spinach recipes have you made with your family?
 - What different ways have you eaten spinach?
 - What new ways do you think spinach could be eaten?



RECIPE

Spinach Egg Bake

This is a USDA standardized recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ¼ cups spinach, frozen, chopped, thawed, and drained (2 ¼ cups thawed and drained yields 1 ½ cups)
- 6 eggs, large (1 ¼ cup of whole liquid eggs can be substituted for fresh eggs)
- 1 tablespoon feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 teaspoon onions, dehydrated, chopped
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper, ground
- Nonstick cooking spray
- Forks, plates, and napkins (one per child)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Thaw spinach in the microwave using package direction or by placing under cool running water.
3. Drain excess water from spinach.
4. Whisk eggs in a small mixing bowl. Add feta cheese, dehydrated onions, salt, and black pepper. Mix well.
5. Lightly coat medium baking dish (about 8" x 8") with nonstick cooking spray.
6. Spread spinach evenly on the bottom of the baking dish.
7. Top spinach with egg mixture. Keep the vegetables spread evenly by slightly stirring the mixture with a spatula or spoon. Place baking dish in the oven. Bake for 15 minutes at 350 °F to an internal temperature of 165 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds.
8. Then, broil on high for 2 minutes or until the eggs are set and the top is a light to golden brown color. Remove immediately to prevent burning. Caution: use a hot pad as dish will be very hot.
9. Cut into 6 even pieces. Serve immediately. Serve 1 piece per child.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help mix ingredients in the bowl.
- Help crack the eggs.
- Help spread the spinach in the baking dish.

PREPARATION TIME

20 minutes

COOK TIME

17 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving provides 2 oz equivalent meat alternate and ¼ cup vegetable. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	115
Protein	8 g
Carbohydrate	4 g
Total Fat	8 g
Saturated Fat	2 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	14 mg
Sodium	203 mg
Dietary Fiber	0 g

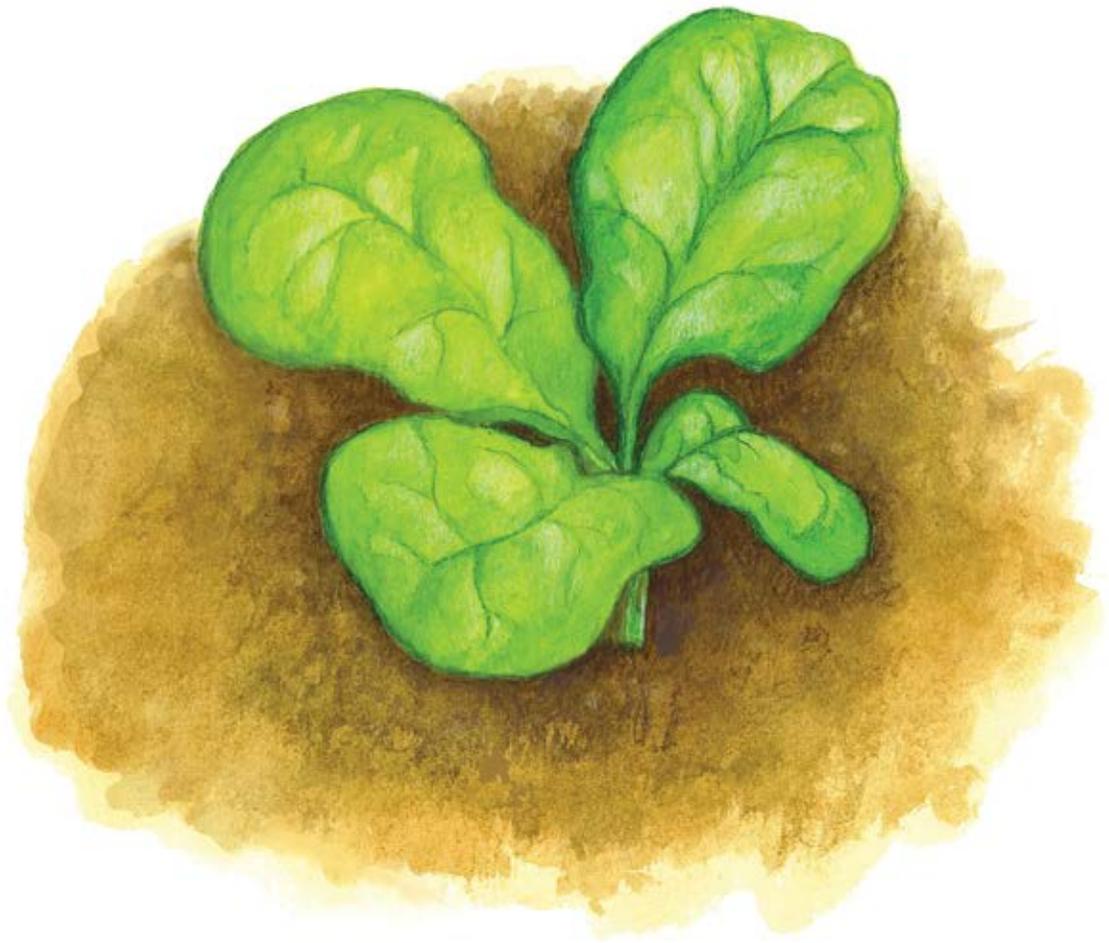


Fun Extras



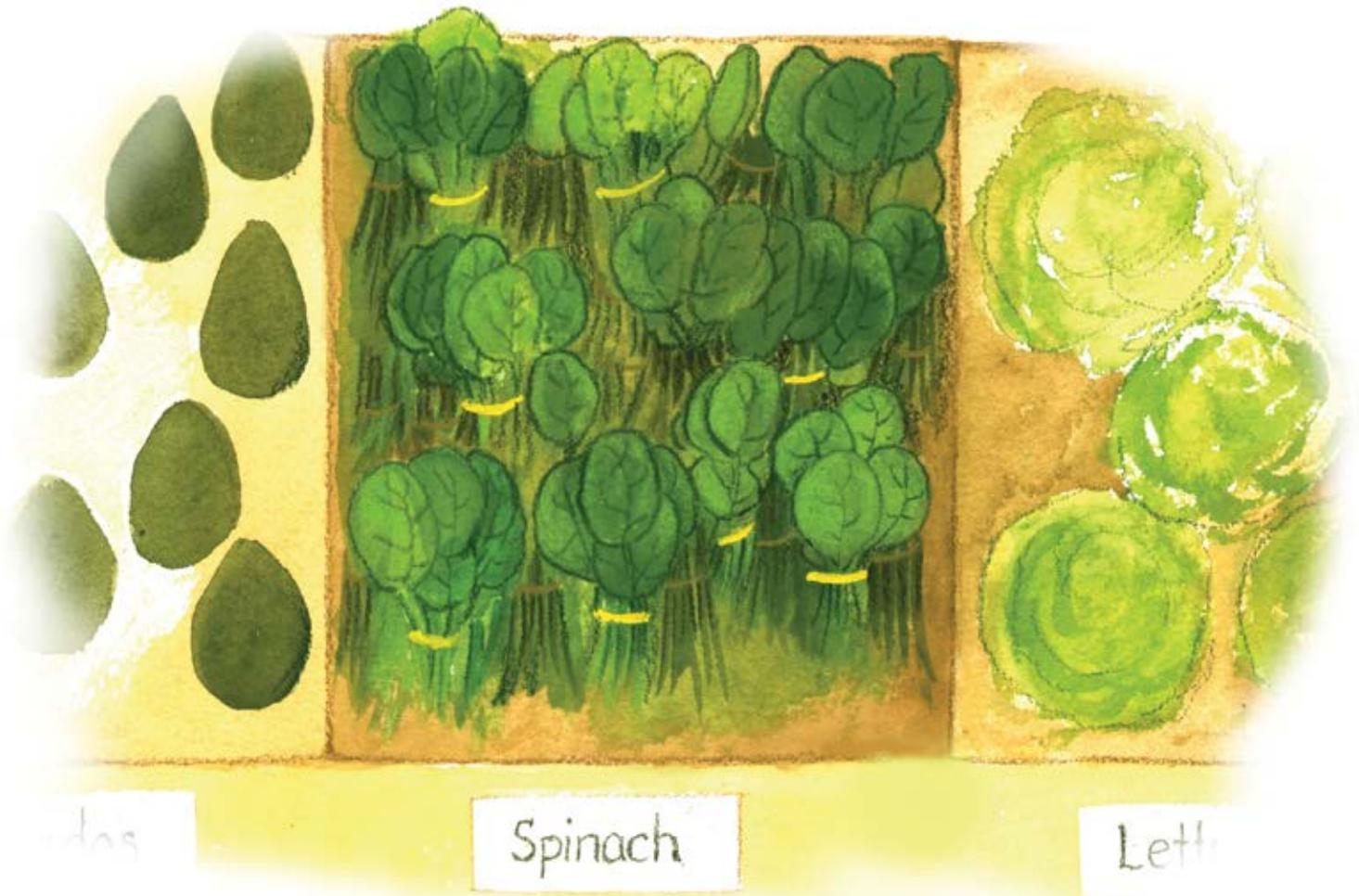
Spinach

Growing in a Garden



Spinach

In a Grocery Store



Spinach

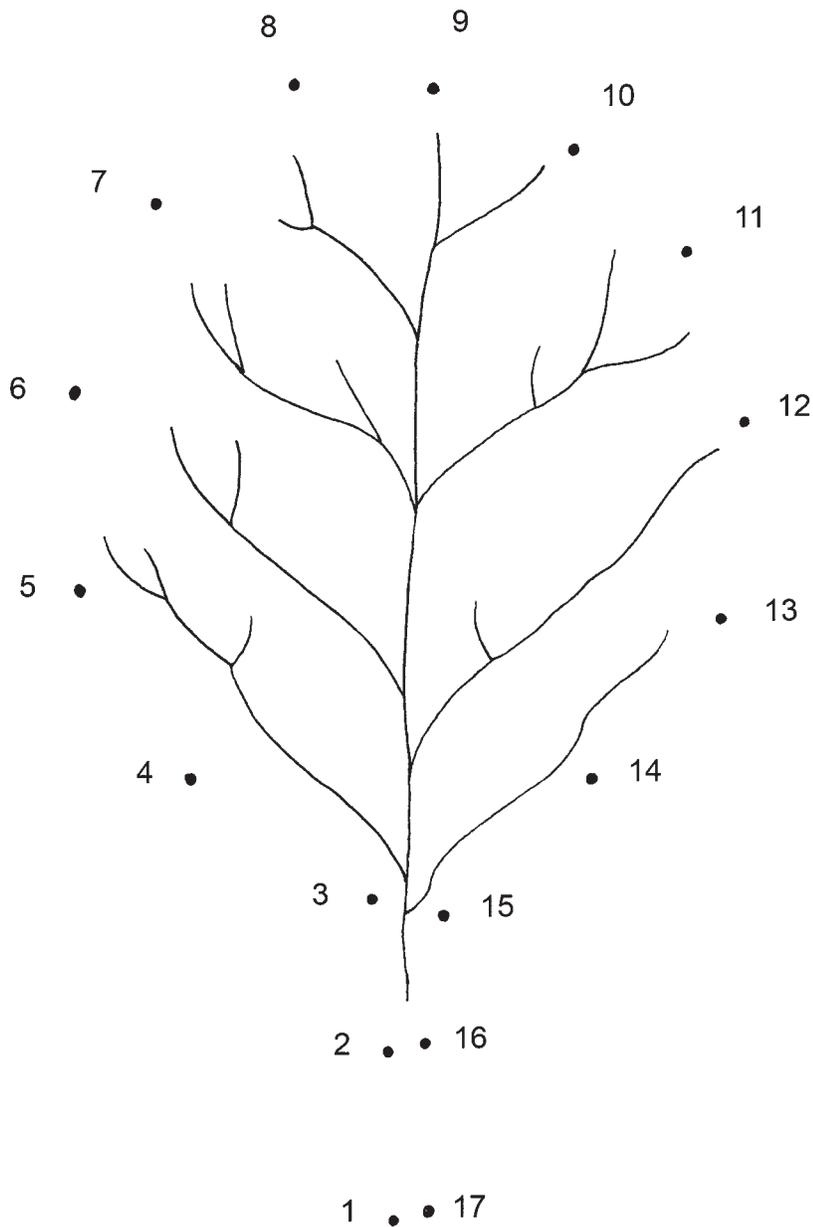
Blackline Master



Spinach Dot-to-Dot

Dear Family:

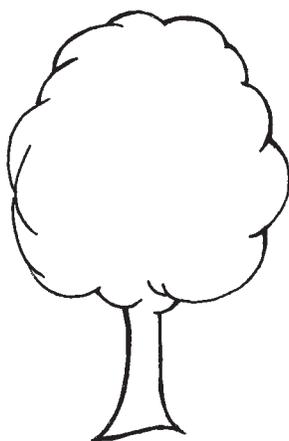
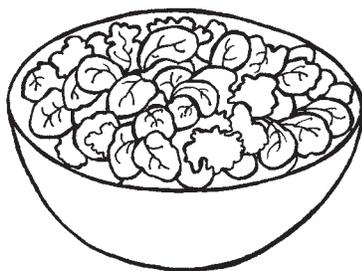
Your child has been learning about spinach, how it looks and feels. Help your child complete this dot-to-dot activity. The completed dot-to-dot reveals a spinach leaf. Talk with your child about different ways to eat spinach while he or she colors the spinach leaf.



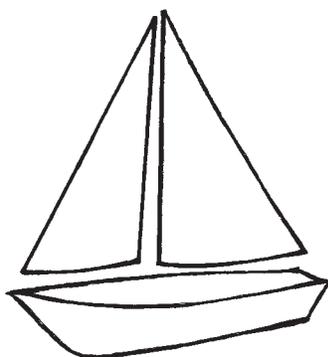
Where Does Spinach Grow?

Dear Family:

Help your child recall all we've learned about growing spinach. Have your child draw a line from the bowl of spinach to the picture showing where spinach grows. Talk with your child about how spinach gets to our homes—we buy it at the store or farmers market.



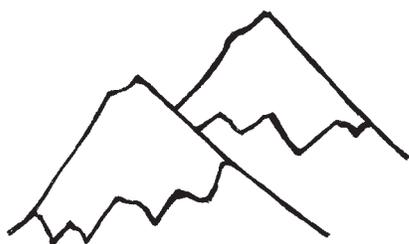
On a tree



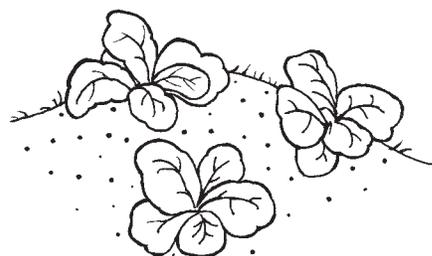
On a boat



In a building



On a snow-covered mountain



In a field

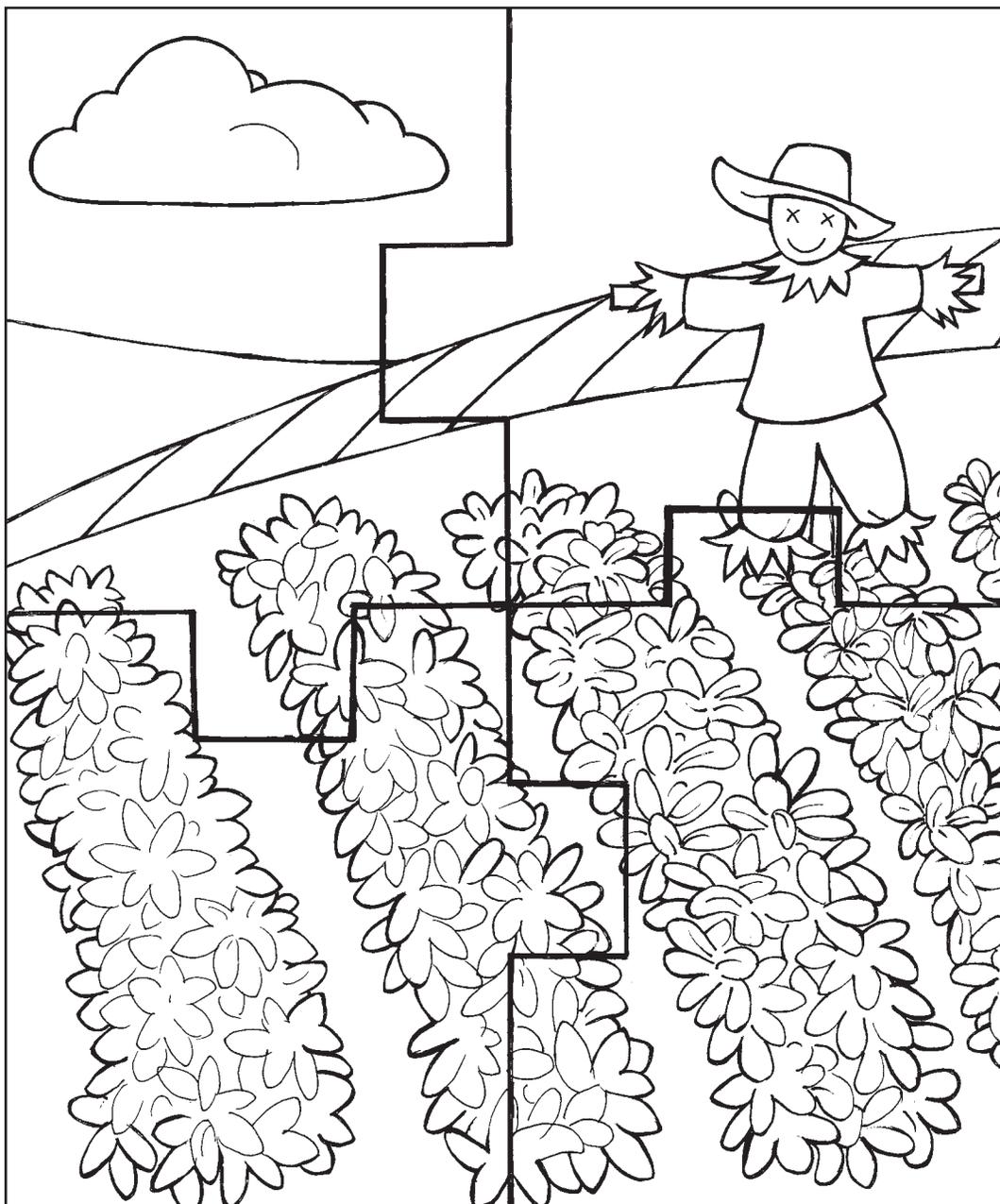


Spinach Puzzle Pieces

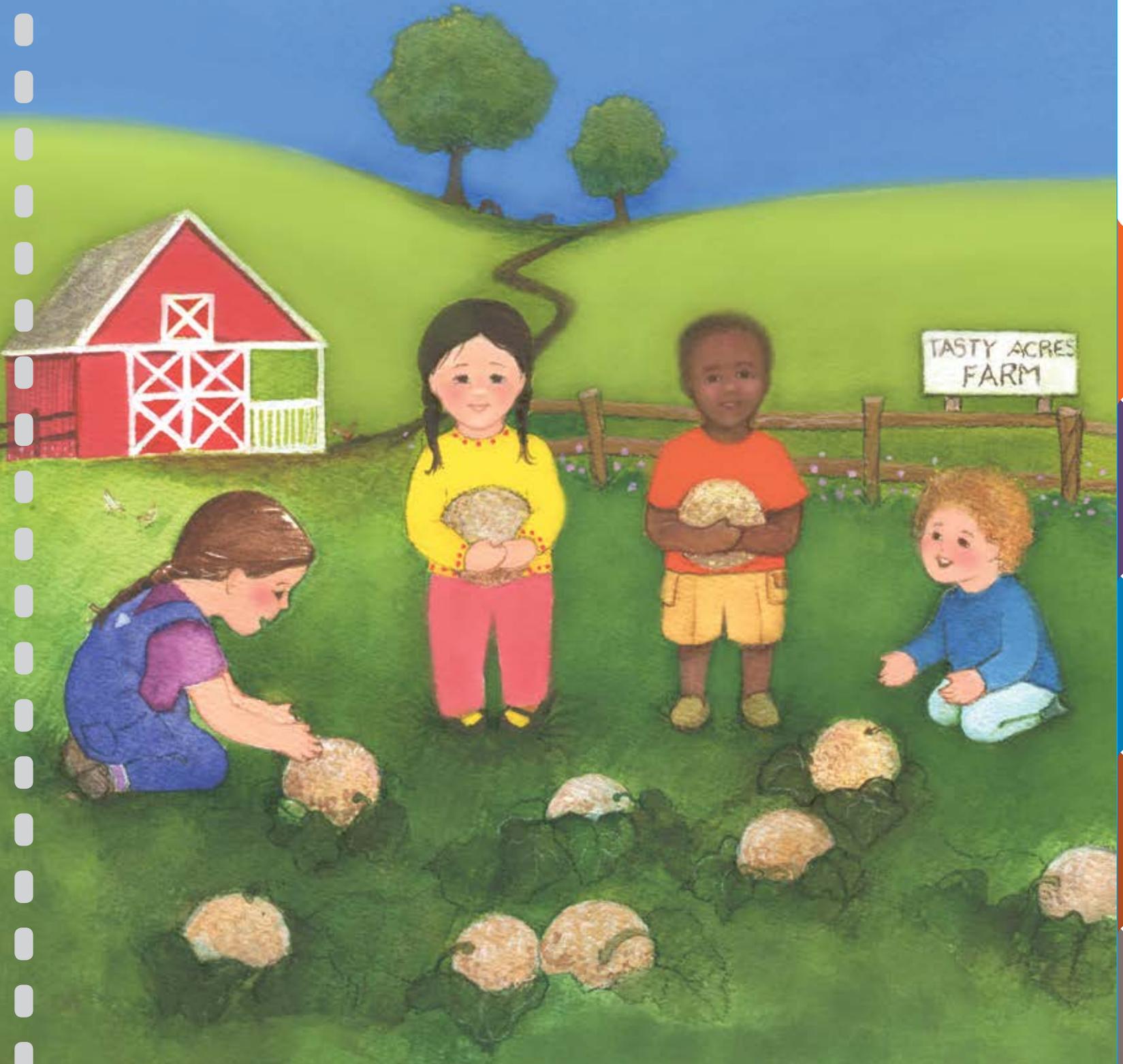
Dear Family:

Have your child color this drawing of spinach growing in the field. Glue the colored page to a piece of cardboard (a cereal box works great). Cut out the puzzle pieces along the lines. Have your child put the puzzle pieces together.

Keep the puzzle and encourage your child to put it together often. Each time the puzzle is used, talk about spinach. Ask your child how spinach grows. Talk about ways to eat it.



Cantaloupe Corner



CANTALOUPE

SQUASH

PEACH

POTATO

APPENDIXES

WELCOME TO

Cantaloupe Corner at Tasty Acres Farm!

Cantaloupe is a juicy fruit that ripens on the vine. Through the activities in this unit, children will explore cantaloupe, experiencing how it looks, feels, smells, and tastes.

Cantaloupe Corner connects the cantaloupes grown on the farm or in your garden to the fruit in the store or the farmers market. Leave time to tempt the taste buds with cantaloupe fruit salad. Growing at Home materials encourage families to include cantaloupe in cooking, conversations, and fun and games.



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Cantaloupe Activity Chart

DAY 1 45 minutes	DAY 2 45-55 minutes	DAY 3 40 minutes	DAY 4 40-50 minutes	DAY 5 40-50 minutes
MYSTERY BOX OR BAG	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY
<p>Can You Tell What's Hiding?</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Cantaloupes Start as Seeds</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Plant a Cantaloupe Seed in a Cup</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Plant a Cantaloupe Seed or Starter Plant Outdoors</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Cantaloupe Is a Fruit</p> <p>20-25 minutes</p>
TASTING ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY	CRAFT ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY
<p>Cantaloupe—A Look Inside</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Cantaloupe Shapes</p> <p>10-15 minutes</p>	<p>Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Cantaloupe Style</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Decorated Garden Bags</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Cantaloupe Curl Ups</p> <p>10 minutes</p>
CRAFT ACTIVITY	CRAFT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY	READING ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY
<p>Row Markers</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Seed Art</p> <p>15-20 minutes</p>	<p>Cantaloupe Fruit Salad</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	 <p>10-20 minutes</p>	<p>Meet Cantaloupe's Fruit Friends</p> <p>10-15 minutes</p> 
	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY			
	<p>"Cantaloupe Says"</p> <p>10 minutes</p> 			





Introduction to Cantaloupe Corner Activities

Check with local farms and farmers markets to find out when cantaloupe is in peak season. Usually cantaloupe is a summer crop. Seeing cantaloupe growing in the field makes a great farm field trip for preschoolers. If a farm is not nearby, visit a produce stand or farmers market to see fresh cantaloupe.

The cantaloupe lessons in this unit are arranged by day to teach over the course of 5 consecutive days. If possible, do the growing activities and enjoy homegrown cantaloupe. It is an easy fruit to grow and can be planted in a garden bed or 5-gallon container (smaller varieties of cantaloupe). Planting and watching a plant grow can be an enjoyable activity for children.

WORDS TO GROW

New Words To Use When Teaching About Cantaloupe

Fruits	Circle
Summer	Melons
Round	Tan
Vines	Orange
Inside	Outside

ACTIVITY LENGTH

Most activities require only 10–15 minutes.

CREDITING TIPS

Some activities in this unit include children eating cantaloupe. Check for food allergies before serving. If you plan to serve cantaloupe as part of a reimbursable meal or snack for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), check the minimum serving sizes for each age group (Appendix G, page 330). There are also Crediting Tips with some of the recipes. If you plan to serve those as part of a reimbursable meal or snack, refer to the Crediting Tips for guidance.

For information on purchasing the correct amount of cantaloupe, see USDA's Food Buying Guide at <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov>.

LUNCH AND SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz eq	1½ oz eq
Vegetables	⅓ cup	¼ cup
Fruits	⅓ cup	¼ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.

SNACK MEAL PATTERNS

Select 2 of the 5 components for snack

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	½ cup
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz eq	½ oz eq
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.



Getting To Know Cantaloupe

Fresh, juicy cantaloupe is typically a crowd pleaser, especially when it is in peak season! If you or the children you care for are new to cantaloupe, this unit of *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* will give you many reasons to love this melon.

Cantaloupe can be bought in the produce section of the grocery store or at farm stands and farmers markets. You can judge a cantaloupe's ripeness by its skin color and stem. The rind of a cantaloupe becomes more yellow and the netting pattern becomes more pronounced as it ripens. When melons are ripe, the stem will naturally separate from the vine. It is also common to find pre-cut cantaloupe with refrigerated produce or in the grab-and-go section.

GROWING GUIDE

Cantaloupes grow on vines and thrive in warm soil. The cantaloupe vines need room to roam, therefore it is best to plant seeds at least 36 inches apart or plant melon seedlings 12 inches apart at the base of a trellis or wire fence and train the vines to climb.



KITCHEN TIPS

- Always scrub the rind under cool running water before cutting a melon. Dry with a clean paper towel.
- Slice off the bottom and top ends of a melon first so that it lies flat on a cutting board.
- With a knife, from top to bottom, cut away strips of the rind, following the shape of the fruit.
- Halve the fruit, scoop out the seeds, and slice or cube as desired.

HOW SHOULD I STORE MY CANTALOUPE?

If a cantaloupe needs to ripen, store at room temperature for up to 2 days (keeping it in a closed paper bag will speed up the process). For ripe cantaloupe, store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days (2-3 days if it has been cut). If you have extra cantaloupe that you can't immediately use, freeze chunks of melon and use for smoothies or cold soups.

THREE SIMPLE WAYS TO SERVE CANTALOUPE

1. Bite-size pieces of cantaloupe served alone.
2. Bite-size pieces added to green salad for color and a sweet surprise.
3. Fresh or frozen cantaloupe added to a fruit smoothie.



Cantaloupe

Please provide a print copy (or email a digital copy) of Growing at Home to families before, during, or after completing the Cantaloupe Corner activities. These handouts and recipes are a great way to keep families informed about what their children are learning during the day.

Content from this handout can also be displayed on a family bulletin board or shared on your website.

In addition to the ideas above, text, tweet, or share daily cantaloupe lesson highlights with the families.



MESSAGES FOR FAMILIES

DAY ONE

- Today, your child made a row maker for a cantaloupe plant. #GrowIt
- Today your child tasted cantaloupe. Ask your child how it was. #GrowIt

DAY TWO

- Today your child learned that cantaloupe grows on a vine. #GrowIt

DAY THREE

- Today your child planted a cantaloupe seed in a cup. We'll watch them grow. #GrowIt

DAY FOUR

- Today your child planted a cantaloupe seed. Ask your child what seeds need to grow. (Soil, water, sun, and time) #GrowIt
- Today we read a book that had fruits and vegetables as part of the story. Ask your child to describe his or her favorite part. #GrowIt

DAY FIVE

- Today your child learned about the MyPlate food groups. Ask your child which food group cantaloupe is in. #GrowIt



PREPARATION TIME

10 minutes

MAKES

8 servings

WHAT TO DO
AHEAD OF TIME

- Scrub cantaloupe under cool running water with a vegetable brush. Cut cantaloupe open and remove the seeds. Cut the cantaloupe flesh from rind and cut into small pieces. Place in a medium sized bowl.
- Rinse the strawberries and remove the green tops. Cut the strawberries into small pieces and place on top of the cantaloupe in the bowl.
- Cut peaches into small pieces and place on top of the cantaloupe/strawberry mixture in the bowl.

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and cutting board to cut the fruit into small pieces.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	21
Protein	0 g
Carbohydrate	5 g
Total Fat	0 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	5 mg
Sodium	2 mg
Dietary Fiber	1 g

Cantaloupe Fruit Salad



INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups cantaloupe, fresh, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 ¼ cups peaches, fresh, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 ¼ cups strawberries, fresh, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons orange juice concentrate, frozen, thawed
- Fork, plate, and napkin

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pour orange juice concentrate over the fruit salad and stir gently to mix.
2. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for 2 hours.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help scrub the melon with a vegetable brush.
- Help mix ingredients in the bowl.
- Help scoop seeds from the melon.



Can You Tell Me About Cantaloupe?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

Can You Tell What's Hiding?

Page 134

15 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Cantaloupe—A Look Inside

Pages 135–136

15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Row Markers

Page 137

15 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review Make a Mystery Box or Bag, as needed (Basics, page 11).
- Scrub cantaloupe with a vegetable brush under cool running water.
- Put a whole cantaloupe in the Mystery Box or Bag.
- Make copies of Growing at Home: Cantaloupe, one set per child (pages 131–132), or draft an email for families.
- Have the children wash their hands before and after activity (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).

WORDS TO GROW

Fruit	Round
Tan	Melon
Rough	Heavy
Sweet	

MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

Can You Tell What's Hiding?

Use the Mystery Box or Bag to create interest. Have the children feel the outside of a cantaloupe before revealing the “mystery” item to all.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

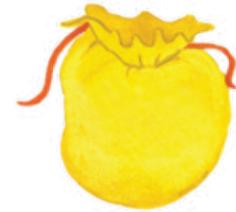
- Identify cantaloupe as a heavy and textured round fruit; and
- Describe the appearance and smell of cantaloupe.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- One cantaloupe, scrubbed with a vegetable brush under cool running water
- Mystery Box or Bag
- Paper and pencil or pen
- Basketball (*optional*)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Introduce the Mystery Box or Bag, or reintroduce it if you have used it before (Basics, page 11).
- One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box or bag with the child.
- Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he or she feels.
- After everyone has guessed, show the cantaloupe to the children. Let each child hold the cantaloupe, if desired.
- Note the children’s guesses that were close (round, a plant, food) or correct (cantaloupe).
- Talk about the cantaloupe. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.
 - Is cantaloupe a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - What shape is it? (Round like a ball)
 - What color is the outside of the cantaloupe? (Tan like the color of sand)
 - How does the outside of it feel? (Rough like a basketball—let children feel the basketball, if available)
 - Does it have a smell? (Smells sweet like a flower)
 - Has anyone ever tasted a cantaloupe? (Yes or no)



TASTING ACTIVITY

Cantaloupe—A Look Inside



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Scrub the cantaloupe with a vegetable brush under cool running water.
- Assemble materials. Keep the knife in a safe place until ready to use.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

Engage all the senses! The children see and feel the inside of a cantaloupe, then smell and taste it.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the appearance, smell, and taste of cantaloupe; and
- Tell that the orange flesh of a cantaloupe can be eaten, but not the rind or seeds.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- One cantaloupe
- Sharp knife
- Cutting board
- Spoon and container to hold removed seeds
- Paper towels
- Damp cloth and dry towel for wiping and drying hands
- Plates and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the cantaloupe with the children.

WORDS TO GROW

Seeds	Strings
Juicy	Orange
Slippery	Cool
Smooth	Green
White	

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children gather around the cantaloupe and cutting board. Review with children how to be safe around sharp knives: only adults use them, children keep their hands away, and do not touch sharp knives.
- Review with the children what they learned about cantaloupe already. If this is the first activity, tell the children that you have a cantaloupe to share today.
- Tell the children cantaloupes grow on the ground. We have to wash the outside very well to remove soil and germs before we cut it open. Tell them that you have already washed the cantaloupe.
- Cut the cantaloupe in half to reveal the inside. Have paper towels handy to wipe up extra juices. Using the spoon, scoop the center strings and seeds into a bowl and set aside. Let the children know they will get to touch the seeds a little later.
- Cut some cantaloupe into thin wedges with the rind intact. Give each child a thin wedge of cantaloupe for individual exploration.
- Talk with the children about the inside of the cantaloupe.
- Lead the children through the questions below and ask additional questions if you like.
 - What colors are on the inside of the cantaloupe? (Orange, green, white)
 - What does the inside of the cantaloupe look like? (Seeds, slippery string-like fibers, and orange flesh)
 - How does the inside flesh feel? (Cool and smooth)
 - How does the cantaloupe smell? (Sweet)

TIME TO TASTE!

- Invite children to taste the cantaloupe together. Remind them not to eat the rind and to take small bites.
- Modify the size and texture of the cantaloupe for younger children as needed (see Appendix F: Choking Prevention).
- Be a healthy role model! Enjoy some melon with the children. Encourage children who may be hesitant to take a tiny bite or even just a lick of the melon. Praise the children who tasted the melon.
- Continue the activity, asking:
 - How does the cantaloupe feel in their mouth? (Smooth and juicy)
 - How does the cantaloupe taste? (Sweet)
- After everyone has sampled his or her own cantaloupe wedge, invite the children to come to the bowl and feel the string-like fibers and seeds from the inside of the cantaloupe.
 - How do the seeds and string-like fibers feel? (Wet and slippery)
- After the children have felt the seeds and strings, have them wash their hands.



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Row Markers

The children draw and color cantaloupe on row markers.

OBJECTIVE

The children will be able to:

- Engage with cantaloupe in a fun and creative way; and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cantaloupe *Grow It! Cards*
- 2- by 4-inch rectangles of corrugated cardboard, one per child
- 4- by 6-inch pieces of white construction-weight paper or poster board, one per child
- Glue sticks or bottles, one for every 2-3 children
- Crayons, colored pencils, and markers
- Wooden craft sticks, one per child
- Clear packing tape and blunt tip scissors to cut tape, if not on a dispenser



INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children, "What is a garden?" Explain that a garden is an area of soil where vegetables and fruits grow. Explain that sometimes people grow fruits and vegetables in gardens in their yards. Fruits and vegetables also grow on farms in large areas of land called fields.
- Tell the children that row markers are helpful when plants are young and little. Row markers help mark what is growing until the plant is big enough to be recognized by its leaves, vines, flowers, and other plant parts. Explain that today they will make a row marker for a cantaloupe plant.
- Show the children a picture of a cantaloupe.
 - Talk with the children about what a cantaloupe looks like.
 - Review the shape (round) and color of a cantaloupe (outside/tan, inside/orange).
- Give each child a piece of paper. Have them draw at least one large circle on their piece of paper. They may choose to draw more than one circle and wedges. Ask them to color their circle like a cantaloupe. They may choose to color whole or cut cantaloupe.
- Help the children glue a piece of corrugated cardboard to the back center of their cantaloupe picture. When dry, push a wooden stick into the center of the piece of corrugated cardboard.
- Use strips of the clear packing tape to cover the white paper to waterproof the sign. Wrap the tape around the back of the sign to waterproof both sides of the paper. The tape will also help hold the cardboard and stick in place.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can help younger children make a row marker. *Grow It! Buddies* can write the word "Cantaloupe" on the row marker.



Cantaloupe: Where Do You Come From and How Do We Eat You?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Cantaloupes Start as Seeds

Page 139

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Cantaloupe Shapes

Pages 140-141

10-15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Seed Art

Page 142

15-20 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Cantaloupe Says"

Page 143

10 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Cantaloupes Start as Seeds

The children see and touch cantaloupe seeds and learn how far apart to plant seeds.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how a cantaloupe grows from a seed into a plant that produces cantaloupe; and
- Describe the resources needed to grow cantaloupe.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Packet of cantaloupe seeds
- Yardstick or three 12-inch rulers
- Cantaloupe *Grow It! Cards*

INSTRUCTIONS

- Tell the children they will learn how cantaloupe grows. Show the children the cantaloupe seeds and ask them what shape the seeds are. Tell the children that the seeds are just like the ones from the inside of the cantaloupe. People buy packets of seeds to grow cantaloupe in gardens. Pass the seeds around. Let the children touch and count the seeds.
- Explain that cantaloupe seeds are planted in the soil at least 3 feet apart. Cantaloupe plants need room to spread out when they grow. Have three children hold the rulers between them to show the distance. Or have a child who is at least 36 inches tall lie down between two standing children to show the distance. Have the children return to the group.
- Explain that the cantaloupe seeds are planted in mounds of soil in the spring. The sun and water help them grow into long vines above the ground. Yellow flowers bloom on the vines. Where the flowers bloom on the vine, cantaloupe fruits will grow during the summer. Remember—to make fruit, flowers must bloom first.
- Explain that the cantaloupe is picked when the skin becomes tan in color. Use the *Grow It! Cards* to show a ripe cantaloupe in a field.
- Explain that ripe cantaloupes are picked and taken to a grocery store or a farmers market. That is where people buy cantaloupes and take them home to eat. Use the *Grow It! Cards* to show cantaloupe on a plate.



Cantaloupe



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

WORDS TO GROW

Seeds	Soil
Fruit	Sun
Water	Flowers
Space	Plants





ACTIVITY LENGTH
10-15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Scrub the outside of a cantaloupe with a vegetable brush under cool running water.
- Cut the cantaloupe into the largest slices possible following the slicing tips on page 141.
- Prepare a plate with two or more cantaloupe slices, one per child.
- Refrigerate any remaining cantaloupe pieces for a future snack or recipe.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.
- Review choking prevention tips (Appendix F, page 327) and modify the size and shape of the cantaloupe as needed for younger children.

TASTING ACTIVITY

Cantaloupe Shapes

The children use cookie cutters to make shapes from cantaloupe. They explore the feel, smell, and taste of cantaloupe.



OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Tell that the flesh of a cantaloupe can be eaten, but not the rind or seeds; and
- Make a simple snack with cantaloupe.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cantaloupe, cut into thin slices
- Small cookie cutters (triangles, flowers, stars, alphabet shapes)
- Plates and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Explain that we always scrub the rind of a cantaloupe under running water before we cut it. Let the children know you have already washed the cantaloupe.
- Give each child a paper plate with at least two thin slices of cantaloupe. Give each child a small cookie cutter.
- Show the children how to press the cookie cutter into the flesh of the cantaloupe.
- Help the children as needed.
- Use the cookie cutters to make shapes from the cantaloupe slices.
- After making the cantaloupe shapes, enjoy eating this snack.
- As the children eat, ask them to describe how the cantaloupe:
 - Smells (Sweet like a flower);
 - Feels in the mouth (Cool, smooth, and slippery); and
 - Tastes (Juicy and sweet).



HOW TO SLICE A CANTALOUPE FOR CANTALOUPE SHAPES



Step 1: Prepare the cantaloupe. Thoroughly scrub the outside of the cantaloupe with a vegetable brush under cool running water.



Step 2: Cut the rind from the stem end and blossom end of the cantaloupe, creating two flat surfaces.



Step 3: Place the cantaloupe on one flat, sliced end so that the rind of the cantaloupe can be trimmed easily from the orange flesh of the whole cantaloupe.



Step 4: Remove all of the rind from the cantaloupe by cutting down along the curve of the fruit. Be careful to trim as little orange flesh with the rind as possible. If necessary, trim any green from the cantaloupe.



Step 5: Slice thin sheets of cantaloupe from an outer edge to the center until the hollow center with seeds is revealed.



Step 6: Use a small spoon to scoop and remove the seeds—a grapefruit spoon works well—and discard seeds.

Step 7: Slice thin sheets of cantaloupe from the side opposite of the first slices. Slice thin sheets of cantaloupe from the two remaining edges, stopping each time when the center is reached.

Step 8: Refrigerate the leftover cantaloupe to make future snacks or recipes.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15-20 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Preschoolers can paint or color drawings of cantaloupe or make fingerprints in place of gluing seeds.

CRAFT ACTIVITY

Seed Art

The children decorate a cantaloupe shape with seeds.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Engage with cantaloupe in a fun and creative way; and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Dyed or natural cantaloupe seeds
- Box lid, piece of cardboard, or disposable tray for each child
- Pencil for each child
- White glue and wooden craft sticks or paint brushes
- Cantaloupe *Grow It! Cards*

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show the picture of cantaloupe from the *Grow It! Cards* to the children and keep it on display.
 - Talk about how cantaloupe looks.
 - Review the shape (round) and color of cantaloupe (outside/tan, inside/orange).
- Have the children draw a cantaloupe on their box lid or tray. Have them use a circle stencil or trace the bottom of a container if they have trouble drawing a cantaloupe freehand. Write the child's name on the drawing.
- Help the children spread white glue with a wooden craft stick or paint brush in one section at a time of their picture.
- Have the children press seeds into the glue.
- Continue to spread glue on a section and press seeds into the glue until the entire image is covered with seeds.
- Lay the completed seed art on a flat surface until the glue has dried.
- Have the children wash their hands for snack or mealtime.



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Cantaloupe Says"



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Clear or designate an open space for children to move about during the activity.

"Cantaloupe Says" is the Tasty Acres Farm version of a popular children's game.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move and stretch during a group game;
- Follow instructions from a peer or adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Optional:* Shirt, badge, or other accessory for the leader to wear that lets everyone know he or she is the Farmer.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit in a circle or stand in a group.
- Choose one person to be the Farmer (leader).
- The Farmer orders the other children to do all sorts of different and fun things, the funnier the better!
- But the Farmer's orders are only to be followed when they start with "Cantaloupe says."
- When someone follows an order that doesn't begin with "Cantaloupe says," that child is out of the game. However, make sure to keep the children moving even if they are "out." Ask the children to stand off to the side and do different movements to care for the cantaloupe crop. For example children can march through the field, reach or squat toward the ground to harvest the cantaloupe.
- Repeat until only one person is left. That person is the winner and can be the Farmer in the next round!



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Cantaloupe Seed in a Cup

Pages 145-146

15 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Cantaloupe Style

Pages 147-148

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Cantaloupe Fruit Salad

Pages 149-150

15 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Cantaloupe Seed in a Cup



The children plant cantaloupe seeds in the soil and learn what the seeds need to grow (see Appendix B, page 318, for more information on growing seedlings indoors). Children can check the cup daily to see the seed's progress. Once the plant becomes big enough, the children can take their cup home.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the resources needed to grow cantaloupe; and
- Experience planting a cantaloupe seed.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Packet of cantaloupe seeds
- 5- to 6-ounce paper cups, one per child
- Potting mix or soil
- Water for soil in a small spray bottle
- Plastic spoons or scoops, one per child
- Unsharpened pencils, with a line marking $\frac{1}{2}$ inch
- Waterproof pens or markers
- Wooden craft sticks for plant markers, one per child, or the row markers the children made on Day 1 (page 137).
- Table covers, if desired
- Smocks for the children (*optional*)
- Sunny location and/or fluorescent lights if planning to grow plants indoors



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Prepare potting soil.
- Write "Cantaloupe" on the wooden craft sticks or gather row markers from Day 1.
- At the table(s), place a small paper cup, three seeds, and a plastic spoon per child.



Green Thumb Guide

Choose the right seeds. If you will be planting the seedlings in containers outside, select a miniature variety of cantaloupe seeds and leave plenty of room for the vines to grow.



INSTRUCTIONS

- Help each child write his or her name on the cup.
- During the activity, help the children (or have older *Grow It! Buddies* help):
 - Fill their cups about three-quarters full with moist potting soil.
 - Gently tap the sides and bottom of their container with their index finger to settle but not pack the soil.
 - Using the marked, unsharpened pencil, poke three holes $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep.
 - Place a seed in each hole and gently cover the seeds with soil.
 - Lightly spray water over the top of the soil; help any children needing assistance.
 - If using wooden craft sticks as plant markers, stick one in the soil close to the inside curve of the cup.
- During the activity, tell the children:
 - The seeds will grow in the potting soil as plants grow in the earth's soil outside.
 - The seeds need soil, water, sun, and time to grow into plants.
 - Inside, we can use lights to give plants warmth and light, just as the sun helps outside plants grow.
 - The seeds will grow first into very small plants (seedlings), then into larger plants. These larger plants, if planted outside in a garden and given proper sunlight and water, will grow vines, leaves, and flowers. Cantaloupes will grow from the flowers on the larger plants.
- Have the children set their cups in a sunny spot or under lights.
- Have the children check their cups every day to see the progress of the seeds growing into plants. Follow the care instructions on the seed packet.





MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm

CANTALOUPE STYLE

The children sing about growing and eating cantaloupe and act out motions to this familiar tune.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Sing and act out motions to a familiar tune; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cantaloupe lyrics to “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” (page 148)
- Large space for the children to move about

INSTRUCTIONS

- Lead the children in singing these new words to the tune “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” and demonstrate the suggested motions or make up new ones.
- Encourage the children to move about as they are singing.
- Explain that skipping, wiggling, stretching, running, jumping, and playing actively every day helps us to feel good and stay healthy.



ACTIVITY LENGTH
10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Become familiar with the words and motions of the song.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can take turns leading the song.





Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Cantaloupe Style

1ST VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some cantaloupe, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry a basket of cantaloupe)*
With plant seeds here and plant seeds there,
Here seeds, there seeds, everywhere cantaloupe seeds! *(Pretend to dig ground and plant seeds using large, vigorous motions)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

2ND VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some cantaloupe, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry basket of cantaloupe)*
With a sprout, sprout here and a sprout, sprout there,
Here a sprout, there a sprout, *(Squat to ground and "sprout" up, jumping and moving hands, until hands are above head)*
everywhere cantaloupe sprouts!
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

3RD VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some cantaloupe, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry basket of cantaloupe)*
With a munch, munch here and a munch, munch there. *(Pretend to eat cantaloupe)*
Here a munch, there a munch, *(Pretend to eat cantaloupe)*
everywhere a cantaloupe munch.
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

4TH VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some cantaloupe, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry basket of cantaloupe)*
With a juicy bite here and a juicy bite there, *(Pretend to eat and wipe juice from chin)*
Here a bite, there a bite, everywhere a juicy bite.
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*



TASTING ACTIVITY

Cantaloupe Fruit Salad

Discuss cantaloupe facts with the children and have them try a new cantaloupe recipe.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how cantaloupe is grown, harvested, and eaten; and
- Understand that the flesh of cantaloupe can be eaten but not the rind or seeds.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cantaloupe Fruit Salad ingredients (recipe, page 150)
- Cantaloupe *Grow It! Cards*

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Gather the children and lead a discussion about cantaloupe.
- Use the cantaloupe *Grow It! Cards* to show cantaloupe growing and ready to eat.
- Tell the children that cantaloupe is a fruit that grows on vines.
- Ask some of the following questions:
 - Is cantaloupe a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - What color is a cantaloupe? (Orange)
 - What shape is cantaloupe? (Round like a ball)
 - What color is the outside rind? (Tan)
 - How does the rind feel? (Rough)
 - Where do cantaloupes grow? (In the soil, on a farm)
 - What is inside the cantaloupe? (Little seeds)
 - Do cantaloupes grow on vines above or below the ground? (Above the ground)
 - Where are cantaloupes shipped after they are picked? (To grocery stores and farmers markets)
- Have the children name some of the ways that cantaloupe can be eaten (in fruit salads, salsas, smoothies, fresh and sliced, and even in soups).
- Conclude the activity by telling the children they are going to help you make and then taste fruit salad.
- Gather children around a table and make cantaloupe fruit salad together.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Thoroughly wash the outside of the cantaloupe.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the fruit salad with the children.

WORDS TO GROW

Fruit	Round
Rough	Vine
Soil	Seed



PREPARATION TIME

10 minutes

MAKES

8 servings

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Scrub cantaloupe under cool running water with a vegetable brush. Cut cantaloupe open and remove the seeds. Cut the cantaloupe flesh from rind and cut into small pieces. Place in a medium sized bowl.
- Rinse the strawberries and remove the green tops. Cut the strawberries into small pieces and place on top of the cantaloupe in the bowl.
- Cut peaches into small pieces and place on top of the cantaloupe/strawberry mixture in the bowl.

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving (½ cup) provides ½ cup of fruit. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	21
Protein	0 g
Carbohydrate	5 g
Total Fat	0 g
Saturated fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	5 mg
Sodium	2 mg
Dietary Fiber	1 g

RECIPE

Cantaloupe Fruit Salad



INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups cantaloupe, fresh, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 ¼ cups peaches, fresh, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 ¼ cups strawberries, fresh, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons orange juice concentrate, frozen, thawed
- Fork, plate, and napkin (one per child)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pour orange juice concentrate over the fruit salad and stir gently to mix.
2. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate for 2 hours.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help scrub the melon with a vegetable brush.
- Help mix ingredients in the bowl.
- Help scoop seeds from the melon.

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and cutting board to cut the fruit into small pieces.



Cantaloupe: How Do You Grow?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Cantaloupe Seed or Starter Plant Outdoors

Pages 152-153

15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Decorated Garden Bags

Page 154

15 minutes



READING ACTIVITY

Page 155

10-20 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- If using a seed tape, prepare it ahead of time (page 106). Involve the children as an extra activity.
- Prepare garden or flowerbed for planting by tilling (breaking up) and fertilizing the soil (Appendix B: Green Thumb Guide, page 318).

PLANTING OPTIONS

- **SEEDS:** Follow the directions on the back of the cantaloupe seed packet to plant seeds directly into the ground.
- **SEED TAPE:** A seed tape (see page 106) ensures your seeds will be spaced appropriately and can make it easier for small hands to help plant small seeds.
- **SEEDLINGS:** If you have grown cantaloupe seedlings indoors and hardened off the plants for outdoor planting, you can substitute the plants for the seeds. See Appendix B, page 318, for information on hardening seedlings.
- **STARTER PLANTS:** You can also purchase cantaloupe plants at a greenhouse or farmers market and plant directly into the ground. Refer to starter plants instead of seeds during the activity.

GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Cantaloupe Seed or Starter Plant Outdoors



The children plant cantaloupe outdoors and learn what cantaloupe needs to grow.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the resources needed to grow cantaloupe; and
- Experience planting cantaloupe seeds or a cantaloupe plant.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cantaloupe seeds, seed tape, seedlings, or starter plants (see Planting Options)
- Garden or flowerbed, 12 feet or longer by 18 inches wide
- Hoe, trowel, or large spoon (wash after the activity)
- Garden hose with sprinkler nozzle or watering can
- Yardstick or two 12-inch rulers



INSTRUCTIONS

- Take the children and the cantaloupe seeds or seed tape outside. Explain that today they will plant cantaloupe seeds and learn what seeds need to grow into plants.
- Point to the sun. Ask the children how the sunlight feels on their skin (warm).
- Explain that the light and warmth of the sun helps cantaloupe seeds grow into plants that will produce more cantaloupe.
- Show the children the soil in a garden or flowerbed. Let them touch the soil. Ask them how the soil feels (wet or dry, hard or soft). Explain that cantaloupe seeds need soil to grow into plants. Let children make little mounds of soil to plant the seeds.
- Run some water from a hose or pour some from a watering can and let the children touch it. Ask how it feels (wet). Explain that water helps plants grow, they get “thirsty” just like we (humans) get thirsty. Explain that water for plants usually comes as rain. Juicy foods, like cantaloupe, need lots of water so farmers and gardeners use sprinklers, hoses, or watering cans in addition to rain to make sure the plants have plenty of water.
- Have the children help lay the seeds or prepared seed tapes in the soil at the preferred planting depth of ½ inch, cover with soil and water. Remind the children of how far apart cantaloupe seeds are planted (at least 2 feet apart). Use the yardstick or two 12-inch rulers to make sure the seeds are planted at the correct distance apart.
- Let children know cantaloupe grows best when you tend to it daily. Water plant as needed.



Green Thumb Guide

IS SPACE LIMITED?

Grow miniature varieties of cantaloupe in a container garden (see Appendix B: Green Thumb Guide, page 318).





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Decorated Garden Bags

The children draw the shape and color of cantaloupe on paper bags.

OBJECTIVE

The children will be able to:

- Engage with cantaloupe in a fun and creative way; and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper lunch bags (one per child)
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Cantaloupe *Grow It! Cards*

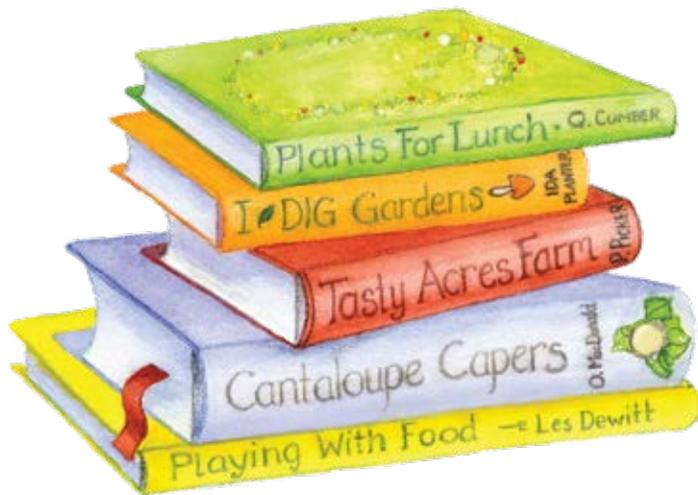


INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show a picture of cantaloupe from the *Grow It! Cards* to the children.
- Talk about how a cantaloupe looks different on the outside from the inside.
 - Review the shape (round) and colors (outside/tan and inside/orange) of a cantaloupe.
- Give each child a paper lunch bag and explain that they are going to decorate the bag with drawings of cantaloupe.
- Have the children draw at least one cantaloupe on the bag.
 - Invite them to color the cantaloupe. Some may choose to color the outside of the cantaloupe; some may color the inside.
 - Children can also choose to draw and color slices of cantaloupe.
- Have the children think of uses for the Decorated Garden Bags they just created.
- Some ideas include:
 - Use the bag to carry home the seed cup planted on Day 3 (page 190) and the row marker from Day 1 (page 137);
 - Use as a gift bag for a present; and
 - Other ideas the children suggest.



Reading Activity



Read story books to the children that are about growing and/or eating fruits and vegetables. Listening to such stories can encourage children to adopt positive behaviors that can last a lifetime, like trying new fruits and vegetables.

OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to:

- Describe the fun and interesting stories about fruits and vegetables that were read to them.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Books from a library or purchased books
- Space for the children to sit

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit around you as you read the book.
- Ask the children to listen for the names of vegetables and fruits as the story is read. If possible, have the children act out parts of the book to encourage movement during story time.
- Ask the children which fruits and vegetables were named in the story and what happened to them. For example,
 - Where were the fruits and vegetables grown?
 - What happened to the fruits and vegetables after they were picked?
 - Who ate the fruits and vegetables?
- Add other questions that relate to the story.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10–20 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Clear a space for the children to sit around you.
- Choose a book from the Harvest of Books list (Basics, page 15).
- Borrow the book you select from a library or purchase it.
- You can also use other books related to fruits and vegetables that may already be available to you.

MIXED-AGES TIPS

- Hold the baby on your lap while reading to other children.
- Give the baby a fruit or vegetable board book.
- Have *Grow It! Buddies* read to younger children.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

Cantaloupe Is a Fruit

Pages 157-159

20-25 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Cantaloupe Curl Ups

Pages 160-161

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Meet Cantaloupe's Fruit Friends

Pages 162-163

10-15 minutes



FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

Cantaloupe Is a Fruit



Introduce the children to the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. The children will learn that cantaloupe and other melons are part of the Fruit Food Group.

OBJECTIVES

- The children will be able to:
- Say that cantaloupe is part of the Fruit Group;
- Say that eating fruits like cantaloupe help keep us healthy;
- Say that being physically active every day helps us feel good;
- Say that eating foods from the different food groups each day helps us grow and be healthy; and
- Name a food from each of the five food groups.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*
- *Optional:* MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child



ACTIVITY LENGTH
20 minutes; 25 minutes
if optional coloring
activity conducted

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

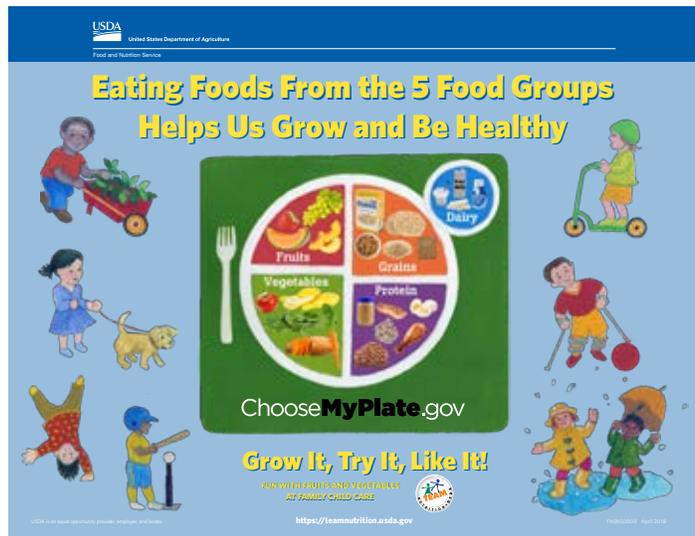
- Review the foods and activities shown on the poster.
- Display the *MyPlate Poster*
- *Optional:* Make copies of MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child.



INSTRUCTIONS

Learning the Food Groups

- Seat the children in a semicircle on the floor in view of the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*.
- Tell the children that today they are going to learn about ways to be healthy and have fun every day. Tell the children that the best part is they already like to do what helps them be healthy—they like to eat a variety of foods, and they like to play.
- Show the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster* to the children. Ask the children to tell you what they see on the poster. Accept all correct answers, such as food, specific foods by name, children playing, and specific activities by name, etc.
- Explain that MyPlate shows the five food groups a person should eat from each day. Each food group has its own color. Point to the different sections as you discuss. The Fruit Group is red, the Vegetable Group is green, the Grains Group is orange, the Dairy Group is blue, and the Protein Foods Group is purple. Eating foods from each food group helps us to grow and healthy. Explain that cantaloupe is part of the Fruit Group.



The Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster shows foods from the five food groups.



GRAINS

- Tell the children that foods made from grains are in the Grains Group represented by the orange-colored section on MyPlate. Point to the food group on the poster and state that grain foods like bread, cereal, rice, and pasta give us energy to play.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a food in the orange section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Grains Group also give us energy to play.
- Children this age may not know what a grain is. Tell them grains come from plants such as wheat, oats, rice, and corn. Grains are used to make foods like cereal, bread, tortillas, and pasta.



VEGETABLES

- Tell the children that many foods from plants are in the Vegetable Group and are represented by the green section of MyPlate. Point out the carrot on the poster. Ask the children to name this vegetable (carrot). Ask the children to name the color of carrots (orange). Explain that eating orange vegetables, like carrots, can help them to be healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a vegetable in the green section, and name the vegetable. After each child names a vegetable, repeat the name of the vegetable and state that (the vegetable named) and other foods from the Vegetable Group also help keep us healthy.





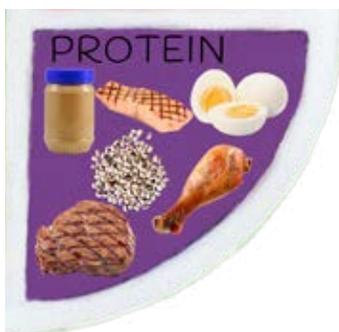
FRUITS

- Tell the children that some foods from plants are in the Fruit Group represented by the red section. Point to the cantaloupe shown on the poster and state that melons like cantaloupes help keep us healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a fruit in the red section, and name the fruit. After each child names a fruit, repeat the name of the fruit and state that (the fruit named) and other foods from the Fruit Group help keep us healthy.



DAIRY

- Tell the children that milk and foods made from milk are in the Dairy Group represented by the blue section. Point to the milk and yogurt on the poster and state that milk and yogurt help us build strong bones.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the blue section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Dairy Group also help us build strong bones.

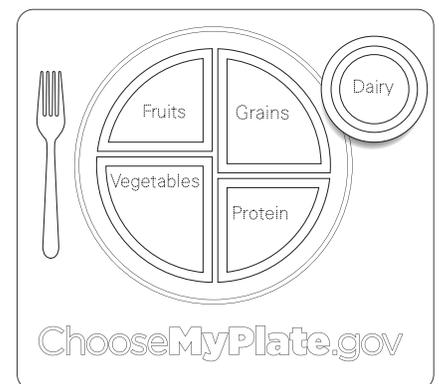


PROTEIN FOODS

- Tell the children that foods from animals and some plants are in the Protein Foods Group represented by the purple section. Point to the meat, fish, egg, beans, and peanut butter on the poster and state that these foods help our muscles grow.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the purple section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Protein Foods Group also help our muscles grow. (Note: if only foods that come from animals are selected, point out a food from plants and name it. If only foods from plants are selected, point out a food that comes from animals and name it.)

OPTIONAL COLORING ACTIVITY

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Distribute a copy of the MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333) to each child.
- Ask the children to color the Fruit Group section of MyPlate red and draw and color a cantaloupe near it. Help the younger children who may not know their colors yet.
- With older children, have them copy the dot-to-dot outline of the word "Fruits."





ACTIVITY LENGTH
10 minutes

MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Cantaloupe Curl Ups

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Display the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster



Cantaloupe Curl Ups is a fun activity that gets children moving.

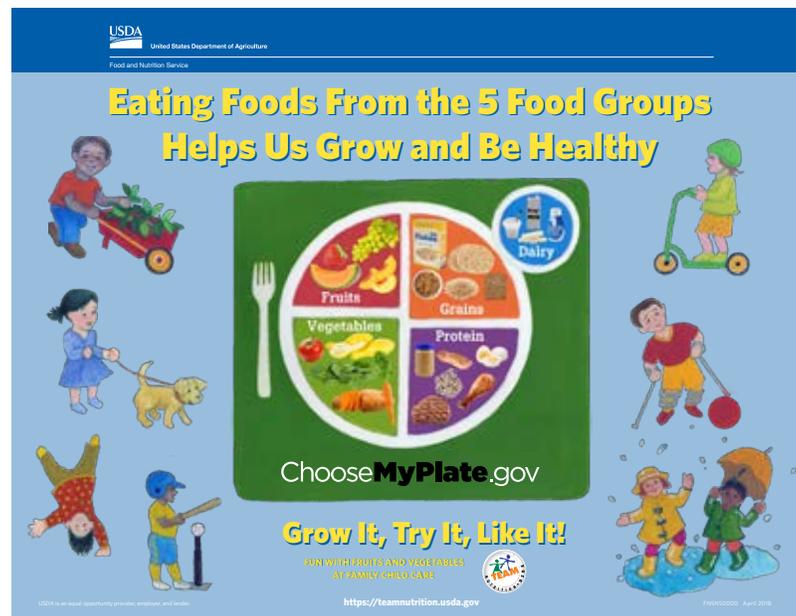
OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move during a group activity;
- Follow instructions from an adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Space to do activity
- *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster



Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster



INSTRUCTIONS

- Point to the various activities depicted on the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. Ask the children to tell you why it is important to be physically active and play every day (it helps you be strong and healthy, and it is fun).
- Ask the children to extend their arms out to the side and spread apart from each other so that no child is able to easily touch another child's fingers. When the children are spaced around the room, ask them to sit down and listen carefully. Tell the children that building strength is an important way to be active. Ask the children to watch you show them a special strength-building activity that celebrates cantaloupe.
- Ask the children to watch you as you lie on your back on the floor, with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Place your hands on the back of your head with the elbows pointed out to the side. Gently tighten the stomach muscles and raise your head and upper body off the floor a few inches in a slight sit-up. Point out to the children that a shape similar to the curve of a slice of cantaloupe is made between the bent knees and raised head. Hold this position for 3 seconds and gently release back to the floor.
- Repeat the curl-up several times with the children, saying, "Cantaloupe Curl-Up (do slight sit up), cantaloupe down (return to floor)."
- Conclude the activity by telling the children it is fun be physically active by doing Cantaloupe Curl-Ups.

NOTE TO CAREGIVER

Active play and movement are important for every child's growth and development. Although they may seem to be active and energetic, most children do not get the amount of physical activity they need for good health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children get 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10–15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Wash the outside of all three fruits with a vegetable brush under cool running water.
- Prepare a wedge each of cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon with rind or skin intact.
- Prepare bite-size pieces of cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.



TASTING ACTIVITY

Meet Cantaloupe's Fruit Friends



The children taste the difference between cantaloupe and other fruits.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Compare cantaloupe to other types of melon; and
- Describe many different ways to eat melon.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon
- Plates, forks, and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about cantaloupe.
- Encourage answers such as how and where cantaloupe grows; how it looks, feels, smells, and tastes; and other information covered in the unit.
- Show the children the cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon wedges. Tell the children that honeydew is a melon similar to cantaloupe, but different in color.
- Ask the children what is different about the three fruits? Discuss differences in size, shape, color, etc. Also point out that cantaloupe and honeydew have seeds in the middle that can be scraped out.



- Let the children know that they are also going to find out if the fruits taste different from one another.
- Give the children the fruit samples to taste on a plate with a napkin. Note the similarities as well—all three are juicy and taste sweet.
- As the children are eating, ask:
 - What different ways have they eaten fruits (i.e., cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon)?
 - What new ways do they think melons and other fruits could be eaten?
- Give suggestions such as in a fruit salad, in a smoothie, plain, or served with yogurt.
- After tasting the samples, invite the children to feel and smell the different wedges and rinds. Discard wedges at end of lesson.



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy eating the melon with the children.

WORDS TO GROW

Melon

Honeydew

Rind

Watermelon

Seeds

Round



Fun Extras



Cantaloupe

Cantaloupe Growing in Field



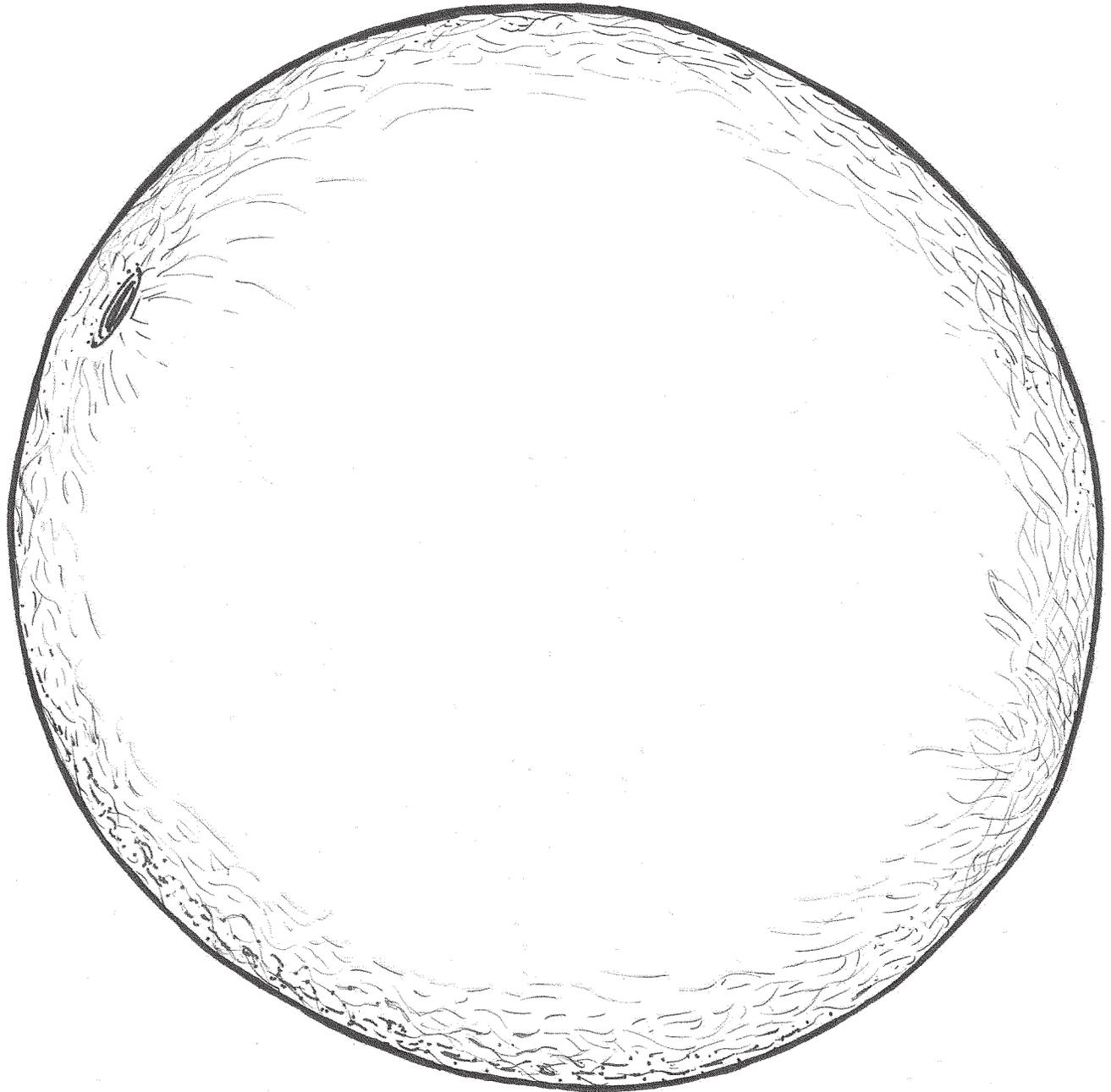
Cantaloupe

Cantaloupe in Grocery Store



Cantaloupe

Blackline Master



What Do Cantaloupes Look Like?

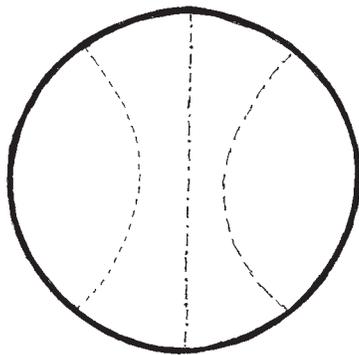
Dear Family:

Generally, children are more eager to try and eat foods that are familiar. Help your child review what they have learned about cantaloupe in child care. If possible, buy a cantaloupe and explore it with your child as you complete this activity. Your child will love sharing with you everything we've learned about how a cantaloupe looks, feels, and tastes! We've learned: cantaloupe is round with tan-colored skin. The outside rind of a cantaloupe feels rough when you touch it. We scrub the outside well before we cut a cantaloupe in half. The inside of cantaloupe is orange, soft, and smooth. The seeds of the cantaloupe are in the center. We remove these seeds before we eat cantaloupe.

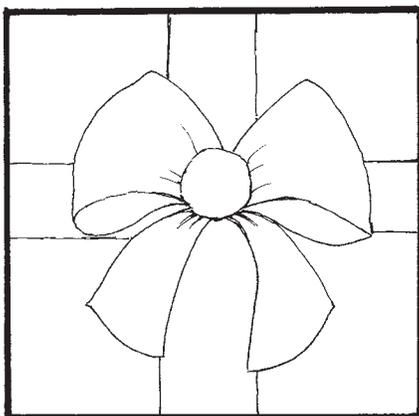
Have your child complete the activity below.

What shape is a cantaloupe?

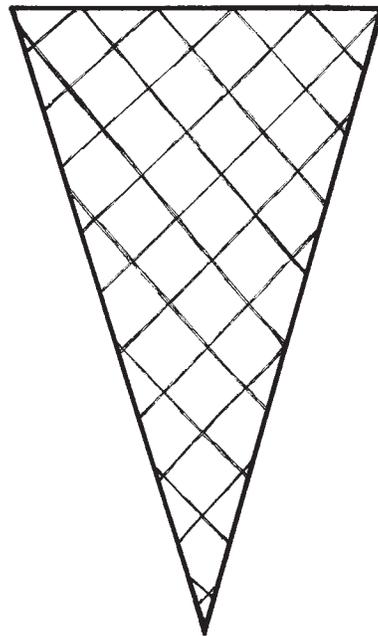
Draw a circle around the object with the same shape as a cantaloupe.



Round like a basketball



Square like a box



Triangular like an ice cream cone



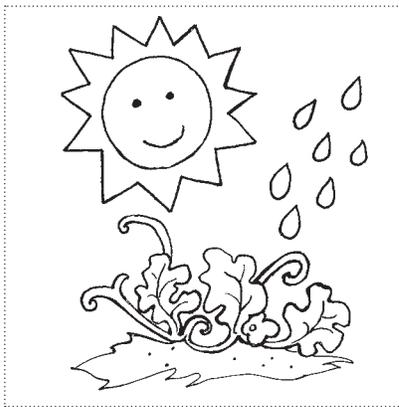
Story of How a Cantaloupe Grows

Dear Family:

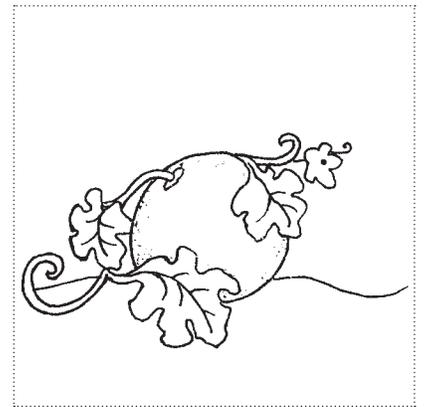
Your child has learned about growing and harvesting cantaloupe. Review what they have learned by reading this story together. The pictures show the steps of growing and harvesting a cantaloupe. Enjoy eating cantaloupe while you read this story together. After you have read the story, you can cut the pictures apart and create a game for your child. Have your child practice putting the story of how a cantaloupe grows in the right order.



In spring, a farmer plants cantaloupe seeds in the ground.



The cantaloupe seeds grow vines on top of the ground. The plants need soil, a lot of sun, warm weather, water, and time to grow.



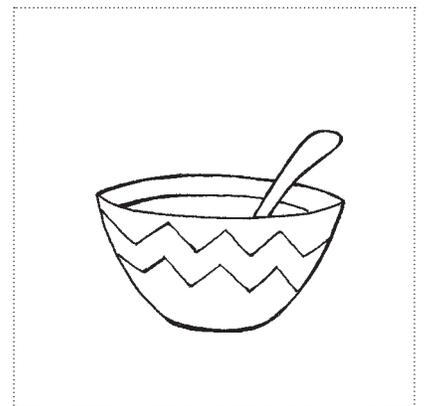
Cantaloupes grow on the vines and ripen to a tan color during the summer.



The farmer picks the cantaloupes.

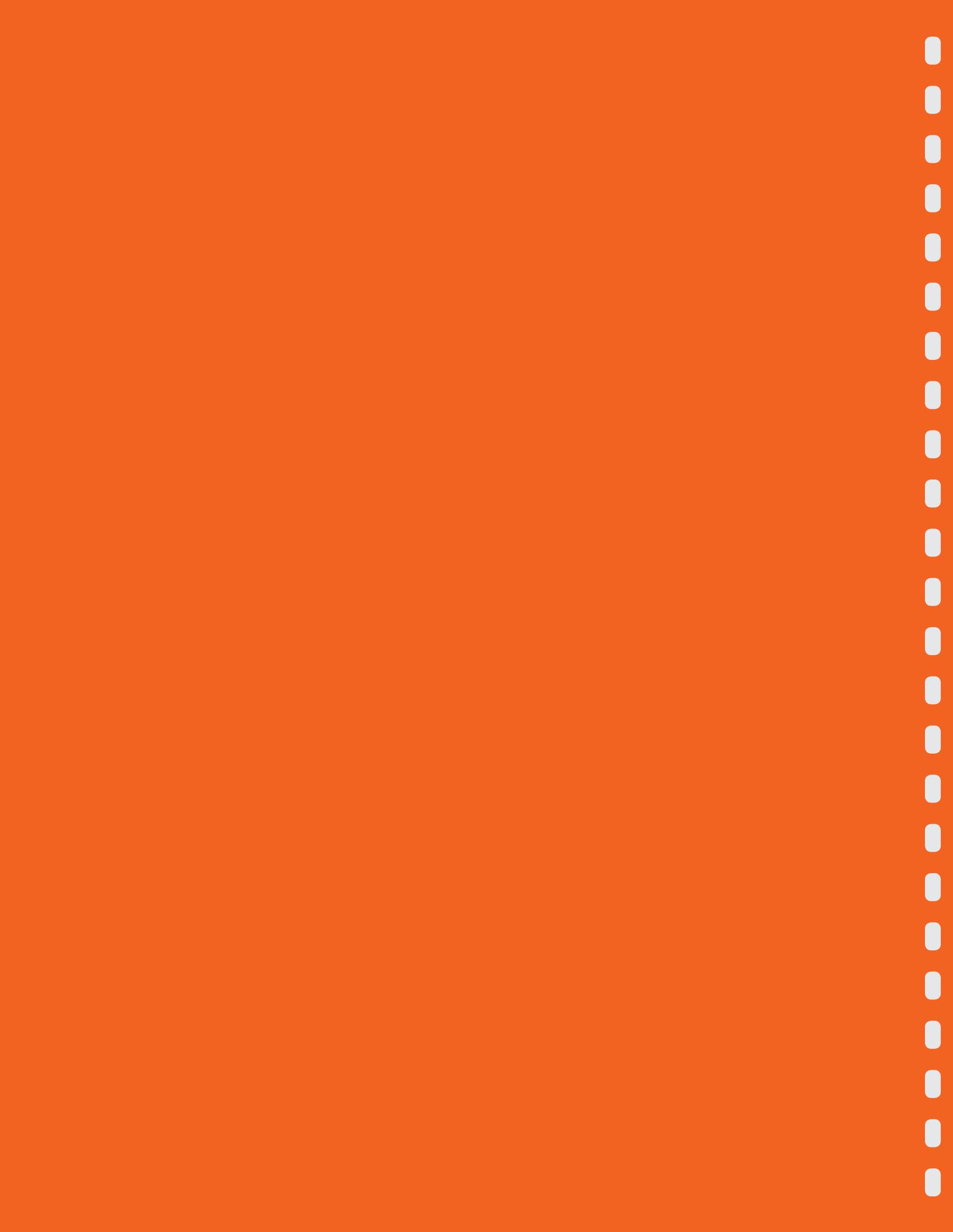


The family chooses a cantaloupe at the grocery store or farmers' market.



The family makes and eats cantaloupe soup at home. Yum!





Crookneck Squash Row



SQUASH

PEACH

POTATO

APPENDIXES

WELCOME TO

Crookneck Squash Row at Tasty Acres Farm!



Crookneck squash is a vegetable that children find fascinating because of the unusual shape. Through the activities in this unit, children will explore this unique yellow vegetable, experiencing how a crookneck squash looks, feels, smells, and tastes. Children will learn how crookneck squash are grown, harvested, and shipped from the farm to farmers markets and stores.

Children also have many opportunities to try crookneck squash throughout the unit. Growing at Home materials encourage families to include squash in cooking, conversations, and fun and games.

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Crookneck Squash Activity Chart

DAY 1 45 minutes	DAY 2 40-50 minutes	DAY 3 25 minutes	DAY 4 45-50 minutes	DAY 5 40-50 minutes
MYSTERY BOX OR BAG	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY
<p>Feel That Curvy Shape</p> <hr/> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Crookneck Squash Start as Seeds</p> <hr/> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Plant a Crookneck Squash Seed in a Cup</p> <hr/> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Plant a Crookneck Squash Outdoors</p> <hr/> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Squash Is a Vegetable</p> <hr/> <p>20-25 minutes</p>
TASTING ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY	OPTIONAL ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY
<p>Crookneck Squash—A Look Inside</p> <hr/> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>“Crookneck Squash Says”</p> <hr/> <p>10 minutes</p> 	<p>Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Crookneck Squash Style</p> <hr/> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Make a Seed Tape</p> <hr/> <p>15-20 minutes</p>	<p>Crookneck Squash Skip</p> <hr/> <p>10 minutes</p>
CRAFT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY		CRAFT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY
<p>Garden Art Bookmarks</p> <hr/> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Crookneck Squash Sandwiches</p> <hr/> <p>10 minutes</p>		<p>Decorated Garden Bags</p> <hr/> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Squash Casserole</p> <hr/> <p>10-15 minutes</p> 
	READING ACTIVITY			
	 <hr/> <p>10-20 minutes</p>			





Introduction to Crookneck Squash Row Activities

Check with local farms and farmers markets to find out when crookneck squash is in peak season. Usually crookneck squash is a summer or late summer crop. Crookneck squash is an interesting vegetable, and seeing crookneck squash growing makes a great farm field trip for preschoolers. If a farm is not nearby, visit a produce stand or farmers market to see fresh crookneck squash. If those options do not work, you can also show the children a picture using the crookneck squash *Grow It! Cards*.

The crookneck squash lessons in this unit are arranged by day to teach over the course of 5 consecutive days. If possible, do the growing activities. Growing and watching a plant grow can be an enjoyable activity for children.

WORDS TO GROW

New Words To Use
When Teaching About
Crookneck Squash

- Vegetables** **Curves**
- Vines** **Squash**
- Circle** **Inside**
- Yellow** **Outside**
- White** **Summer**

ACTIVITY LENGTH

Most activities require only 10–15 minutes.

CREDITING TIPS

Some activities in this unit include children eating crookneck squash. Check for food allergies before serving. If you plan to serve crookneck squash as part of a reimbursable meal or snack for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), check the minimum serving sizes for each age group (Appendix G, page 330). There are also Crediting Tips with some of the recipes. If you plan to serve those as part of a reimbursable meal or snack, refer to the Crediting Tips for guidance.

For information on purchasing the correct amount of squash, see USDA's Food Buying Guide at <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov>.

LUNCH AND SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz eq	1½ oz eq
Vegetables	⅓ cup	¼ cup
Fruits	⅓ cup	¼ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.

SNACK MEAL PATTERNS

Select 2 of the 5 components for snack

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	½ cup
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz eq	½ oz eq
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.



Getting To Know Crookneck Squash

If you're not familiar with crookneck squash, that's ok! *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* can help both providers and children discover new vegetables and fruits.

Crookneck squash is a type of summer squash, similar to patty pan squash and zucchini. Crookneck squash is easy to grow and is famous for being one of the varieties with the most flavor. The outside of the crookneck squash is light yellow and the inside is white and contains edible seeds.

GROWING GUIDE

Plant seeds outdoors 2-3 weeks after the last spring frost when weather is warm. Crookneck squash plants are bushy with large green leaves and grow best in full sun and well-drained soil. Crookneck squash plants need to be watered moderately. These vegetables will be ready to harvest about 2 months after planting. Harvest when squash are 6-8 inches long. Adults may use a knife or garden pruner to cut the squash from the plant, ensuring a piece of the stem remains attached. Regularly harvest so the plants keep growing more squash.



HOW SHOULD I STORE MY CROOKNECK SQUASH?

Refrigerate after harvest and use within 3-5 days.

SIX SIMPLE WAYS TO SERVE CROOKNECK SQUASH

1. Sliced raw and cut into thin sticks (*optional*: serve with dip).
2. Cut into noodles with a vegetable peeler.
3. Shredded raw and tossed into green salad.
4. Diced and added to vegetable soup.
5. Stir-fried with other vegetables.
6. Grilled on a kabob.



Crookneck Squash

Please provide a print copy (or email a digital copy) of Growing at Home to families before, during, or after completing the Crookneck Squash activities. These handouts and recipes are a great way to keep families informed about what their children are learning during the day.

Content from this handout can also be displayed on a family bulletin board or shared on your website.

In addition to the ideas above, text, tweet, or share daily crookneck squash lesson highlights with the families.



MESSAGES FOR FAMILIES

DAY ONE

- Today your child tasted crookneck squash. #GrowIt
 - Share a photo of their child eating squash. Do not post pictures without permission.

DAY TWO

- Today your child learned that squash starts as a seed. #GrowIt

DAY THREE

- Today we danced to a fun song about squash. Ask your child to sing it for you. #GrowIt

DAY FOUR

- Today we read a book that had vegetables and fruits as part of the story. Ask your child to describe his or her favorite part. #GrowIt
- Today your child experienced growing a crookneck squash seed. #GrowIt

DAY FIVE

- Today your child learned about the MyPlate food groups. Ask your child which food group squash is in. #GrowIt



Squash Casserole



PREPARATION TIME

10 minutes

COOKING TIME

35 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and cutting board to cut the onions into pieces.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	45
Protein	3 g
Carbohydrate	3 g
Total Fat	2 g
Saturated Fat	1 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	76 mg
Sodium	70 mg
Dietary Fiber	1 g

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup onions, fresh, peeled, ¼-inch diced
- 1 cup zucchini, fresh, unpeeled, grated
- 1 cup crookneck squash, fresh, unpeeled, grated
- ½ teaspoon parsley, dried
- ½ teaspoon oregano, dried
- ⅛ teaspoon salt, table
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper, ground
- 1 egg, large, whole
- 2 tablespoons milk, fat-free (skim)
- 1 ¼ ounces sharp cheddar cheese, reduced-fat, shredded
- Nonstick cooking spray
- Forks, plates, and napkins

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 °F.
2. Lightly coat a medium baking dish (8" x 8") with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
3. Spray a medium skillet with nonstick cooking spray and heat over medium-high heat.
4. Sauté onions for 3 minutes or until soft. Stir frequently.
5. Add zucchini and crookneck squash. Sauté for 5 minutes. Stir frequently.
6. Add parsley, oregano, salt, and pepper and stir. Continue cooking until zucchini and crookneck squash begin to lightly brown, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
7. Whisk together egg and milk in a small bowl.
8. Place sautéed vegetables in baking dish. Top with egg and milk mixture and lightly stir. Be sure to keep vegetables spread evenly on the bottom of the pan. Sprinkle cheese evenly on top of mixture.
9. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes. Heat to 160 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds.
10. Cut pan into 6 even pieces.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help rinse the vegetables.
- Help mix the eggs and milk together.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

Feel That Curvy Shape

Page 180

15 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Crookneck Squash—A Look Inside

Pages 181-182

15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Garden Art Bookmarks

Page 183

15 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review Make a Mystery Box or Bag, as needed (Basics, pages 11–12).
- Place one well-scrubbed, whole crookneck squash in the Mystery Box or Bag.
- Make copies of Crookneck Squash Growing at Home handout, one set per child (pages 177–178) or draft an email for families.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.
- Have the children wash their hands before and after activity (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).

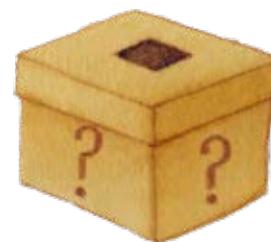
WORDS TO GROW

Vegetable	Curve
Yellow	Smooth
Light (weight)	Crookneck squash

MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

Feel That Curvy Shape

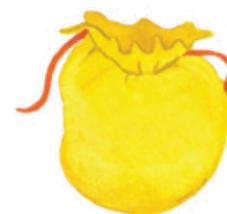
Use the Mystery Box or Bag to create interest and excite their sense of touch. Have the children feel the crookneck squash in the box or bag before revealing the “mystery” item to all.



OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Identify a crookneck squash as a medium-weight, yellow vegetable with a curved neck; and
- Describe the outside appearance and smell of a crookneck squash.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- 2 crookneck squash, well-scrubbed
- Mystery Box or Bag
- Paper and pencil

INSTRUCTIONS

- Introduce the Mystery Box or Bag, or reintroduce it if you have used it before.
- One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box or bag with the child.
- Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he or she feels.
- After everyone has guessed, reveal the crookneck squash. Let each child hold the crookneck squash if desired.
- Note the children’s guesses that were close (curved, crooked, a plant, food) or correct (crookneck squash).
- Talk about the crookneck squash. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.
 - Is a crookneck squash a vegetable or fruit? (Vegetable)
 - What shape is it? (Curved like a cane)
 - What color is it? (Light yellow)
 - How does the outside of it feel? (Smooth)
 - Is it light or heavy? (Light)
 - Is it soft or hard? (Hard, with a thin skin)
 - Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell earthy)
 - Has anyone ever tasted a crookneck squash? (Yes or no)



TASTING ACTIVITY

Crookneck Squash—A Look Inside



Engage all the senses! The children will see and feel a crookneck squash, then smell and taste it.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the appearance, smell, and taste of a crookneck squash; and
- Recognize that all of the crookneck squash can be eaten including the seeds, flesh, and skin.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Crookneck squash (can be the one used with the Mystery Box or Bag)
- Sharp knife
- Cutting board or surface
- Damp cloth and dry towel for wiping and drying hands
- Plates and napkins (one per child)

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Prepare the crookneck squash. Scrub the squash with a vegetable brush under cool running water.
- Assemble materials.
- Keep the knife in a safe place until ready to use.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.





INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children gather around the area with the crookneck squash and cutting board. Review with children how to be safe around sharp knives: only adults use them, children keep their hands away, and do not touch sharp knives.
- Review what was learned about crookneck squash already. If this is your first activity, tell the children you have a crookneck squash to share today.
- Tell the children that crookneck squash grows on the ground. We have to wash the outside very well to remove soil and germs before we cut it open. Tell the children you have already washed the crookneck squash.
- Cut the crookneck squash in half to reveal the inside. Let the children know they will get to touch the inside if they want to a little later.
- Cut one half of the crookneck squash into small wedges with the skin and seeds intact. On a plate, give each child a small wedge of crookneck squash to look at, touch, and smell.
- Talk with the children about the inside of the crookneck squash. Ask the following questions and any additional questions if you like.
 - What color is the inside of the crookneck squash? (White)
 - What does the inside of the crookneck squash look like? (Seeds and white flesh of the crookneck squash)
 - How does the inside feel? (The flesh feels smooth and firm, the seeds feel like small, flat bumps)
 - How does the crookneck squash smell? (Mild, earthy, or no smell)

TIME TO TASTE!

- Once the children have explored their own piece of crookneck squash, invite them to taste a small piece of the crookneck squash (see Appendix F: Choking Prevention, pages 327–329). Tell the children that all of the parts of the squash may be eaten: flesh, seeds, and skin.
- Continue the activity asking:
 - How does the crookneck squash feel in their mouth? (Smooth, firm, crunchy)
 - How does the crookneck squash taste? (Mild)
- Be open to any answer the children have—tastes vary and use as a teaching tool. Explain to the children there are four different tastes: sweet, salty, bitter, and sour.
- Be a healthy role model! Enjoy some squash with the children. Encourage children who may be hesitant to take a tiny bite or even just a lick of the squash. Praise the children who tasted the squash.
- After everyone has sampled his or her own uncooked crookneck squash, invite the children to come to the board and feel the squash half with the seeds.
- After the children have felt the half with seeds, have the children wipe their hands on the damp cloth and dry with the towel.

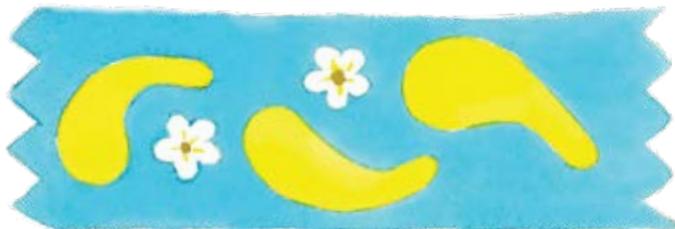
OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the crookneck squash with the children.



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Garden Art Bookmarks



Have the children draw and color fruits and vegetables on bookmarks.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Engage with crookneck squash in a fun way; and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- White poster board or sturdy paper cut into 3-inch x 9-inch strips
- Markers, crayons, pencils, and/or colored pencils
- Crookneck Squash *Grow It! Cards*
- *Optional:* Laminating material for each bookmark

INSTRUCTIONS

This example uses crookneck squash as the featured vegetable.

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show a picture of crookneck squash to the children. Use images from the *Grow It! Cards*.
 - Talk about how a crookneck squash looks different on the outside from the inside.
 - Review the shape (curved) and colors (light yellow outside and white inside with white seeds) of a crookneck squash.
- Give each child a paper strip for his or her bookmark.
- Show them how to make a curve with their index finger. Show them how to turn their wrist to put the curved finger flat on their strip of paper (see drawing on the right). Explain that they are going to trace around the curve of their finger to make the curve of a crookneck squash and then lift their hand and draw the letter U or loop to make the rest of squash.
- Tell the children to:
 - Color the shape like a crookneck squash.
 - Decide to color the outside or inside of the crookneck squash.
 - Draw more crookneck squash of different sizes on the bookmark, if desired.
- Help each child write his or her name on the back of the bookmark.
- Collect and laminate the finished bookmarks (*optional*).



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

MIXED-AGES TIP

A *Grow It! Buddy* can help a younger child make a bookmark.



Crookneck Squash: Where Do You Come From and How Do We Eat You?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Crookneck Squash Start as Seeds

Page 185

10 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Crookneck Squash Says"

Page 186

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Crookneck Squash Sandwiches

Page 187

10 minutes



READING ACTIVITY

Page 188

10-20 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Crookneck Squash Start as Seeds

The children see and touch crookneck squash seeds and learn how far apart to plant them.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how a crookneck squash grows from a seed into a plant that produces crookneck squash; and
- Describe the materials needed to grow crookneck squash.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Crookneck squash seed packet (check your local hardware store or supermarket)
- Yardstick or two 12-inch rulers
- Crookneck Squash *Grow It! Cards*

INSTRUCTIONS

- Tell the children they will learn about how crookneck squash grows. Show the children the crookneck squash seeds. Tell them the seeds are similar to the ones from the inside of the crookneck squash. People buy packets of seeds to grow crookneck squash in gardens.
- Pass the seeds around. Let the children touch and count the seeds.
- Explain that the crookneck squash seeds are planted at least 2 feet apart in the soil. The crookneck squash plants need enough room to spread out when they grow. Have two children hold the yardstick or rulers between them to show the distance. Have the children return to the group.
- Explain that the crookneck squash seeds are planted in the soil in the spring. Yellow flowers bloom on the vines. Use the *Grow It! Cards* to show crookneck squash growing in a field.
- Explain that crookneck squash are picked by an adult when they are tender and still have a shiny or glossy appearance. Squash stems and leaf stalks are prickly so it is best to wear gardening gloves when picking squash. The squash is taken to a store or a farmers market where people buy them and take them home to eat.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

WORDS TO GROW

Seeds

Soil

Sun

Water

Space

Plants





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Clear or designate an open space for children to move about during the activity.

MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

“Crookneck Squash Says”



“Crookneck Squash Says” is the Tasty Acres Farm version of a popular children’s game.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move and stretch during a group game;
- Follow instructions from a peer or adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Optional:* Shirt, badge, or other accessory for the leader to wear that lets everyone know he or she is the Farmer.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit in a circle or stand in a group.
- Choose one person to be the Farmer (leader).
- The Farmer tells the other children to do all sorts of different and fun things, the funnier the better!
- The Farmer’s orders are only to be followed when they start with “Crookneck squash says.”
- When someone follows an order that doesn’t begin with “Crookneck squash says,” that child is out of the game. However, make sure to keep the children moving even if they are “out.” Ask them to stand off to the side and do different movements to find and pick crookneck squash. For example, children can march through the fields, squat to find squash, make large sweeping motions with their arms to pick up the squash, skip home from the farm, etc.
- Repeat until only one person is left. That person is the winner and can be the Farmer in the next round.



TASTING ACTIVITY

Crookneck Squash Sandwiches

The children make sandwiches with crookneck squash slices. They explore the feel, smell, and taste of crookneck squash.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Make a simple snack with crookneck squash; and
- Taste a new food featuring crookneck squash.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Crookneck squash, about 1-2 inches in diameter (wide)
- Low-fat or fat-free mozzarella or cheddar cheese slices
- Plates and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Explain that we always wash crookneck squash under running water before they are eaten. Tell the children you have already washed the crookneck squash.
- Give each child a clean plate with at least two thin slices of crookneck squash and one slice of cheese.
- Tell the children they are going to make a sandwich with crookneck squash.
- Show the children how to place the cheese between the crookneck squash slices to make a sandwich. Have the children note the difference in shapes between the round squash slice and the triangle or square cheese slice in the sandwich.
- Remind the children of the interesting curved shape of a crookneck squash.
- After making the crookneck squash sandwiches, invite the children to eat their snack.
- As the children eat, ask them to describe how the crookneck squash:
 - smells (mild);
 - feels in the mouth (cool, smooth, firm, and crunchy); and
 - tastes (fresh).



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Prepare crookneck squash. Wash the outside of the crookneck squash well and cut into ¼-inch slices, two per child.
- Cut cheese slices into triangles or squares, one slice per child.
- Prepare a plate for each child with two slices of squash and one slice of cheese on the plate.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.
- Modify squash size and texture for younger children (see Appendix F: Choking Prevention).

WORDS TO GROW

Slice	Firm
Smooth	Cheese
Triangle	Crunchy
Cool	Round





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10-20 minutes
depending on the
length of the book

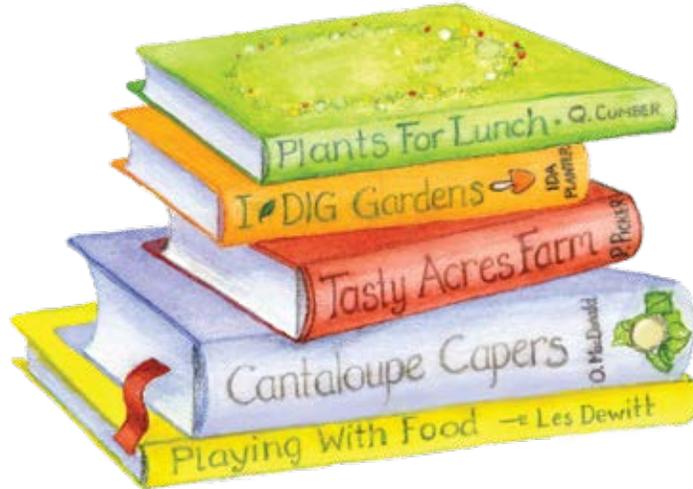
WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Clear a space for the children to sit around you.
- Choose a book from the Harvest of Books list (Basics, page 15).
- Borrow from a library or purchase a book about fruits and vegetables.
- You can also use other books related to fruits and vegetables that may already be available to you.

MIXED-AGES TIP

- Hold the baby on your lap while reading to other children.
- Give the baby a fruit board book.
- Have *Grow It! Buddies* read to younger children.

Reading Activity



Read story books to the children that are about growing and/or eating vegetables or fruits. Listening to such stories can encourage children to adopt positive eating behaviors that can last a lifetime, like trying new vegetables and fruits.

OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to:

- Describe the fun and interesting stories about fruits and vegetables that were read to them.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Books from a library or purchased books
- Space for the children to sit

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit around you as you read the book.
- Ask the children to listen for the names of vegetables and fruits as the story is read. If possible, have the children act out parts of the book to encourage movement during story time.
- After reading the story, ask the children which vegetables and fruits were named in the story and what happened to them. For example,
 - Where were the fruits and vegetables grown?
 - What happened to the fruits and vegetables after they were picked?
 - Who ate the fruits and vegetables?
- Add other questions that relate to the story.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Crookneck Squash Seed in a Cup

Pages 190-191

15 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm,
Crookneck Squash Style

Pages 192-193

10 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Prepare potting soil and divide into containers, one per table.
- Write "Crookneck Squash" on the wooden craft sticks.
- At the table(s), place a small paper cup, three seeds, and a plastic spoon per child.

GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Crookneck Squash Seed in a Cup



The children plant crookneck squash seeds in the soil and learn what the seeds need to grow. Children can check the cup daily to see the seed's progress. Once the plant becomes big enough, the children can take their cup home.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the materials needed to grow crookneck squash; and
- Experience planting a crookneck squash seed.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Crookneck squash seed packets (can be packets from Day 2)
- 5- to 6-ounce paper cups, one per child
- Potting soil
- Water for soil in a small spray bottle
- Plastic spoons or scoops, one per child
- Unsharpened pencils, with a line marking $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch
- Waterproof pens or markers
- Wooden craft sticks for plant markers, one per child
- Table covers, if desired
- Smocks for the children, optional
- Sunny location and/or fluorescent lights if planning to grow plants indoors



INSTRUCTIONS

- Help the children write their name on their cup.
- During the activity, help the children (or have older *Grow It! Buddies* help):
 - Fill their cups about three-quarters full with potting soil with spoons or scoops.
 - Gently tap the sides and bottom of their cup with their index finger to settle but not pack the soil.
 - Poke three holes in the soil spaced inside the cup. Use the marked unsharpened pencil to make holes $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep.
 - Place a seed in each hole and gently cover the seeds with soil.
 - Lightly spray water over the top of the soil; help any children needing assistance.
 - If using wooden craft sticks as plant markers, write the name of the plant on the stick and place it in the soil close to the inside curve of the cup.
- During the activity, tell the children:
 - The seeds will grow in the potting soil the same way plants grow in the earth's soil outside.
 - The seeds need soil, water, sun, and time to grow into plants.
 - Inside, we can use lights to give plants warmth and light, just as the sun helps outside plants grow.
 - The seeds will grow first into very small plants (seedlings), then into larger plants. These larger plants, if planted outside in a garden, will continue to grow with sunlight and water. The crookneck squash vegetable will grow from the larger plants.
- Have the children set their cups in a sunny spot near a window or under lights.
- Have the children follow the care instructions on the seed packet and check their cups weekly to see the progress of the seeds growing into plants.
- Water with spray bottle as needed.





MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm

CROOKNECK SQUASH STYLE

The children sing about growing and eating crookneck squash and act out motions to this familiar tune.



ACTIVITY LENGTH
10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Become familiar with the words and motions of the song.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can take turns leading the song.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Sing and act out motions to a familiar tune; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Crookneck Squash Lyrics to “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”
- Large space for the children to move about

INSTRUCTIONS

- Lead the children in singing these new words to the tune “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” and demonstrate the suggested motions or make up new ones.
- Encourage the children to move about as they are singing.
- Explain that skipping, wiggling, stretching, running, jumping, and playing actively every day helps us to feel good and stay healthy.





Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Crookneck Squash Style

1ST VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew crookneck squash, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry crookneck squash)*
With vines growing here and vines growing there,
Here vines, there vines, everywhere squash vines! *(Wiggle arms to left and right repeatedly using large, vigorous motions)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

2ND VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew crookneck squash, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry crookneck squash)*
With sunshine here and sunshine there,
Here sun, there sun, everywhere sun shines! *(Hold hands in circle above head and jump to face four corners & sides of room)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

3RD VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some squash, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry crookneck squash)*
With a harvest here and a harvest there, *(Pretend to wheel a heavy wheelbarrow)*
Here a harvest, there a harvest,
everywhere a squash harvest *(Pretend to wheel a heavy wheelbarrow)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

4TH VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some squash, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry crookneck squash)*
With a bite, bite here, and a bite, bite there, *(Pretend to eat crookneck squash)*
Here a bite, there a bite, everywhere a crunchy bite. *(Pretend to eat crookneck squash)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*



Crookneck Squash: How Do You Grow?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Crookneck Squash Outdoors

Pages 195-196

15 minutes



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Make a Seed Tape

Page 197

15-20 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Decorated Garden Bags

Page 198

15 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Plant a Crookneck Squash Outdoors



The children plant crookneck squash and learn what crookneck squash seeds need to grow.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the materials needed to grow crookneck squash; and
- Experience growing a crookneck squash.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Crookneck squash seeds, a seed tape, seedlings, or starter plants (see Planting Options right)
- Garden or flowerbed, 12 feet or longer by 18 inches wide
- Hoe or trowel
- Garden hose with sprinkler nozzle or watering can
- Yardstick or two 12-inch rulers

INSTRUCTIONS

- Take the children and the crookneck squash seeds or seed tape outside. Explain that today they will plant crookneck squash seeds and learn what seeds need to grow into plants.
- Point to the sun. Ask the children how the sunlight feels on their skin (warm).
- Explain that the light and warmth of the sun helps crookneck squash seeds grow into plants that will produce more crookneck squash.
- Show the children the soil in a garden or flowerbed. Let them touch the soil. Ask them how the soil feels (wet or dry, hard or soft). Explain that crookneck squash seeds need soil to grow into plants.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- If using a seed tape, prepare it ahead of time (page 197). Involve the children for an extra activity.
- Prepare garden or flowerbed for growing by tilling (breaking up) and fertilizing the soil (Appendix B: Green Thumb Guide, page 318).

PLANTING OPTIONS

- **SEEDS:** Follow the directions on the back of the crookneck squash seed packet to plant seeds directly into the ground.
- **SEED TAPE:** A seed tape ensures your seeds will be spaced appropriately and can make it easier for small hands to help plant small seeds.
- **SEEDLINGS:** If you have grown crookneck squash seedlings indoors and hardened the plants for outdoor growing (Appendix B: Green Thumb Guide, page 318), you can substitute the plants for the seed tape.
- **STARTER PLANTS:** You can also purchase crookneck squash starter plants at a greenhouse and plant directly into the ground. Refer to starter plants instead of seeds during the activity.



Green Thumb Guide

IS SPACE LIMITED?

Miniature varieties of crookneck squash can grow in a large container; at least 2 feet deep and 2 feet in diameter (Appendix B: Green Thumb Guide, page 318).



- Run some water from a hose or pour some from a container and let the children touch it. Ask how it feels (wet). Explain that water helps plants grow. Explain that water for plants usually comes as rain. Plants like crookneck squash need lots of water, so farmers and gardeners use sprinklers in addition to rain to make sure the plants have plenty of water.
- Have the children help lay the seeds or prepared seed tapes in the soil at the preferred growing depth of ½-inch, cover with soil, and water. Remind the children of how far apart crookneck squash are planted (at least 2 feet apart). Use the yardstick or two 12-inch rulers to make sure the seeds are planted at the correct distance apart.
- Water the plant as needed.



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Make a Seed Tape



A seed tape makes planting easier when working with small seeds and makes sure seeds are spaced appropriately.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Experience making a seed tape.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Cornstarch
- Stovetop or hot plate
- Crookneck squash seeds
- Sealable plastic sandwich bag or small paintbrush
- Paper towels, inexpensive type that will breakdown in soil easily
- Yard stick
- Pen
- Blunt-tip scissors

INSTRUCTIONS

- Take three or four paper towels, fold them in half, and cut them into 1-inch strips, cutting across the perforations to create long strips. Unfold and lay the paper towel strips on a flat surface.
- Refer to the seed packet to note how far apart the seeds should be spaced (typically about 1 yard). Use a yard stick and pen to make marks on the towel strips at the appropriate spacing.
- Place a few spoonfuls of the gel into a plastic sandwich bag and seal the top. Snip off a corner of the gel-filled bag and squeeze a small droplet of gel on each of the marked spots. Place a seed on top of each drop of gel. The seeds will be firmly attached when the gel dries. Note: Gel can also be applied with a small paintbrush.

Young children can help mark where to place the seeds on the paper strip and place crookneck squash seeds on gel dots.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15-20 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- To make the seed tape, prepare the gel ahead of time by dissolving 1 tablespoon of cornstarch in 1 cup of cold water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Once the mixture starts to boil and turns into a gel, remove from heat and allow it to cool to room temperature.



GIFT GIVING IDEA

Seed tapes can be made for gifts. Store dried seed tapes in sealed envelopes; label with seed name and directions for growing. Children can decorate the envelopes with drawings of the plants before putting the seed tapes inside the envelopes.

VARIATION

MAKE A SEED CIRCLE TO PLANT IN A POT

Cut a circle of paper towel the diameter of a 15-ounce can of food. Glue one or two seeds to the center of the paper towel circle using the cornstarch gel.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Decorated Garden Bags

The children draw the shape and color of crookneck squash on paper bags.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Engage with crookneck squash in a fun way; and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper lunch bags (one per child)
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Crookneck Squash *Grow It!* Cards

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show a picture of crookneck squash from the *Grow It! Cards* to the children.
- Talk about how a crookneck squash looks different on the outside from the inside.
 - Review the shape (curvy) and colors (outside/light yellow and inside/white with white seeds) of a crookneck squash.
- Give each child a paper lunch bag and explain that they are going to decorate the bag with drawings of crookneck squash.
- Have the children draw at least one crookneck squash on the bag.
- Use the method described in the Garden Bookmarks activity (page 183) if they have trouble drawing crookneck squash freehand.
- Instruct them to color the squash.
- Have the children think of uses for the Decorated Garden Bags they just created. Some ideas include:
 - Use the bag to carry home the seed cup planted on Day 3 (page 190);
 - Use as a gift bag for a present; and
 - Other ideas the children suggest.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

Squash Is a Vegetable

Pages 200-203

20-25 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Crookneck Squash Skip

Pages 204-205

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Squash Casserole

Pages 206-207

10-15 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

20 minutes;
25 minutes if
optional coloring
activity conducted

FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

Savor the Flavor of Squash



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review the foods and activities shown on the *MyPlate Poster*.
- Display the *MyPlate Poster*.
- Wash and then cut a crookneck squash and a zucchini squash in half.
- Prepare thin slices of crookneck squash and zucchini squash with the skin and seeds intact, at least one piece per child. Modify the size and texture of the squash for younger children as needed (see Appendix F: Choking Prevention).
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.
- *Optional:* Make copies of the *MyPlate* coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child.

Introduce the children to the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. The children will learn that crookneck squash and other summer squash (zucchini) are part of the Vegetable Group. They will taste the difference between zucchini and crookneck squash.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Say that crookneck squash is found in the Vegetable Group;
- Say that eating vegetables like crookneck squash help keep us healthy;
- Compare crookneck squash to zucchini squash;
- Say that being physically active every day helps us feel good and is fun;
- Say that eating foods from the different food groups each day helps us grow and be healthy; and
- Name a food from each of the 5 food groups.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*
- Crookneck squash and zucchini squash, at least two of each type of squash
- Plates and napkins
- *Optional:* Make copies of the *MyPlate* coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child.

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

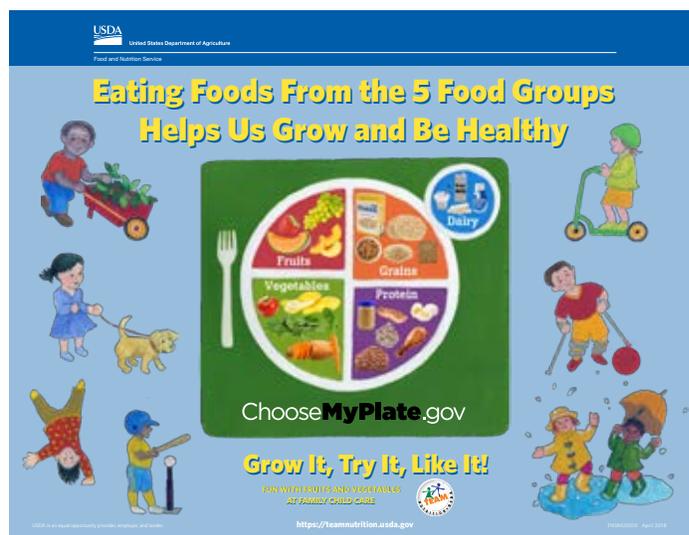
- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



INSTRUCTIONS

Learning the Food Groups

- Seat the children in a semicircle on the floor in view of the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*.
- Tell the children that today they are going to learn about ways to be healthy and have fun every day. Tell the children that the best part is they already like to do what helps them be healthy: they like to eat a variety of foods and they like to play.
- Show the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster* to the children. Ask the children to tell you what they see on the poster. Accept all correct answers, such as food, specific foods by name, children playing, specific activities by name, etc.
- Explain that MyPlate shows the five food groups a person should eat from each day. Each food group has its own color. Point to the different sections as you discuss. The Fruit Group is red, the Vegetable Group is green, the Grains Group is orange, the Dairy Group is blue, and the Protein Foods Group is purple. Eating foods from each food group helps us to grow and be healthy. Explain that crookneck squash is a part of the Vegetable Group.



The Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster shows foods from the five food groups.



GRAINS

- Tell the children that foods made from grains are in the Grains Group represented by the orange-colored section on MyPlate. Point to the food group on the poster and state that grain foods like bread, cereal, rice, and pasta give us energy to play.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a food in the orange section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Grains Group also give us energy to play.
- Children this age may not know what a grain is. Tell them grains come from plants such as wheat, oats, rice, and corn. Grains are used to make foods like cereal, bread, tortillas, and pasta.



VEGETABLES

- Tell the children that many foods from plants are in the Vegetable Group and are represented by the green section of MyPlate. Point out the crookneck squash on the poster. Ask the children to name this vegetable (crookneck squash). Ask the children to name the color of crookneck squash (yellow). Explain that eating yellow vegetables, like crookneck squash, can help them to be healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a vegetable in the green section, and name the vegetable. After each child names a vegetable, repeat the name of the vegetable and state that (the vegetable named) and other foods from the Vegetable Group also help keep us healthy.





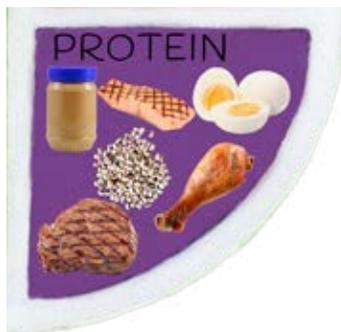
FRUITS

- Tell the children that some foods from plants are in the Fruit Group represented by the red section. Point to the strawberry shown on the poster and state that strawberries help keep us healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a fruit in the red section, and name the fruit. After each child names a fruit, repeat the name of the fruit and state that (the fruit named) and other foods from the Fruit Group help keep us healthy.



DAIRY

- Tell the children that milk and foods made from milk are in the Dairy Group, represented by the blue section. Point to the milk and yogurt on the poster and state that milk and yogurt help us build strong bones.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the blue section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Dairy Group also help us build strong bones.

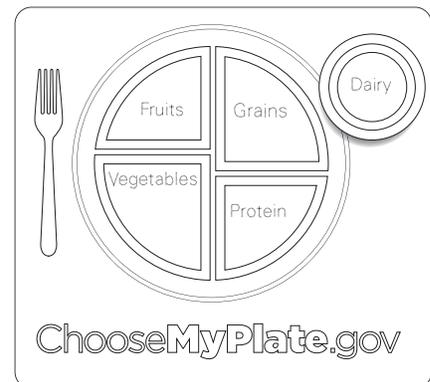


PROTEIN FOODS

- Tell the children that foods from animals and some plants are in the Protein Foods Group, represented by the purple section. Point to the meat, fish, egg, beans, and peanut butter on the poster and state that these foods help our muscles grow.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the purple section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Protein Foods Group also help our muscles grow. (Note: if only foods that come from animals are selected, point out a food from plants and name it. If only foods from plants are selected, point out a food that comes from animals and name it.)

OPTIONAL COLORING ACTIVITY

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Distribute a copy of the MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333) to each child.
- Ask the children to color the Vegetable Group section of MyPlate green and draw and color a crookneck squash near it. Help the younger children who may not know their colors yet.
- With older children, have them copy the dot-to-dot outline of the word "Vegetables".



TIME TO TASTE!

- Show the children the crookneck squash and zucchini. Tell the children that zucchini is a type of summer squash similar to crookneck squash but different in color. Explain that zucchini and crookneck squash are both in the Vegetable Group on the *MyPlate Poster*.
- Give the children thin squash samples to taste. Note both are firm, crunchy, and taste mild.
- After tasting the samples of squash, invite the children to feel and smell the different squash halves.
- Ask the children to name different ways to eat vegetables like squash at different meals and snacks. Accept all answers such as fresh slices or sticks, in vegetable salads, roasted or grilled, etc.



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the crookneck squash with the children.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

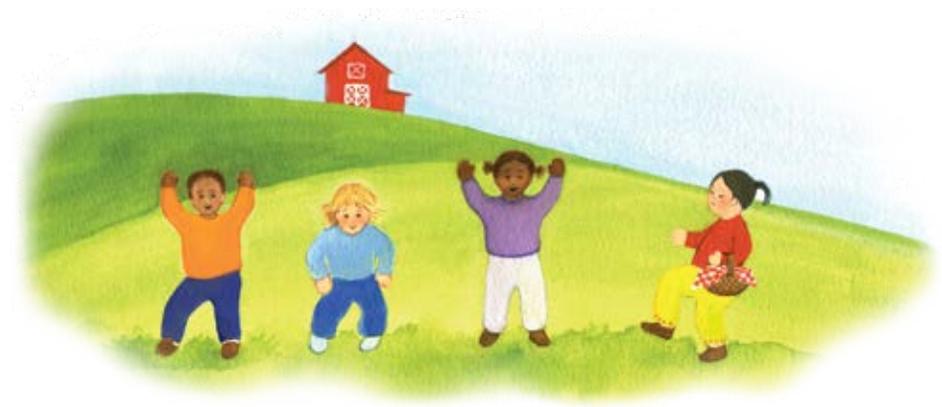
10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Display the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate* Poster.

MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Crookneck Squash Skip



Crookneck Squash Skip is a fun activity to get children moving.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Enjoy physical activity in a fun and new way; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS

- *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate* Poster



Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster



INSTRUCTIONS

- Point to the various activities depicted on the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. Ask the children to tell you why it is important to be physically active and play every day (it helps you be strong and healthy, and it is fun). Tell the children that today they will learn to be physically active in a way that reminds them of the crookneck squash they just tasted.
- Take the children to a large open space, indoors or outdoors. Ask the children to stand in a large circle, standing so that one arm can be extended into the circle and one arm can be extended outside of the circle. Show the children how to extend the arm on the outside of the circle over their head and curve in toward the inside of the circle, similar to the curve of a crookneck squash. Tell the children they are going to skip around the large circle with their arms curved like crookneck squash while you call out the word “squash.” When the children hear you say the word “squish,” they will stop skipping and lower their arms. The children turn to face the opposite direction and curve the opposite arm over their heads like the curve of a crookneck squash. The children skip around the large circle as you call out the word “squash.” When they hear the word “squish,” the children stop, change directions, and curve the opposite arm over their heads to repeat skipping until the activity is concluded.
- Have the children curve their arms like crookneck squash, and say, “1, 2, 3, Squash, Squash, Squash (repeat saying squash several more times)...Squash!”
- Continue to have the children skip in a large circle for several minutes. If desired, increase the activity difficulty for older children by occasionally asking the children to skip backwards in the large circle for one round of skipping.
- Conclude the activity by telling the children it is fun to be physically active by doing a Crookneck Squash Skip.

NOTE TO CAREGIVER

Active play and movement are important for every child’s growth and development. Although they may seem to be active and energetic, most children do not get the amount of physical activity they need for good health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children get 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10–15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize recipe ingredients.
- Make the Squash Casserole OR
- Gather recipe ingredients and let the children help make the casserole.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

WORDS TO GROW

Casserole **Zucchini**
Crookneck squash **Grate**

OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the squash casserole with the children.

TASTING ACTIVITY

Squash Casserole

The children taste a new crookneck squash recipe and talk about different ways to eat crookneck squash.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Taste crookneck squash in a combination food, Squash Casserole.
- Describe many different ways to eat crookneck squash.
- Help prepare a dish with crookneck squash (*optional*).

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Squash Casserole ingredients (page 206)
- Plates, forks, and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about crookneck squash.
- Encourage answers such as how and where crookneck squash grows; how it looks, feels, smells, and tastes; and other information covered in the unit.
- Show the children the Squash Casserole or prepare the casserole together and talk about the other foods in the casserole (zucchini, onions, cheese). Ask the children what food groups each ingredient belongs to (zucchini, crookneck squash, and onions—Vegetable Group; cheese—Dairy Group).
- Serve the children Squash Casserole.
- Show the children some of the grated squash (if available). Talk about how the squash was grated into small pieces for the recipe.
- As the children are eating, ask:
 - What crookneck squash recipes have they made with their families?
 - What different ways have they eaten crookneck squash?
 - What new ways do they think crookneck squash could be eaten?
- Give suggestions such as soups, salads, as a side dish (e.g., baked squash and apples), or cut into sticks and served with a dip.



RECIPE

Squash Casserole

This is a USDA standardized recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup onions, fresh, peeled, ¼-inch diced
- 1 cup zucchini, fresh, unpeeled, grated
- 1 cup crookneck squash, fresh, unpeeled, grated
- ½ teaspoon parsley, dried
- ½ teaspoon oregano, dried
- ⅛ teaspoon salt, table
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper, ground
- 1 egg, large, whole
- 2 tablespoons milk, fat-free (skim)
- 1 ¼ ounces sharp cheddar cheese, reduced-fat, shredded



- Nonstick cooking spray
- Forks, plates, and napkins (one per child)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 °F.
2. Lightly coat a medium baking dish (8" x 8") with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
3. Spray a medium skillet with nonstick cooking spray and heat over medium-high heat.
4. Sauté onions for 3 minutes or until soft. Stir frequently.
5. Add zucchini and crookneck squash. Sauté for 5 minutes. Stir frequently.
6. Add parsley, oregano, salt, and pepper and stir. Continue cooking until zucchini and crookneck squash begin to lightly brown, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
7. Whisk together egg and milk in a small bowl.
8. Place sautéed vegetables in baking dish. Top with egg and milk mixture and lightly stir. Be sure to keep vegetables spread evenly on the bottom of the pan. Sprinkle cheese evenly on top of mixture.
9. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes. Heat to 160 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds.
10. Cut pan into 6 even pieces. Serve 1 piece per child.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help rinse the vegetables.
- Help mix the eggs and milk together.

PREPARATION TIME

10 minutes

COOKING TIME

35 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving provides ½ oz equivalent meat alternate and ¼ cup vegetable. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and cutting board to cut the onions into pieces.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	45
Protein	3 g
Carbohydrate	3 g
Total Fat	2 g
Saturated Fat	1 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	76 mg
Sodium	70 mg
Dietary Fiber	1 g



Fun Extras



Crookneck Squash

Growing in the Garden



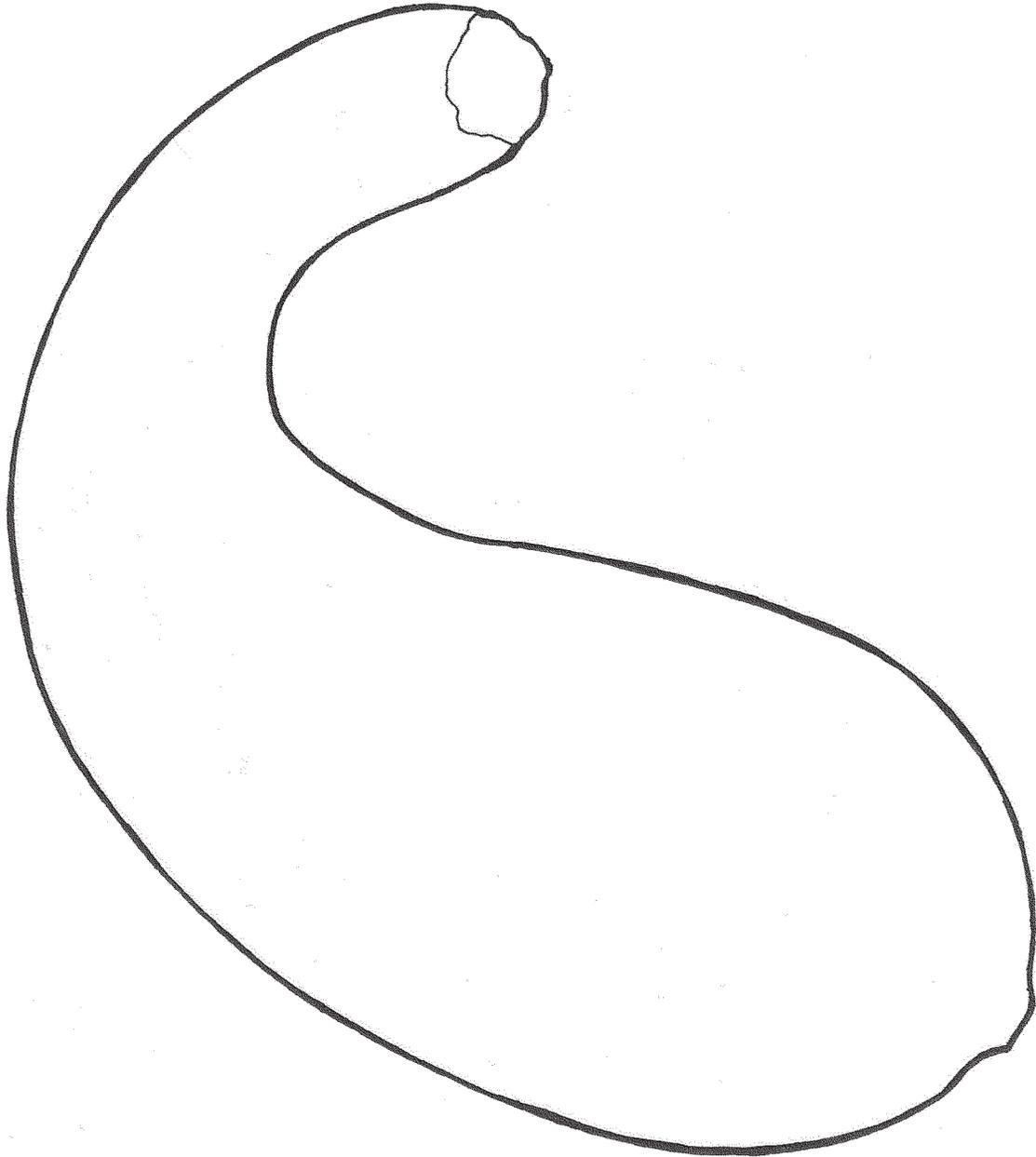
Crookneck Squash

At the Farmers Market



Crookneck Squash

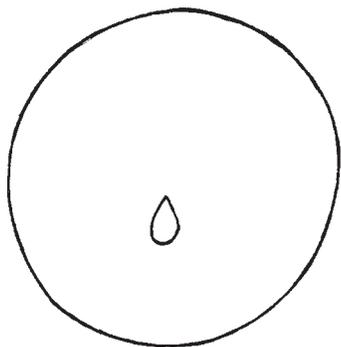
Blackline Master



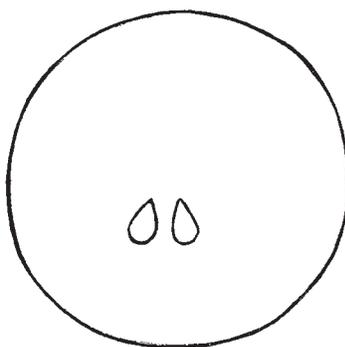
Counting Crookneck Squash Seeds

Dear Family:

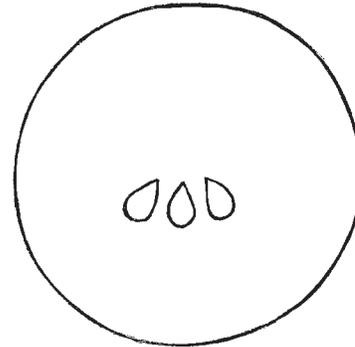
When children are familiar with new foods, they are more willing to taste new foods. In child care, your child has learned what the inside of crookneck squash looks like. Crookneck squash have many white, flat seeds. Help your child count the number of seeds in each piece of squash and trace the numbers under each picture. Guide their hand as they trace the numbers, if necessary. Have your child count different ways to enjoy eating crookneck squash. Write those ideas on the lines below the traced numbers. Make a plan to enjoy a crookneck squash recipe this week.



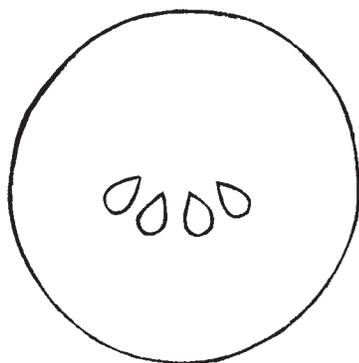
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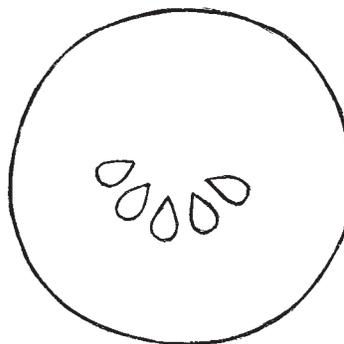
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3



4



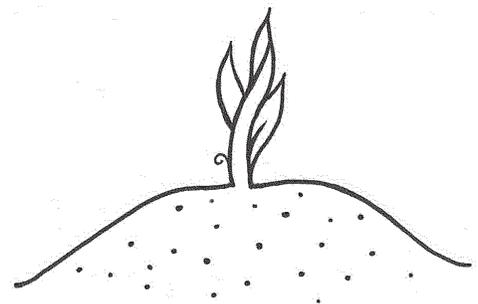
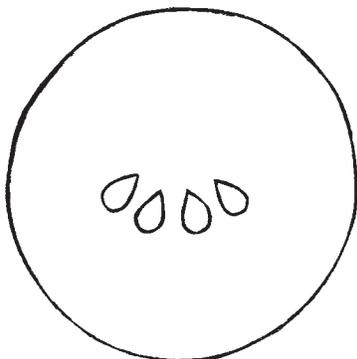
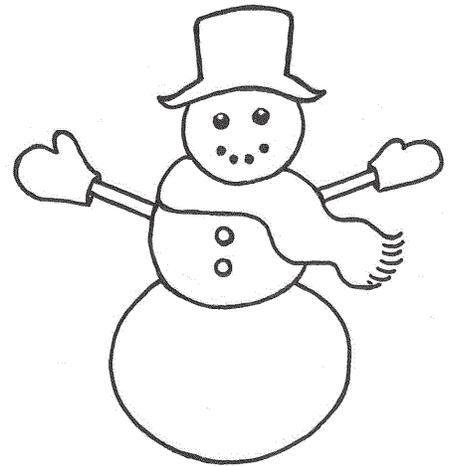
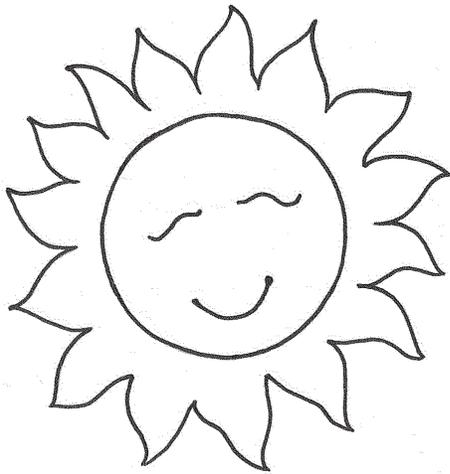
5



What Crookneck Squash Needs To Grow

Dear Family:

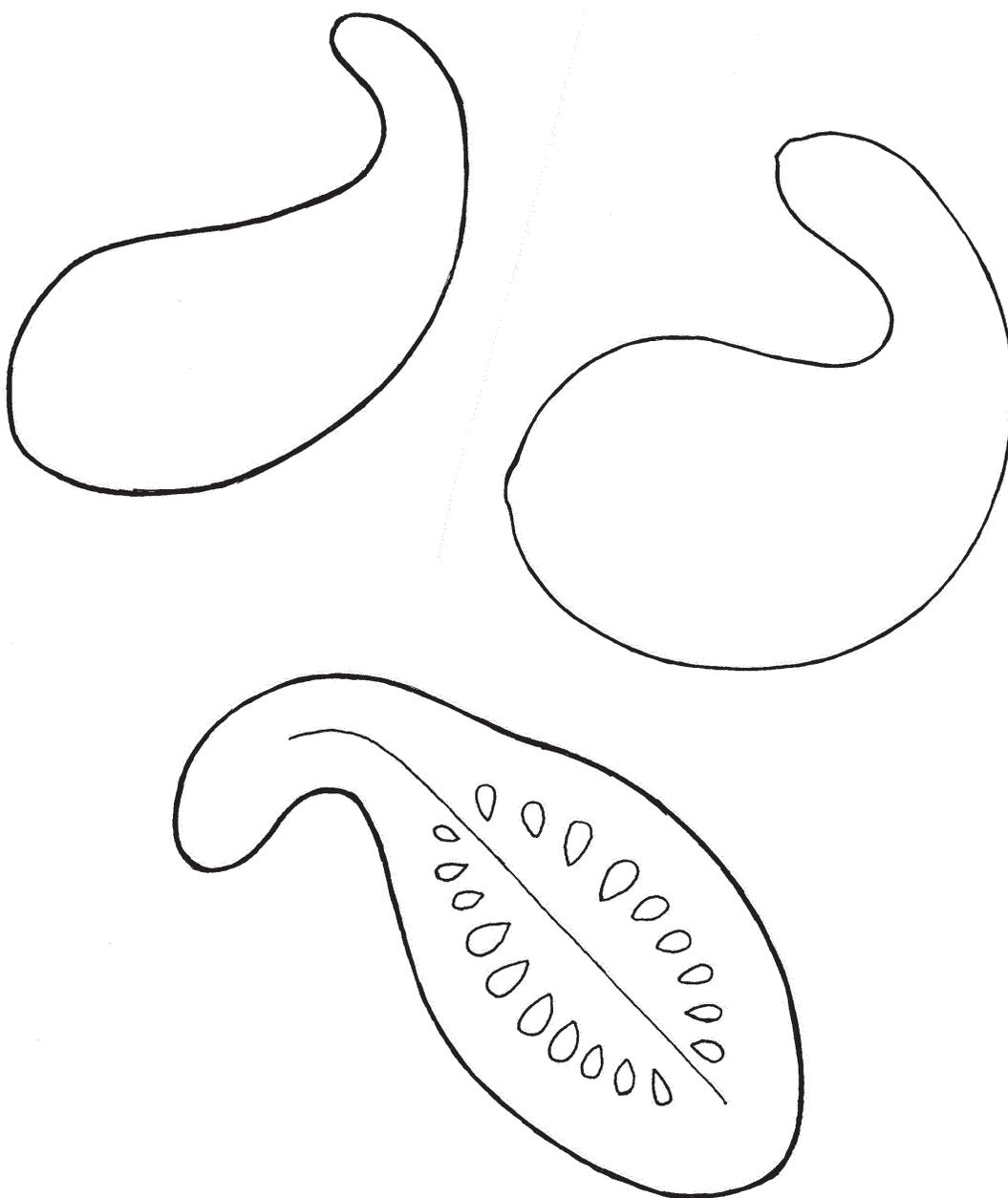
Crookneck squash plants start from flat white seeds found inside the squash. Squash grows on vines above the ground. It can grow in home gardens or on large farms. Squash grows fast, particularly in hot weather. Squash stems and leaf stalks are prickly, so it is best to wear gloves when picking squash. Squash is picked in late summer or early fall. Ask your child to look at the pictures below and draw a circle around the things a crookneck squash needs to grow.



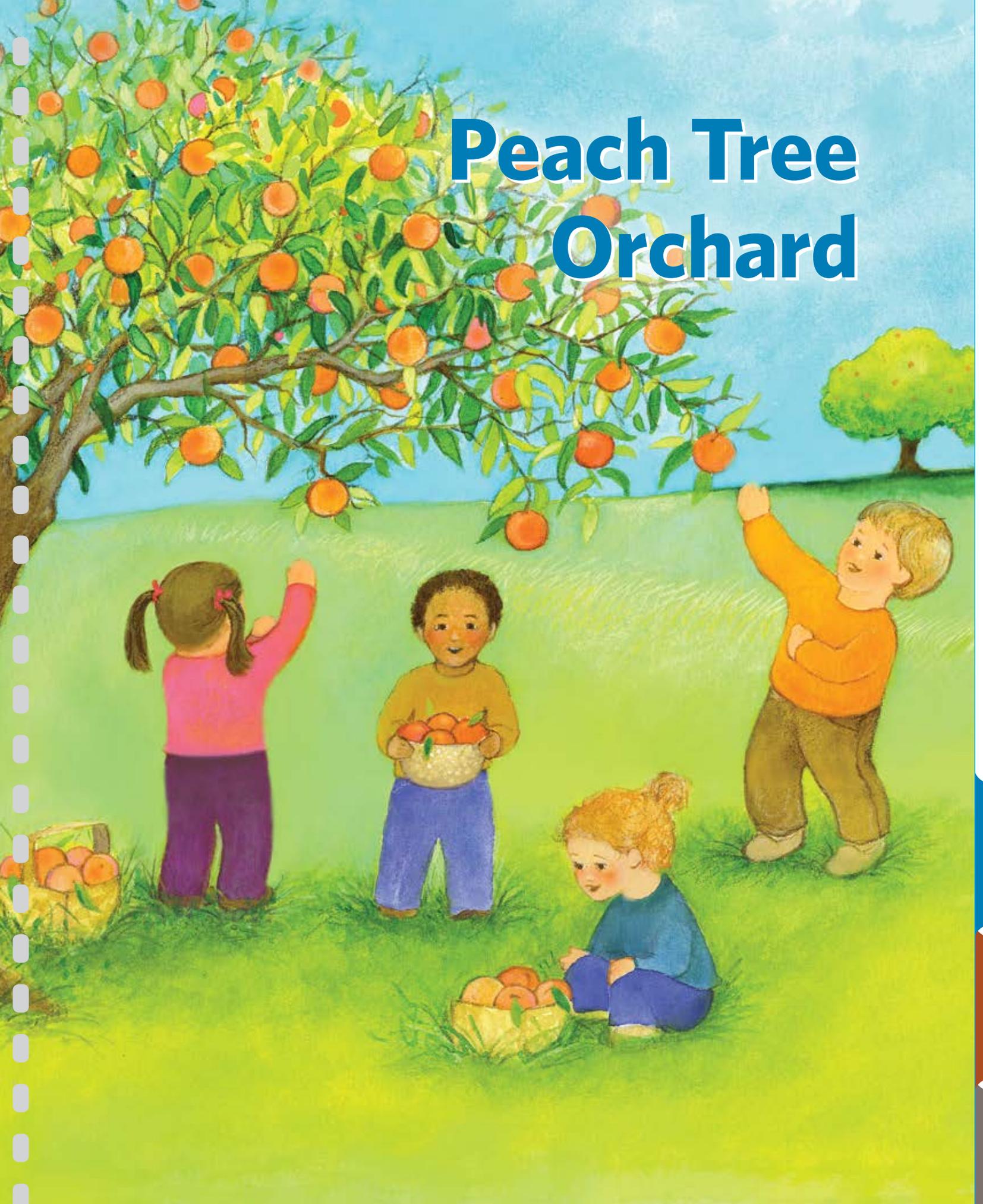
Crookneck Squash Is Fun To Color

Dear Family:

Crookneck squash is a light yellow color. Young squash has smooth skin. As the squash grows, the skin becomes slightly bumpy. The inside of the squash is white and firm. Crookneck squash has flat, white seeds on the inside. Help your child color the drawings of crookneck squash below. After the activity, taste thin slices of raw crookneck squash with your child's favorite dip.



Peach Tree Orchard



PEACH

POTATO

APPENDIXES

WELCOME TO

Peach Tree Orchard at Tasty Acres Farm!



Close your eyes, tip your head back, and breathe in the sweetly scented air at Peach Tree Orchard. Look high above your head to find this fuzzy-skinned fruit. Through the activities in this unit, children will discover how a peach looks, feels, smells, and tastes.

The children make and grow a pretend peach tree to learn how this fruit is grown and then harvested and shipped to farmers markets and stores. Children also have many opportunities to taste peaches throughout the unit. Growing at Home materials allow families to share in the fun.

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Peach Activity Chart

DAY 1 45 minutes	DAY 2 50-55 minutes	DAY 3 35-40 minutes	DAY 4 40-50 minutes	DAY 5 45-55 minutes
MYSTERY BOX OR BAG	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY
Something Feels Fuzzy <hr/> 15 minutes 	Peach Trees Grow From Pits <hr/> 10 minutes	Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree (Continued) <hr/> 15 minutes	Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree (Continued) <hr/> 15 minutes	Reach for the Peach <hr/> 20-25 minutes
TASTING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY
Peach—A Look Inside <hr/> 15 minutes	Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree (Continued) <hr/> 15 minutes	Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Peach Style <hr/> 10 minutes 	Peachy Salsa <hr/> 15 minutes	Peach Reach Stretch <hr/> 10 minutes 
GROWING ACTIVITY	CRAFT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY	READING ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY
Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree <hr/> 15 minutes 	Garden Scene Note Cards <hr/> 15-20 minutes	Peaches a la Mode <hr/> 10-15 minutes	 <hr/> 10-20 minutes	Fruits With Pits <hr/> 10-15 minutes
	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY			GROWING ACTIVITY
	"Peach Says" <hr/> 10 minutes 			Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree (Continued) <hr/> 5 minutes





Introduction to Peach Tree Orchard Activities

Check with local farms and farmers markets to find out when peaches are in peak season. Usually, peaches are a summer crop, with their peak season falling from June to September. Seeing peaches growing in the orchard makes a great farm field trip for preschoolers. If a farm is not nearby, visit a produce stand or farmers market to see freshly picked peaches.

The peach lessons in this unit are arranged by day to teach over the course of 5 consecutive days. The children will make a pretend peach tree and see the peaches grow during this unit.

WORDS TO GROW

New Words To Use When Teaching About Peaches

- Fruits** **Pit**
- Senses** **Yellow**
- Round** **Orchard**
- Trees** **Red**
- Summer** **Blossoms**

ACTIVITY LENGTH

Most activities require only 10–15 minutes.

CREDITING TIPS

Some activities in this unit include children eating peaches. Check for food allergies before serving. If you plan to serve peaches as part of a reimbursable meal or snack for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), check the minimum serving sizes for each age group (Appendix G, page 330). There are also Crediting Tips with some of the recipes. If you plan to serve those as part of a reimbursable meal or snack, refer to the Crediting Tips for guidance.

For information on purchasing the correct amount of peaches, see USDA's Food Buying Guide at <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov>.

LUNCH AND SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz eq	1½ oz eq
Vegetables	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Fruits	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.

SNACK MEAL PATTERNS

Select 2 of the 5 components for snack

	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5
Milk	½ cup	½ cup
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz eq	½ oz eq
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.



Getting To Know Peaches

Peaches are a popular fruit, loved by children and adults alike. Peaches are a type of stone fruit, also called a drupe. Stone fruits, like peaches, nectarines, plums, cherries, and mangoes, get their name from the large “stone” or pit found inside. The peach pit is the seed.

Peach trees grow from pits planted in the ground and prefer warmer climates. After 3 years, a peach tree will begin to produce blossoms. Peaches will then grow where the blossoms were located on the tree. Over the summer, when the weather is warm, the peaches will grow and eventually ripen on the tree. A peach is ready for picking when the fruit is well colored—the skin changes to yellow and red—and the flesh gives slightly to the touch.

Peaches can be enjoyed year round; canned and frozen peaches are readily available. When purchasing packaged varieties, look for products with little or no sugar added (e.g., peaches canned in water or 100% juice).

BUYING GUIDE

When selecting fresh peaches, choose peaches that feel heavy for their size and have bit of “give” at the stem.

HOW SHOULD I STORE PEACHES?

Ripen peaches at room temperature, stem-end down. A sweet smell means peaches are ripe. Once ripe, store peaches unwashed, in a plastic bag, in the refrigerator. Ripe peaches will last 1-5 days in the refrigerator depending on the variety of peach. Be careful when picking your peaches because some varieties bruise easily. Peaches can also be canned or frozen to use throughout the year.

FOUR SIMPLE WAYS TO SERVE PEACHES

1. Fresh peach slices with low-fat or fat-free vanilla yogurt for dipping.*
2. Peach oatmeal—prepare oats with pieces of drained canned peaches (packed in water or 100% juice) and low-fat or fat-free milk.
3. Diced peaches tossed in a green salad for a sweet treat.
4. Blended peaches in a fruit smoothie.

DID YOU KNOW

There are many different types of peaches including white peaches, yellow peaches, and donut peaches. Although yellow peaches are the most common in the United States, white peaches are sweeter.

Peach varieties can also be freestone or clingstone. Freestone peaches have flesh that does not stick to the pit, making them easier to eat out of hand. Most commercially canned peaches are clingstone, however, because they are juicier, sweeter, and softer.



*Choose yogurts that meet CACFP sugar requirements (see Appendix K, page 335).



Peaches

Please provide a print copy (or email a digital copy) of Growing at Home to families before, during, or after completing the Peach Tree activities. These handouts and recipes are a great way to keep families informed about what their children are learning during the day.

Content from this handout can also be displayed on a family bulletin board or shared on your website.

In addition to the ideas above, text, tweet, or share daily peach lesson highlights with the families.



MESSAGES FOR FAMILIES

DAY ONE

- Today your child learned what a peach looks and feels like. #GrowIt
- Today your child learned that the outside of a peach is fuzzy. #GrowIt

DAY TWO

- Today your child learned that peaches grow from pits. #GrowIt
- Today your child learned that it takes 3 years for a peach tree to grow peaches. #GrowIt

DAY THREE

- Today we danced to a fun song about peaches. Ask your child to sing it for you. #GrowIt
- Today your child tried Peaches a la Mode. Ask your child how it's made. #GrowIt

DAY FOUR

- Today we read a book that had fruits and vegetables as part of the story. Ask your child to describe his or her favorite part. #GrowIt
- Today your child tried Peachy Salsa. Ask what fruits were in it. #GrowIt

DAY FIVE

- Today your child learned about the MyPlate food groups. Ask your child which food group peaches are in. #GrowIt



PREPARATION TIME

10 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and a cutting board to cut peaches in half, remove pit, and slice peaches.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	44
Protein	1 g
Carbohydrate	10 g
Total Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	1 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	39 mg
Sodium	14 mg
Dietary Fiber	1 g

Optional ingredients are not included in nutrient analysis.

Peaches a la Mode



INGREDIENTS

- 3 peaches (approximately 1 ½ cups), peeled, pitted, and cut into ½-inch pieces
- ¾ cup yogurt, fat-free, vanilla
- cinnamon (*optional*)
- Spoons, bowls, and napkins

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place ¼ cup of peaches in a serving dish (plate, bowl, or mug) for each serving.
2. Measure out 2 tablespoons of yogurt and scoop onto the peaches for each serving.
3. Sprinkle with a pinch of cinnamon (*optional*).

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help rinse peaches in a colander.
- Scoop yogurt with a tablespoon measure.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

Something Feels Fuzzy

Page 224

15 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Peach—A Look Inside

Pages 225–226

15 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree

Pages 227–229

15 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

Something Feels Fuzzy

Use the Mystery Box or Bag to create interest and excite their sense of touch. Have the children feel a peach in the box or bag before revealing the “mystery” item to all.



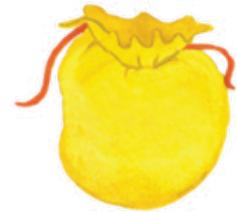
OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Identify a peach as a lightweight, round fruit; and
- Describe the outward appearance and smell of a peach.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- A peach, whole and washed
- Mystery Box or Bag
- Paper and pencil or pen
- Tennis ball (*optional*)



INSTRUCTIONS

- Introduce the Mystery Box or Bag, or reintroduce it if you have used it before (Basics, page 11).
- One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box or bag with the child.
- Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he or she feels.
- After everyone has guessed, show the peach to the children. Let the children hold the peach, if desired.
- Note the children’s guesses that were close (round, a plant, food) or correct (peach).
- Talk about the peach. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.
 - Is a peach a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - What shape is it? (Round, like a ball)
 - What color is the outside? (Yellow and red)
 - How does the outside of it feel? (Fuzzy like a baby chick or a tennis ball—let the children feel the tennis ball, if available)
 - Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell sweet like a flower)
 - Is it light or heavy? (Small, round, and light like a tennis ball)
 - Has anyone ever tasted a peach? (Yes or no)

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review Make a Mystery Box or Bag, as needed (Basics, page 11).
- Wash peach.
- Place a clean, fresh peach in the Mystery Box or Bag.
- Make copies of Growing at Home: Peaches, one set per child (pages 221-222, or draft an email for families.
- Have the children wash their hands before and after activity (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).

WORDS TO GROW

Fruit	Round
Fuzzy	Yellow
Light (weight)	Red



TASTING ACTIVITY

Peach—A Look Inside



Engage all the senses! The children see and feel the inside of a peach, then smell and taste it.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the appearance, smell, and taste of a peach; and
- Tell that all of the peach can be eaten except the pit.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- 2 peaches (1 whole peach and 1 peach cut into ½-inch pieces)
- Peaches cut into ½-inch pieces, several pieces per child
- Sharp knife
- Cutting board or surface
- Plates and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children gather around the area with the peach and cutting board. Review with children how to be safe around sharp knives. Emphasize that only adults use knives, children keep hands away, and don't touch a sharp knife.
- Review what was learned about peaches already. If this is your first activity, tell the children you have a peach to share today.
- Talk about how a collection of peach trees, or other fruit trees, is called an orchard.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Wash the outside of the peaches.
- Cut one peach into bite-size pieces, several per child.
- Assemble supplies in a central area; keep the knife in a safe place until ready to use.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the peaches with the children.

WORDS TO GROW

Smooth	Rough
Juicy	Fuzzy
Pit	Hard
Sweet	



- Tell the children we have to rinse the outside of a peach with lots of water to remove soil and germs before we cut it open. Tell the children you have already rinsed the peach.
- Cut the peach in half to reveal the inside. Have a paper towel handy to wipe up extra juices. Let the children know they will get to touch the peach half with the pit in a few minutes.
- Cut the peach half without the pit into ½-inch pieces with the skin intact; make enough pieces for each child.
- On a plate, give each child a small piece of a peach to look at, touch, and smell.
- Talk with the children about the inside of the peach. Lead the children through the questions below and ask additional questions if you like.
 - How does the outside of the peach feel? (Fuzzy)
 - What color is on the inside of the peach? (Light orange or white)
 - What was in the center of the peach? (A large seed called the pit that is not eaten)
 - How does the inside flesh feel? (Cool and smooth)
 - How does the peach smell? (Sweet)

TIME TO TASTE!

- Invite the children to taste the peach. (Note: If desired, make additional peach pieces available.)
- Be a healthy role model! Enjoy some peach with the children. Encourage children who may be hesitant to take a tiny bite or even just a lick of the peach. Praise the children who tasted the peach.
- Continue the activity asking:
 - How does the peach feel in their mouth? (Smooth and juicy)
 - How does the peach taste? (Sweet)
- After everyone has sampled a peach, invite the children to feel the peach half with the pit intact.
- After everyone has explored the pit, ask the children what differences they felt between the flesh of the peach and the pit.
 - How does the pit feel? (Rough and hard)
 - How does the flesh feel? (Smooth and wet)
- After the children have felt the peach and pit, have the children wash their hands.



GROWING ACTIVITY

Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree

The children make a pretend peach tree and learn about the growing stages of peaches. Each day of the Peach Tree unit has separate steps to complete your peach tree.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Experience making a pretend peach tree; and
- Describe the resources needed to grow peaches.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Brown paper, at least 4 feet in height, cut to look like a tree trunk with limbs (Tip: A brown paper grocery bag can be used. Cut off the bottom and down the edge of one side of the bag and then unroll it into a long sheet. Display the inside of the bag, where there is no branding or type.)
- Green paper, cut to look like peach tree leaves
- Peach Blossom Blackline Master, include one copy per child (Fun Extras, page 257)
- Peach *Grow It!* Cards
- Blunt-tip scissors
- Reusable adhesive or double-stick tape

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Tell the children that peaches grow from seeds called peach pits that are planted in the ground. Ask children if they have ever planted anything before. Tell children the pit needs soil, water, sun, and time to grow into a peach tree.
- Describe how a place where many fruit trees have been planted is called an orchard.
- When the tree is at least 3 years old, the tree grows flowers called peach blossoms every spring. The blossoms fall away and peaches grow where the flowers were. At first the peaches are small, hard, and slightly yellow-green with some orange in color.
- By the middle of summer, the peaches have grown larger and are changing in color to have less green and more orange and red.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes each day

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Preview all steps involving the pretend peach tree on page 229.
- Create a paper peach tree and attach to a wall.

(Variation: Paint a tree trunk, limbs, and leaves on a large piece of white paper, at least 4 feet in height).



- Copy and cut out, from white paper, one peach blossom per child (Fun Extras, page 262). There are two blossoms per page.
- Organize materials.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can help make the paper or painted tree (trunk, limbs, and leaves). *Grow It! Buddies* can also help cut out the peach blossoms.



- By the end of the summer, the large peaches on the tree are soft, round, and creamy yellow to orange-red in color. Once the peaches are ripe, they are picked and sent to stores or farmers markets. That is where we buy peaches to take home and eat.
- Tell the children they are going to make a pretend peach tree. Use the *Peach Grow It! Cards* to show peaches growing on a tree.
- Let the children know that they are going to help the peaches grow over the course of a few days.
- Help the children attach a peach blossom to the tree with reusable adhesive or tape. As the blossoms are added, remind the children that the tree grows for 3 years before it produces blossoms.
- During the next 4 days, the children will replace the blossoms with the growing fruit and enjoy a peach harvest (see page 229 for a preview of the steps to come).



GROW A PRETEND PEACH TREE INSTRUCTIONS

Day 1: Help the children attach a peach blossom to the tree with reusable adhesive or tape. As the blossoms are added, remind the children that the tree has grown for 3 years before it produces blossoms (see below).



Day 2: Remove the blossoms and place the 2-inch peaches in the blossom positions. As the small peaches are added, remind the children that peaches start to grow where the blossoms were located on the tree. Talk with the children about the resources needed for the tree to grow peaches (soil, water, sun, and time) (page 232).



Day 3: Replace the 2-inch peaches with the 3-inch ones. As the medium-size peaches are added, remind the children that peaches grow larger on the tree during the summer. Talk with the children about the resources needed for the tree to grow peaches (soil, water, sun, and time) (pages 236–237).



Day 4: Replace the 3-inch peaches with the 4-inch ones. As the large-size peaches are added, remind the children that after peaches reach their full size, they ripen on the tree. Talk with the children about the resources needed for the tree to grow peaches (soil, water, sun, and time) (pages 243–244).



Day 5: Continue the lesson by celebrating with a pretend harvest of the ripened, 4-inch peaches from the tree. Talk with the children about how the peaches are eaten (page 256).



Peach: Where Do You Come From and How Do We Eat You?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Peach Trees Grow From Pits

Page 231

10 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree
(continued)

Page 232

15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Garden Scene Note Cards

Page 233

15-20 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Peach Says"

Page 234

10 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Peach Trees Grow From Pits

The children see and touch peach pits. They learn that peach trees grow in an orchard.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how peaches grow from a pit into a tree that produces peaches; and
- Describe the resources needed to grow peaches.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Peach pits, at least two
- Peach *Grow It! Cards*
- Picture of peaches at the grocery store (Fun Extras, page 259)
- Plates and napkins

INSTRUCTIONS

- Tell the children that today they will learn how peaches grow. Show the children the peach pits.
- Pass the pits around. Let the children touch and count the pits.
- Explain that the peach pits are seeds. They are planted in the soil. Explain that the sun and rain help the pits grow into trees that stand above the ground. It takes a long time, at least 3 years, for a peach tree to grow big enough to produce a peach. Compare this length of time to the ages of the children.
- Show the Peach *Grow It! Cards* to the children.
- Explain that an orchard is a field where many trees that produce fruits or nuts grow.
- When the trees are at least 3 years old, flowers called blossoms appear on the trees in the spring. Where the blossoms were on the tree, peaches will grow during the summer.
- Explain that the peach is ripe and ready to eat when the skin becomes a nice shade of yellow/red and the peach feels soft.
- Explain that when peaches are ripe, they are picked from the trees. The peaches are taken to a store or a farmers market where people buy them and take them home to eat. Show the drawing of peaches at the grocery store (Fun Extras, page 259).

Optional Activity: Visit a local orchard or farm and see how peaches grow.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

WORDS TO GROW

Blossom	Peach
Orchard	Tree
Soil	Pit
Sun	Water





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Copy of a 2-inch peach, one per child (Fun Extras, page 260). Save the 3-inch peach cut out for Day 3.
- Organize materials.

GROWING ACTIVITY

Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree (continued)

Peach blossoms fall away as fruit begins to grow in the peach tree orchard. Today the children will remove the blossoms from the pretend peach tree started on Day 1 and replace them with 2-inch peaches.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how peaches grow on peach trees; and
- Describe the resources needed to grow peaches.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper or painted peach tree with blossoms used on Day 1 (pages 227-229)
- Peach 2-inch Blackline Master, one per child (Fun Extras, page 260)
- Peach *Grow It! Cards*
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils (yellow, green and orange)
- Blunt-tip scissors
- Reusable adhesive or double-stick tape

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Review with the children that peaches grow from seeds called peach pits that are planted in the ground. The pit needs soil, water, sun, and time to grow into a peach tree.
- Describe how collections of peach trees, or other fruit trees, are called orchards.
- When the tree is at least 3 years old, the tree grows flowers called peach blossoms every spring. The blossoms fall away and peaches grow where the flowers were. At first the peaches are small, hard, and slightly yellow-green with some orange in color.
- Have the children color the smallest peach (2-inch size) using the yellow, green, and orange pencils.
- Help the children cut their colored peach from the sheet.
- Then have each child remove his or her single blossom from Day 1 and place a 2-inch colored peach in the blossom's position. As the small peaches are added, remind the children that peaches start to grow where the blossoms were located on the tree. Talk with the children about the resources needed for the tree to grow peaches (soil, water, sun, and time).
- The remaining steps for Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree will be completed over the coming days. See the complete activity overview on page 229.



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Garden Scene Notecards

The children draw and color peaches and/or peach trees on note cards.

OBJECTIVE

The children will be able to:

- Assert individuality (drawing peaches that differ in color and design from other children's drawings); and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Plain white note cards
- Slips of paper printed with "This Card Handmade by"
- Paper clips, one per child
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Peach *Grow It! Cards*

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show the Peach *Grow It! Cards* to the children.
 - Talk with the children about how a peach changes color as it ripens.
 - Review the shape (round) and color of a peach (yellow and orange) and how peaches grow (on a tree, in an orchard).
- Give each child a note card. Explain that they are going to decorate it with drawings of peaches or peach trees.
- Some children may choose to color a peach tree. Children may also choose to draw an individual peach or a favorite dish made with peaches.
- After the cards are made, help each child write his or her name on the line on the slip of paper. Attach the slip to the child's card(s) and envelope(s) with a paperclip.
- Have the children think of uses for the cards they just created. Some ideas include:
 - Give to a parent to write a favorite recipe on the card;
 - Give to a family member as a gift;
 - Use to write a thank-you note or letter; and
 - Other ideas the children suggest.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15–20 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can help younger children.



Peaches



Peaches





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Clear or designate an open space for children to move about during the activity.

MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Peach Says"



"Peach Says" is the Tasty Acres Farm version of a popular children's game.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move and stretch during a group game;
- Follow instructions from a peer or adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Optional:* Shirt, badge, or other accessory for the leader to wear that lets everyone know he/she is the Farmer.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit in a circle or stand in a group.
- Choose one person to be the Farmer (leader).
- The Farmer orders the other children to do all sorts of different and fun things, the funnier the better!
- But the Farmer's orders are only to be followed when they start with "Peach says."
- When someone follows an order that doesn't begin with "Peach says," that child is out of the game. However, make sure to keep the children moving even if they are "out." Ask them to stand off to the side and do different movements to pick peaches. For example, children can march through the orchard, reach towards the sky to find the peaches, jump up to pick the peaches from the tree, skip home from the orchard, etc.
- Repeat until only one person is left. That person is the winner and can be the Farmer next round.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree
(continued)

Pages 236-237

15 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Peach Style

Pages 238-239

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Peaches a la Mode

Pages 240-241

10-15 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Attach paper or painted peach tree to wall.
- Organize materials.
- Gather the peach 3-inch Blackline Masters from Day 2, one per child (Fun Extras, page 260).

GROWING ACTIVITY

Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree (continued)

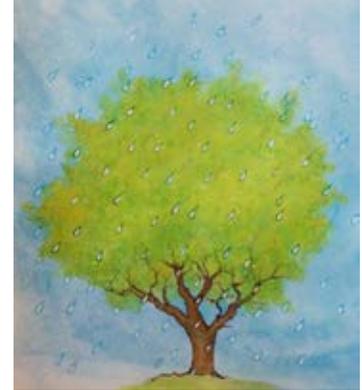
The children continue to make a pretend peach tree and learn about the growing stages of peaches.

Today the children will replace the 2-inch peaches on the pretend tree with the 3-inch ones.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Experience making a pretend peach tree; and
- Describe the resources needed to grow peaches.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper or painted peach tree with 2-inch peaches used on Day 2 (Fun Extras, page 260)
- Peach 3-inch Blackline Master, one per child (Fun Extras, page 260)
- Peach *Grow It! Cards*
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils (Orange and red)
- Blunt-tip scissors
- Reusable adhesive or double-stick tape

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Review with the children that peaches grow from seeds called peach pits that are planted in the ground. The pit needs soil, water, sun, and time to grow into a peach tree.
- Describe how collections of peach trees, or other fruit trees, are called orchards.
- When the tree is at least 3 years old, the tree grows flowers called peach blossoms every spring. The blossoms fall away and peaches grow where the flowers were. At first the peaches are small, hard, and slightly yellow-green with some orange in color.
- By the middle of summer, the peaches have grown larger and are changing in color to have less green and more orange and red.
- By the end of the summer, the large peaches on the tree are soft, round, and creamy yellow to orange-red in color. Once the peaches are ripe, they are picked and sent to stores or farmers markets. That is where we buy peaches to take home and eat.



- Tell the children that today their small peaches will grow into medium-size peaches and change colors.
- Ask children if they have ever visited a fruit orchard, tell them that there may be “pick your own” orchards in their area.
- Have children color the medium peach (3-inch size) with orange and red crayons, markers, or pencils.
- Help the children cut the colored peaches from the sheet.
- Have the children replace their 2-inch peach with their 3-inch peach on the pretend peach tree. As the medium size peaches are added, remind the children that peaches grow larger during the summer. Talk with the children about the resources needed for the tree to grow peaches (soil, water, sun, and time). The remaining steps for Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree will be completed over the coming days. See the complete activity overview on page 229.





MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm

PEACH STYLE

The children sing about growing and eating peaches and act out motions to this familiar tune.



ACTIVITY LENGTH
10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Become familiar with the words and motions of the song.

MIXED-AGES TIPS

Grow It! Buddies can take turns leading the song.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Sing and act out motions to a familiar tune; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Peach lyrics to “Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Peach Style” (page 239)
- Large space for the children to move about

INSTRUCTIONS

- Lead the children in singing these new words to the tune “Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Peach Style” and demonstrate the suggested motions or make up new ones.
- Encourage the children to move about as they are singing.
- Explain that skipping, wiggling, stretching, running, jumping, and playing actively every day helps us to feel good and stay healthy.





Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Peach Style

1ST VERSE

Old MacDonald had an orchard, EIEIO!

(Skip in place)

In this orchard he grew some peaches, EIEIO!

(Pretend to carry a basket of peaches)

With a peach tree here and a peach tree there,

Here a tree, there a tree, everywhere a peach tree!

(Pretend to be trees reaching high into the air stretching tall)

Old MacDonald had an orchard, EIEIO!

(Skip in place)

2ND VERSE

Old MacDonald had an orchard, EIEIO!

(Skip in place)

In this orchard he grew some peaches, EIEIO!

(Pretend to carry basket of peaches)

With a peach blossom here and a peach blossom there,

Here a blossom, there a blossom,
everywhere a peach blossom!

*(Wiggle fingers - blossoms - to the left and right,
moving arms until above head)*

Old MacDonald had an orchard, EIEIO!

(Skip in place)

3RD VERSE

Old MacDonald had an orchard, EIEIO!

(Skip in place)

In this orchard he grew some peaches, EIEIO!

(Pretend to carry basket of peaches)

With a fuzz, fuzz here, and a fuzz, fuzz there,

(Pretend to climb a tree and pick peaches)

Here some fuzz, there some fuzz, everywhere peach fuzz.

(Pretend to climb a tree and pick peaches)

Old MacDonald had an orchard, EIEIO!

(Skip in place)

4TH VERSE

Old MacDonald had an orchard, EIEIO!

(Skip in place)

In this orchard he grew some peaches, EIEIO!

(Pretend to carry basket of peaches)

With a bite, bite here, and a bite, bite there,

(Pretend to eat a peach)

Here a bite, there a bite, everywhere a healthy bite.

(Pretend to eat a peach)

Old MacDonald had an orchard, EIEIO!

(Skip in place)





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10–15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.
- Make Peaches a la Mode.
OR
- Gather recipe ingredients and let the children help make the recipe.
- Modify the recipe ingredients as necessary for younger children (Appendix F: Choking Prevention, page 327).

OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the peaches with the children.

TASTING ACTIVITY

Peaches a la Mode

The children taste a new peach recipe and talk about different ways to eat peaches.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Taste peaches in a combination food, Peaches a la Mode;
- Describe many different ways to eat peaches; and
- Help prepare the recipe. (*Optional*)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Peaches a la Mode recipe (page 240)
- Bowls, spoons, and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Gather the children and lead a discussion about peaches.
- Show the children a whole peach.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about peaches.
- Encourage responses such as how and where peaches grow, how they look, feel, smell, and taste, and other material covered in the unit.
- Serve the children Peaches a la Mode ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup of peaches and 2 Tablespoons of yogurt).
- As the children are eating, ask:
 - Is a peach a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - What shape is a peach? (Round like a ball)
 - What color is the outside? (Yellow, orange, and red)
 - How does it feel? (Fuzzy and soft)
 - Do peaches grow above or below the ground? (Above the ground on trees in an orchard)
 - What is the large seed inside a peach called? (A pit)
 - What colors are a peach when it is ripe and picked? (Yellow and red)
 - Where do peaches grow? (Orchard)
 - Who grows peaches? (A farmer)
 - Where are peaches shipped after they are picked? (To stores and farmers markets)
- Have the children name some of the ways that a peach can be eaten. Give suggestions such as, in smoothies, with cereal, in breads or muffins, or fresh as they are.



RECIPE

Peaches a la Mode



INGREDIENTS

- 3 peaches (approximately 1 ½ cups), peeled, pitted, and cut into ½-inch pieces
- ¾ cup yogurt, fat-free, vanilla*
- cinnamon (*optional*)
- Spoons, bowls, and napkins (one per child)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place ¾ cup of peaches in a serving dish (plate, bowl, or mug) for each serving.
2. Measure out 2 tablespoons of yogurt and scoop onto the peaches for each serving.
3. Sprinkle with a pinch of cinnamon (*optional*).

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help rinse peaches in a colander.
- Scoop yogurt with a tablespoon measure.

Adults should use a sharp knife and a cutting board to cut peaches in half, remove pit, and slice peaches.

*Choose yogurt that meets CACFP sugar requirements (see Appendix K, page 335).

PREPARATION TIME

10 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving provides ¼ oz equivalent meat alternate and ¼ cup fruit. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and a cutting board to cut peaches in half, remove pit, peel and slice peaches.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	44
Protein	1 g
Carbohydrate	10 g
Total Fat	0 g
Saturated Fat.....	0 g
Cholesterol	1 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	39 mg
Sodium	14 mg
Dietary Fiber	1 g



Peaches: How Do You Grow?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree
(Continued)

Pages 243-244

15 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Peachy Salsa

Pages 245-247

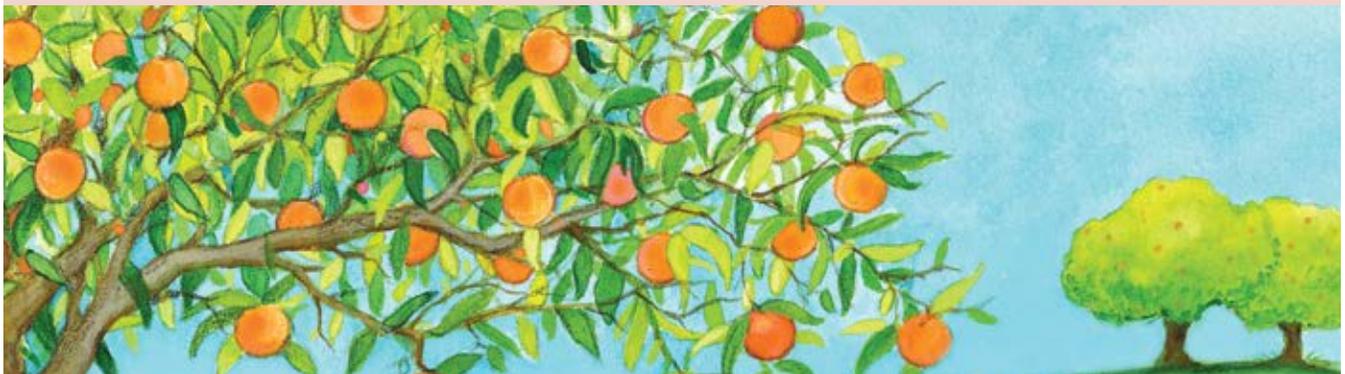
15 minutes



READING ACTIVITY

Page 248

10-20 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree (continued)

The children continue to make a pretend peach tree and learn about the growing stages of peaches.

Today the children will replace the 3-inch peaches with the 4-inch ones.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Experience making a pretend peach tree; and
- Describe the resources needed to grow peaches.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Paper or painted peach tree with blossoms that was used with Day 3 (page 262)
- Peach 4-inch Blackline Master, one per child (Fun Extras, page 261)
- Peach *Grow It!* Cards
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils (Red and orange)
- Blunt-tip scissors
- Reusable adhesive or double-stick tape

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Review with the children how peaches grow. This information was covered in previous days, but it is helpful to review again with the children to reinforce the messages.
- Tell the children that peaches grow from seeds called peach pits that are planted in the ground. The pit needs soil, water, sun, and time to grow into a peach tree.
- Describe how collections of peach trees, or other fruit trees, are called orchards.
- When the tree is at least 3 years old, the tree grows flowers called peach blossoms every spring. The blossoms fall away and peaches grow where the flowers were. At first the peaches are small, hard, and slightly yellow-green with some orange in color.
- By the middle of summer, the peaches have grown larger and are changing in color to have less green and more orange and red.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Attach paper or painted peach tree to wall.
- Copy the 4-inch Peach Blackline Master (Fun Extras, page 261).
- Organize materials.



- By the end of the summer, the large peaches on the tree are soft, round, and creamy yellow to orange-red in color. Once the peaches are ripe, they are picked and sent to stores or farmers markets. That is where we buy peaches to take home and eat.
- Tell the children that today their medium peaches (3-inch) will grow into large peaches (4-inch).
- Have children color the largest peach dark red and orange (4-inch size).
- Help the children cut the colored peaches from the sheet.
- Replace the 3-inch peaches with the 4-inch peaches. As the large-size peaches are added, remind the children that once peaches reach their full size, they ripen on the tree. Talk with the children about the resources needed for the tree to grow peaches (soil, water, sun, and time).
- The remaining steps for Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree will be completed on the final day. See the complete activity overview on page 229.



TASTING ACTIVITY

Peachy Salsa



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.
- Make the Peachy Salsa.
OR
- Organize recipe ingredients and let the children help make the salsa.

The children taste a new peach recipe and talk about different ways to eat peaches.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Taste peaches in a salsa;
- Describe many different ways to eat peaches; and
- *Optional:* Help prepare the recipe.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Peachy Salsa recipe and recipe ingredients (page 247)
- Whole-grain pita bread, cut into triangles and toasted (*optional*)
- Napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about peaches.
- Encourage responses such as how and where peaches grow, how they look, feel, smell, and taste, and other material covered in the unit.
- Tell the children that today they will celebrate a new way to eat peaches. Peaches can be combined with other foods and eaten in many different ways—fresh slices, blended into a smoothie, served with yogurt for Peaches a la Mode, and even baked into breads.
- Show the children the Peachy Salsa and talk about the ingredients in the recipe. If making the recipe as part of the activity, make it at this point.
- Serve the children the Peachy Salsa with whole-grain pita bread slices.
- As the children are eating, ask:
 - Is a peach a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - Where do peaches grow? (In a peach tree or orchard)
 - What is the large seed inside a peach called? (A pit)
 - Can you eat the pit? (No)
 - Can you eat the skin? (Yes, but it should be rinsed under cool running water first)
 - What peach recipes have they made with their families?
 - What different ways have they eaten peaches?
 - What new ways do they think peaches could be eaten?
- Give suggestions such as peaches in salads, cooked in main dishes with chicken or pork, served with cottage cheese, in breads or muffins, or on top of French toast, pancakes, or waffles.



RECIPE

Peachy Salsa



INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups strawberries, fresh, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 1 cup peaches, fresh, peeled, cut into ½-inch pieces
- ½ cup mango or peaches, fresh, peeled, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 3 whole grain-rich pitas, 6-inches (at least 28 grams each, cut into triangles, toasted) (*optional*)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix the strawberries, peaches, and mango in a medium bowl.
2. Divide salsa into ½-cup servings.
3. Serve with pita triangles (*optional*).

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help rinse the fruit in a colander.
- Help mix the salsa ingredients together.

Adapted from: West Virginia Department of Education's *Leap of Taste Menus and Recipes* (2017)

PREPARATION TIME

15 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving (½ cup) provides ½ cup of fruit. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and a cutting board to cut strawberries, peaches, and mangoes into pieces.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	32
Protein	1 g
Carbohydrate	8 g
Total Fat	0 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Vitamin C	31 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	10 mg
Sodium	1 mg
Dietary Fiber	1 g

Optional ingredients are not included in nutrient analysis.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10-20 minutes
depending on the
length of the book

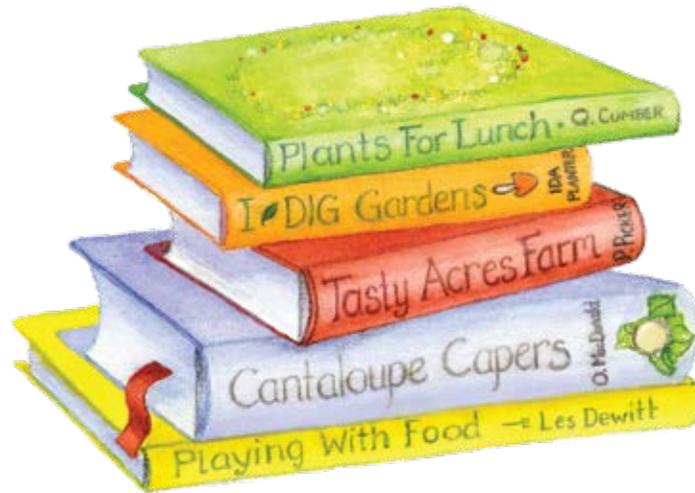
WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Clear a space for the children to sit around you.
- Choose a book from the Harvest of Books list (Basics, page 15).
- Borrow the book you select from a library or purchase it.
- You can also use other books related to fruits and vegetables that may already be available to you.

MIXED-AGES TIPS

- Hold the baby on your lap while reading to other children.
- Give the baby a fruit or vegetable board book.
- Have *Grow It! Buddies* read to younger children.

Reading Activity



Read story books to the children that are about growing and/or eating fruits and vegetables. Listening to such stories can encourage children to adopt positive behaviors that can last a lifetime, like trying new fruits and vegetables.

OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to:

- Describe the fun and interesting stories about fruits and vegetables that were read to them.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Books from a library or purchased books
- Space for the children to sit

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit around you as you read the book.
- Ask the children to listen for the names of fruits and vegetables as the story is read. If possible, have the children act out parts of the book to encourage movement during story time.
- Ask the children which fruits and vegetables were named in the story and what happened to them. For example,
 - Where were the fruits and vegetables grown?
 - What happened to the fruits and vegetables after they were picked?
 - Who ate the fruits and vegetables?
- Add other questions that relate to the story.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

Reach for the Peach

Pages 250-252

20-25 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Peach Reach Stretch

Pages 253-254

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Fruits With Pits

Page 255

10-15 minutes

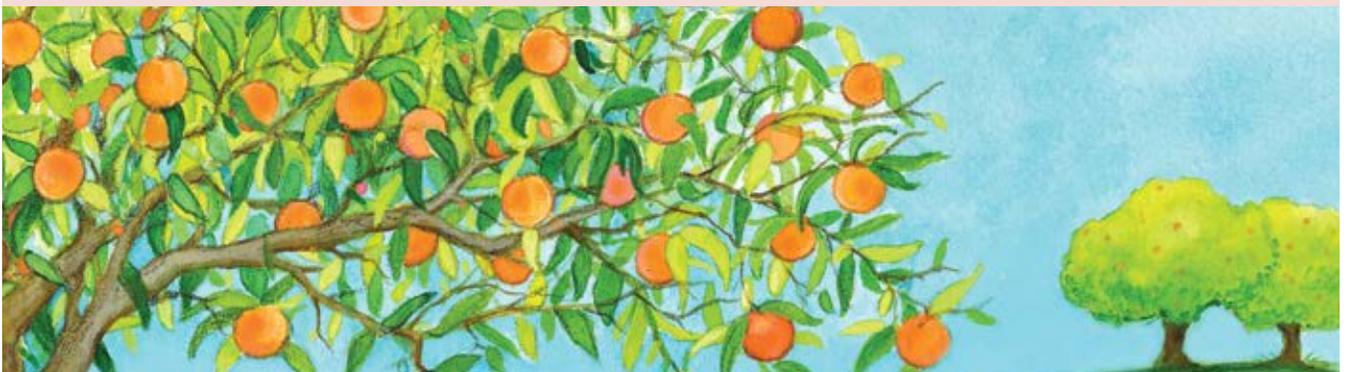


GROWING ACTIVITY

Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree
(continued)

Page 256

5 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

20 minutes;
25 minutes if optional
coloring activity
conducted

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review the foods and activities shown on the *MyPlate Poster*.
- Display the *MyPlate Poster*.
- *Optional*: Make copies of the *MyPlate* coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child.

FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

Reach For the Peach



Introduce the children to the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. The children learn that peaches and other fruits with pits are part of the Fruit Group.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Say that peaches are part of the Fruit Group;
- Say that eating fruits like peaches help keep us healthy;
- Say that being physically active every day helps us feel good;
- Say that eating foods from the different food groups each day helps us grow and be healthy; and
- Name a food from each of the five food groups.

MATERIALS NEEDED

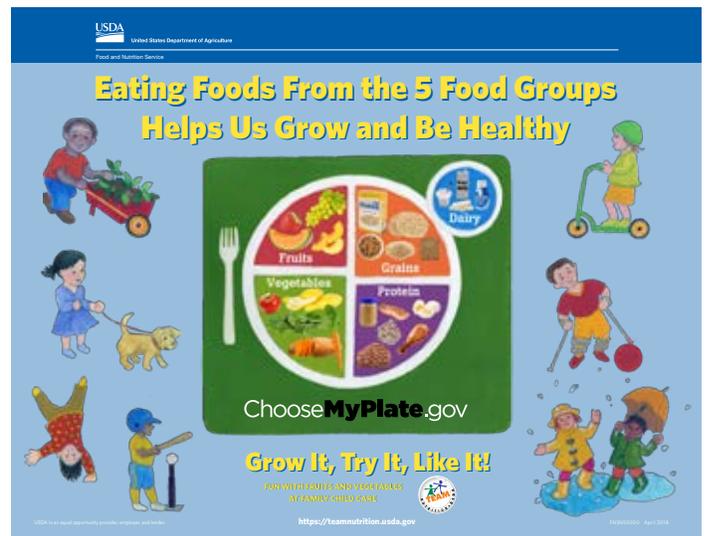
- *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*
- *Optional*: *MyPlate* coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333)



INSTRUCTIONS

Learning the Food Groups

- Seat the children in a semicircle on the floor in view of the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*.
- Tell the children that today they are going to learn about ways to be healthy and have fun every day. Tell the children that the best part is they already like to do what helps them be healthy: they like to eat a variety of foods and they like to play.
- Point out the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster* to the children. Ask the children to tell you what they see on the poster. Accept all correct answers, such as food, specific foods by name, children playing, specific activities by name, etc.
- Explain that MyPlate shows the five food groups a person should eat from each day. Each food group has its own color. Point to the different sections as you discuss. The Fruit Group is red, the Vegetable Group is green, the Grains Group is orange, the Dairy Group is blue, and the Protein Foods Group is purple. Eating foods from each food group helps us to grow and be healthy. Explain that peaches are part of the Fruit Group.



The Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster shows foods from the five food groups.



GRAINS

- Tell the children that foods made from grains are in the Grains Group represented by the orange-colored section on MyPlate. Point to the food group on the poster and state that grain foods like bread, cereal, rice, and pasta give us energy to play.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a food in the orange section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Grains Group also give us energy to play.
- Children this age may not know what a grain is. Tell them grains come from plants such as wheat, oats, rice, and corn. Grains are used to make foods like cereal, bread, tortillas, and pasta.



VEGETABLES

- Tell the children that many foods from plants are in the Vegetable Group and are represented by the green section of MyPlate. Point out the carrot on the poster. Ask the children to name this vegetable (carrot). Ask the children to name the color of carrots (orange). Explain that eating orange vegetables, like carrots, can help them to be healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a vegetable in the green section, and name the vegetable. After each child names a vegetable, repeat the name of the vegetable and state that (the vegetable named) and other foods from the Vegetable Group also help keep us healthy.





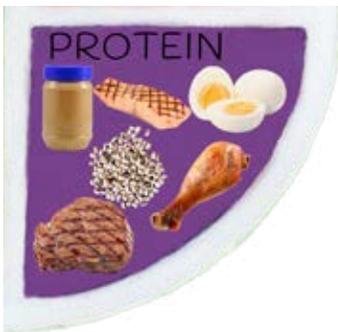
FRUITS

- Tell the children that some foods from plants are in the Fruit Group represented by the red section. Point to the peach shown on the poster and state that peaches help keep us healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a fruit in the red section, and name the fruit. After each child names a fruit, repeat the name of the fruit and state that (the fruit named) and other foods from the Fruit Group help keep us healthy.



DAIRY

- Tell the children that milk and foods made from milk are in the Dairy Group represented by the blue section. Point to the milk and yogurt on the poster and state that milk and yogurt help us build strong bones.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the blue section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Dairy Group also help us build strong bones.

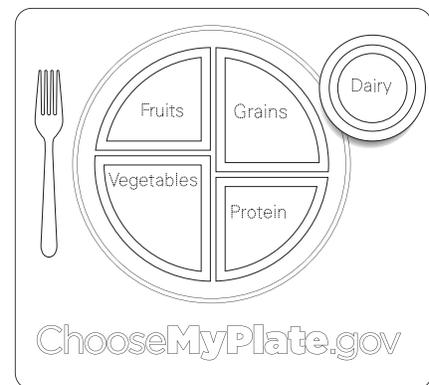


PROTEIN FOODS

- Tell the children that foods from animals and some plants are in the Protein Foods Group represented by the purple section. Point to the meat, fish, egg, beans, and peanut butter on the poster and state that these foods help our muscles grow.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the purple section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Protein Foods Group also help our muscles grow. (Note: if only foods that come from animals are selected, point out a food from plants and name it. If only foods from plants are selected, point out a food that comes from animals and name it.)

OPTIONAL COLORING ACTIVITY

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Distribute a copy of the MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333) to each child.
- Ask the children to color the Fruit Group section of MyPlate red and draw and color a peach near it. Help the younger children who may not know their colors yet.
- With older children, have them copy the dot-to-dot outline of the word "Fruits."



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Peach Reach Stretch



ACTIVITY LENGTH
10 minutes



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Display the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster.

The Peach Reach Stretch is a fun activity that gets children moving.

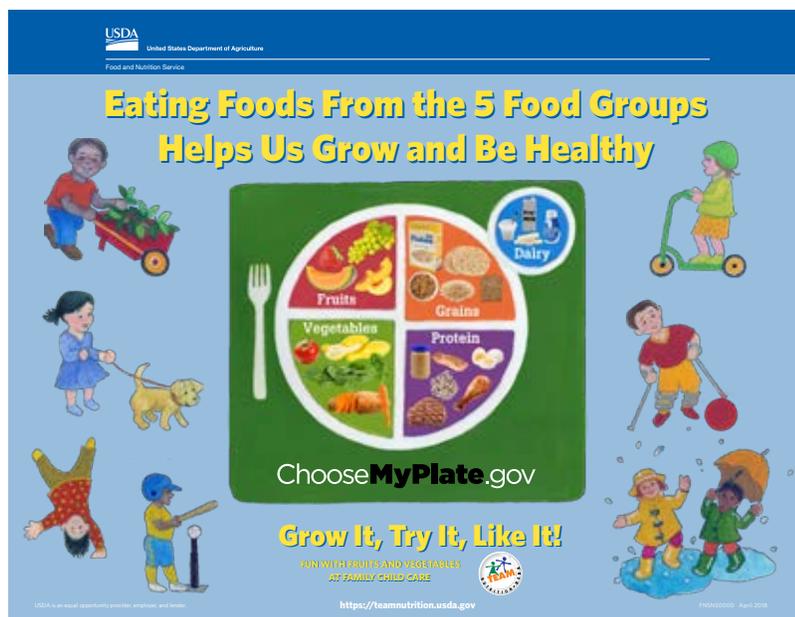
OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move and stretch during a group activity;
- Follow instructions from an adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Space to do activity
- *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster



Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster



INSTRUCTIONS

- Point to the various activities depicted on the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. Ask the children to tell you why it is important to be physically active and play every day (it helps make you strong and healthy, and it is fun). Tell the children that today they will learn to be active in a way that reminds them of peaches.
- Ask the children to extend their arms out to the side and spread apart from each other so that no child is easily able to touch another child's fingers. Talk about how when standing like this, the children are like an orchard that peaches are grown in. When children are spaced around the room, ask them to lower their arms and listen carefully. Tell the children that stretching is an important way to be active. Ask the children to watch as you show them a special stretch that celebrates peaches.
- Tell the children they are going to pretend to harvest peaches while they do the Peach Reach Stretch. Show the children how to reach high above their head with the right arm and pick a peach from the imaginary tree limb above. Repeat the stretch with the left arm. Show the children how to reach high above their heads with both hands and then slowly lower the arms toward the toes, bending forward at the waist. Gently roll the spine up to a standing position. Show how to pretend to extend the left arm from the shoulder to reach for a peach to the left, bring the hand to the center of the body, then pretend to pass the peach to the right hand, and then extend the right arm from the shoulder to the right side, stretching the arm in the opposite direction.
- Ask the children to do the Peach Reach Stretch with you several times. During each stretch, remind the children of the stages of how peaches grow.
- Conclude the activity by telling the children it is fun to be physically active by doing a Peach Reach Stretch.

NOTE TO CAREGIVER

Active play and movement are important for every child's growth and development. Although they may seem to be active and energetic, most children do not get the amount of physical activity they need for good health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children get 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.



TASTING ACTIVITY

Fruits With Pits



The children will discuss peach facts and taste the difference between peaches, nectarines, and apricots. They will also conclude the *Make and Grow a Pretend Peach Tree* lesson with a pretend harvest of the ripe, 4-inch peaches.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Taste different varieties of stone fruits (fruits with pits).
- Compare peaches to other stone fruits.
- Describe many different ways to eat peaches.
- Describe how peaches are grown, harvested, and eaten. Celebrate with a pretend harvest of the 4-inch peaches from the tree.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Peaches, nectarines, and apricots, at least two each
- Plates, forks, and napkins
- Paper or painted peach tree with peaches colored on Day 4
- Basket to collect the peaches (*optional*)

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about peaches.
- Encourage answers such as how and where peaches grow; how they look, feel, smell, and taste; and other information covered in the unit.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10–15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Buy peaches, nectarines, and apricots. Allow time for the fruit to ripen, if needed.
- Rinse fruit.
- Slice a peach, nectarine, and an apricot in half, leaving the pit intact in one half. Put halves back together to make a whole piece of fruit to use in the activity.
- Prepare bite-size pieces of peach, nectarine, and apricot.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.
- Hang the pretend peach tree from Day 4.

VARIATIONS

- Choose other stone fruits available to you including cherries (pitted and sliced into quarters before serving) or plums. Consider the choking prevention tips in Appendix F (page 327), when deciding how to prepare and offer fruits.



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the peaches with the children.

TIME TO TASTE!

- Show the children the peach, nectarine, and apricot whole and then remove the half without the pit to reveal the inside of the fruit.
- Tell the children that nectarines and apricots are similar to peaches.
- Ask children to tell you about how the fruits are the same and how they are different.
- Give the children samples of each fruit to taste and compare. Note: all three are similar in color, are juicy, and taste sweet.
- Invite the children to feel and smell the fruit halves with pits intact. Discard the fruit at the end of the lesson.
- Ask the children to name different ways to eat fruits like peaches, nectarines, and apricots at different meals and snacks. Accept all answers such as on cereal, in fruit salads, plain, with yogurt, etc.

GROWING ACTIVITY

Make a Pretend Peach Tree

- After the children are done tasting, continue the lesson by celebrating with a pretend harvest of the 4-inch peaches from the tree. Explain that the peaches have had a chance to ripen and are ready to eat. Review with the children the resources needed for the tree to grow peaches (soil, water, sun, and time).
- Allow children to collect their pretend peaches off the tree with a basket (*optional*).



Fun Extras



Peach

Peaches Growing on Trees in Orchard



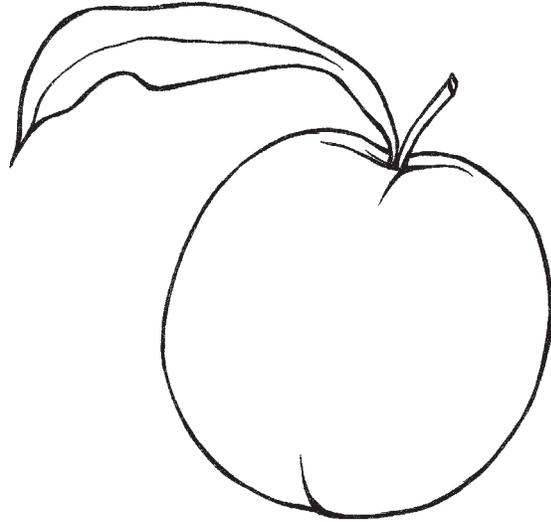
Peach

Peaches in Grocery Store

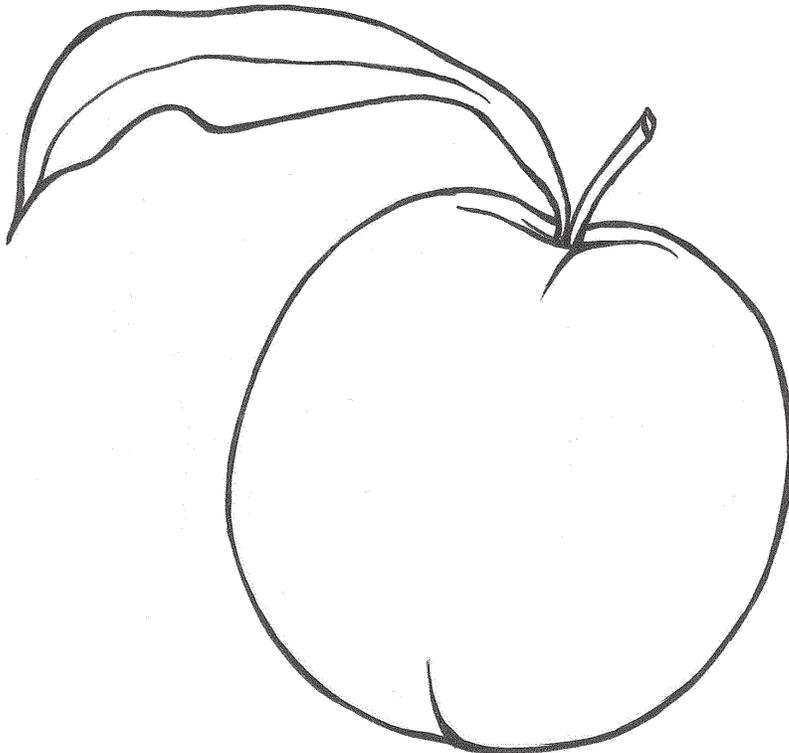


Peach

2-inch and 3-inch Blackline Master



2" peach

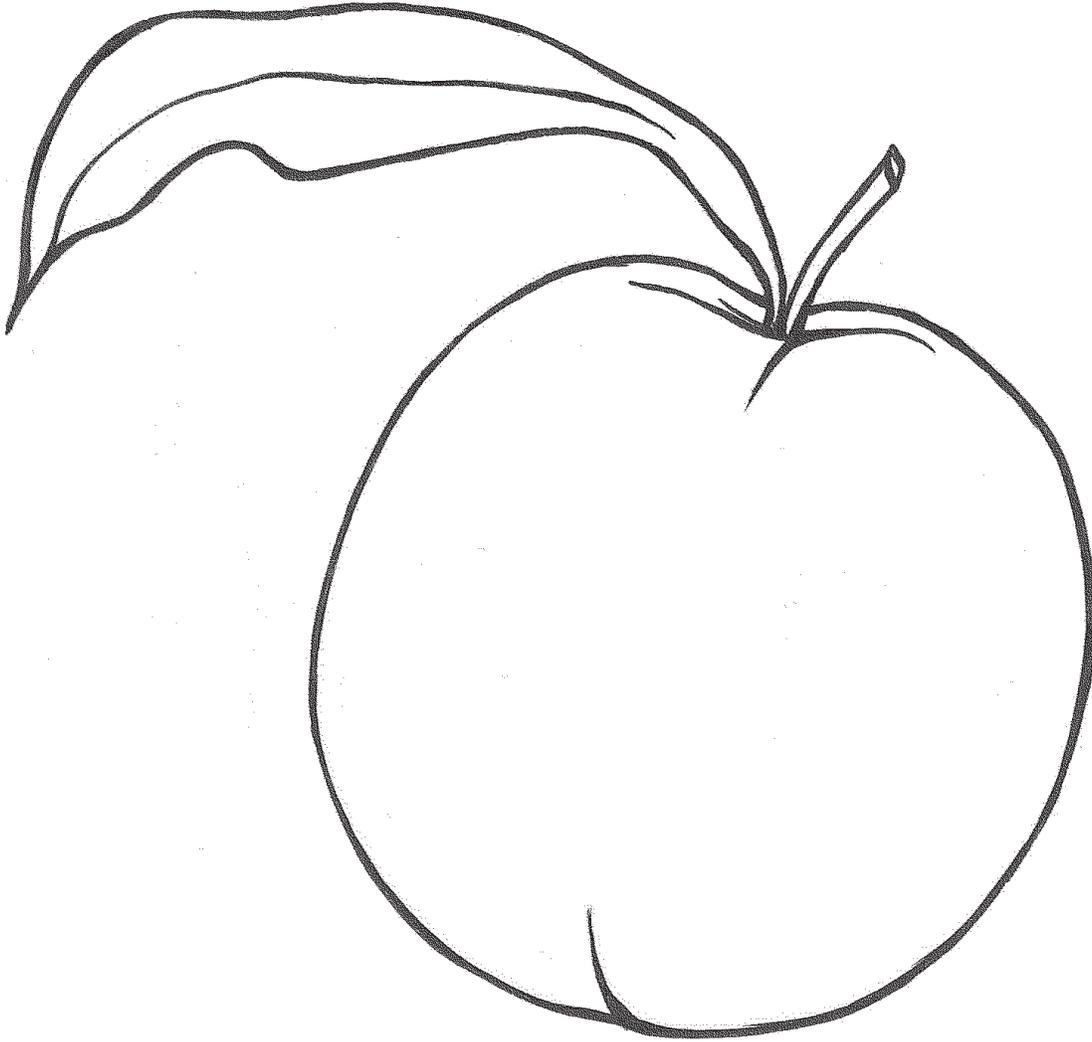


3" peach



Peach

4-inch Blackline Master

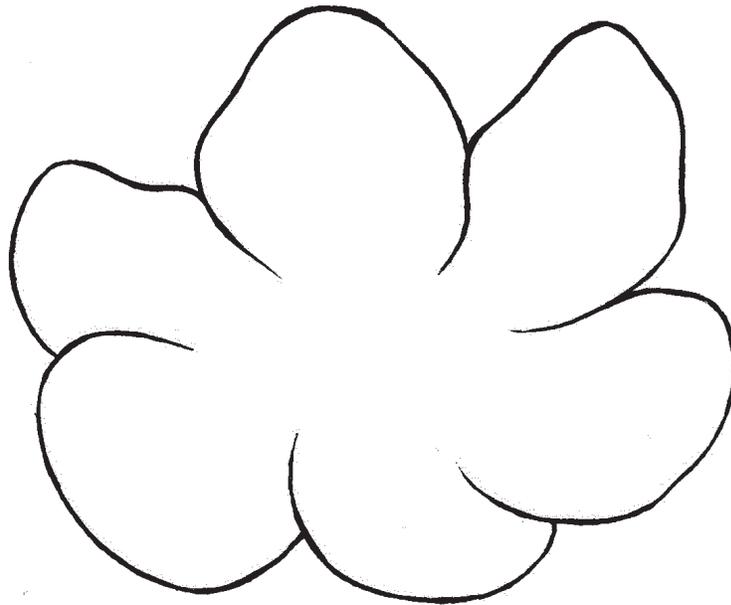


4" peach

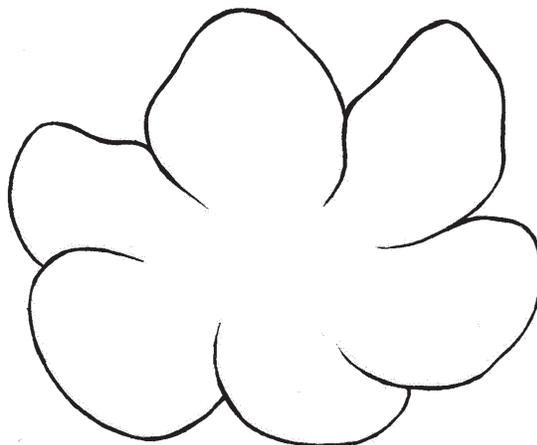


Peach Blossoms

Blackline Master



Large Blossom



Small Blossom



Peaches Grow on Trees

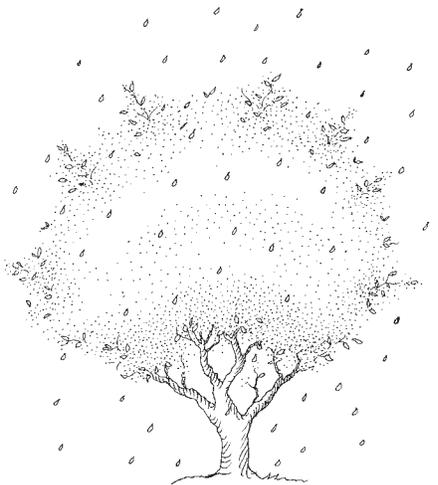
Dear Family:

Review what your child has learned about growing peaches. Read aloud the picture captions and help your child number the pictures in order from 1-5, showing the stages of growing peaches.

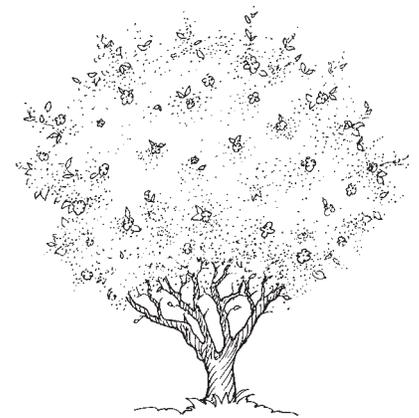
Then, have your child color the pictures. Later, cut the colored pictures apart and help your child glue the pictures on a piece of paper in the correct order.



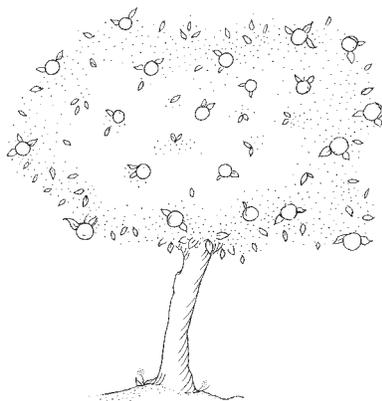
Planting a peach pit _____



Rain on the peach tree _____



Peach tree has blossoms _____



Peaches growing on a tree _____



Picking ripe peaches _____

ANSWERS:

1. Planting a peach pit; 2. Rain on the peach tree; 3. Peach tree has blossoms; 4. Peaches growing on a tree; 5. Picking ripe peaches

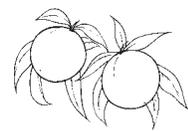
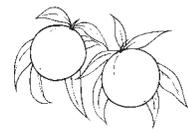
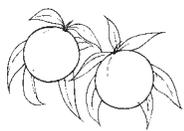
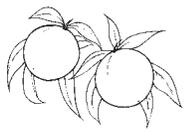


Peachy Picture Frame

Dear Family:

Find out what your child has learned about peaches while he or she makes a "peachy" picture frame. After your child colors the peaches bright yellow and red, cut the picture frame out along the thin dotted outline. Cut out the box along the dashed line to create the photo opening. Fold the frame in half along the solid line and insert a favorite photo. Use tape or glue to seal the frame closed.

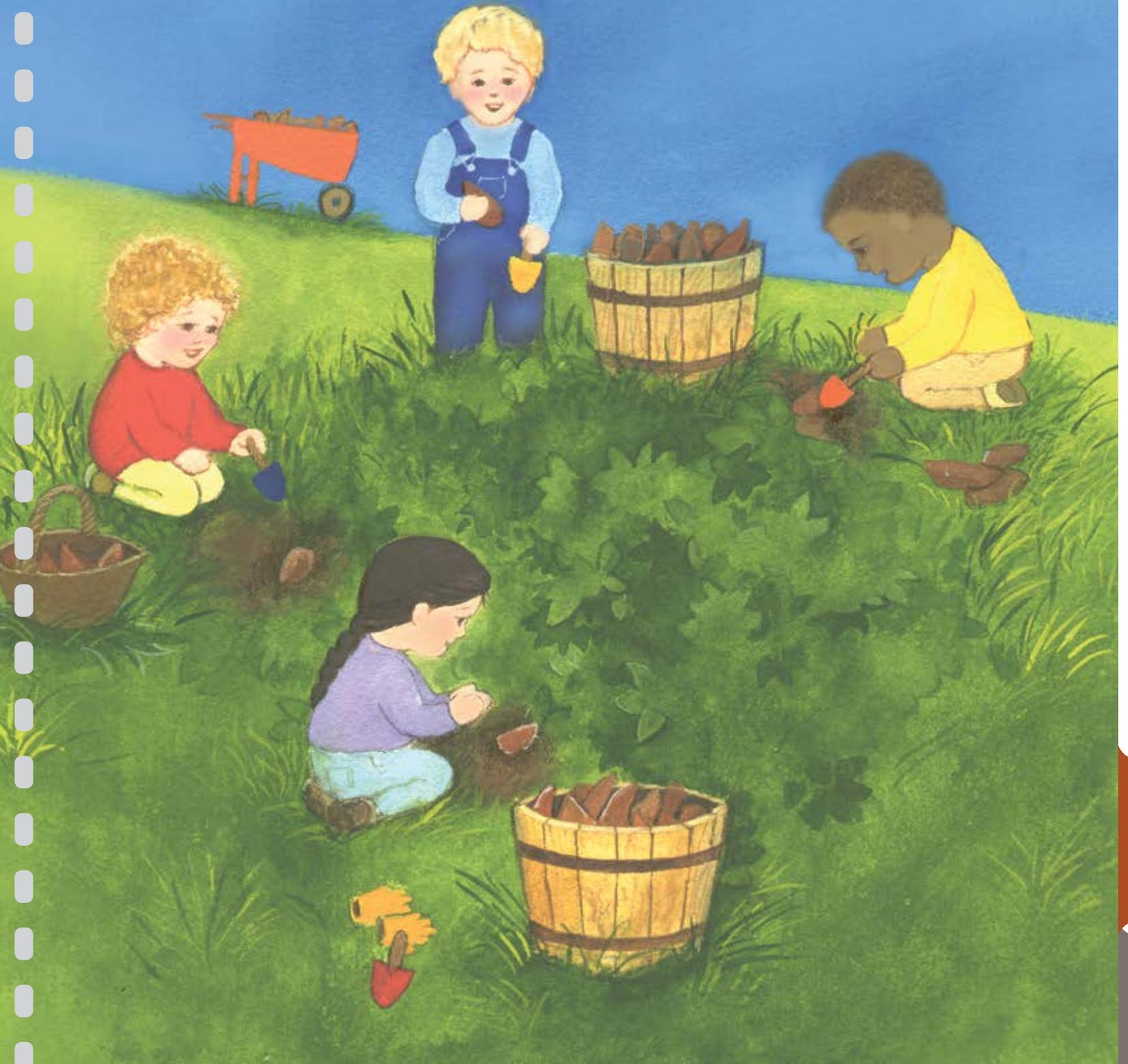
Fold on solid line



Cut along dotted lines for
photo opening



Sweet Potato Hill



WELCOME TO Sweet Potato Hill at Tasty Acres Farm!



While the other plants show off their fruits and vegetables during the growing season, potatoes stay hidden in the ground until harvest time. Through the activities in this unit, children will discover how sweet potatoes look, feel, smell, and taste.

The children make a pretend sweet potato hill to learn how this vegetable is grown, harvested, and shipped to farmers markets and stores. Children also have many opportunities to taste sweet potatoes throughout the unit. Growing at Home materials allow families to share in the sweet rewards.

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Sweet Potato Activity Chart

DAY 1 40 minutes	DAY 2 50-55 minutes	DAY 3 30-40 minutes	DAY 4 55-65 minutes	DAY 5 40-50 minutes
MYSTERY BOX OR BAG	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	GROWING ACTIVITY	FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY
<p>"Eye" Wonder What This Is?</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Sweet Potatoes Grow From Eyes and Slips</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Start a Sweet Potato Slip</p> <p>10 minutes</p> 	<p>Make a Pretend Sweet Potato Hill</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>You Say Potato, and I Say Potato</p> <p>20-25 minutes</p>
TASTING ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY	CRAFT ACTIVITY	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY
<p>Sweet Potato—A Look Inside</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Whipped Sweet Potatoes</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Sweet Potato Style</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Make a Scarecrow</p> <p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Potato Sack Hop</p> <p>10 minutes</p>
CRAFT ACTIVITY	CRAFT ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY	READING ACTIVITY	TASTING ACTIVITY
<p>Stamped Wrapping Paper</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Decorated Produce Placemats</p> <p>15-20 minutes</p>	<p>Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples</p> <p>10-20 minutes</p>	 <p>10-20 minutes</p>	<p>A Rainbow of Potatoes</p> <p>10-15 minutes</p> 
	MOVEMENT ACTIVITY			
	<p>"Sweet Potato Says"</p> <p>10 minutes</p> 			





Introduction to Sweet Potato Hill Activities

Check with local farms and farmers markets to find out when sweet potatoes are in peak season. Usually sweet potatoes are available year-round, with their peak season falling from late October through December. If sweet potatoes do not grow in your region, substitute other vegetables that grow underground, like carrots, rutabagas, or other types of potatoes, in these activities. Seeing sweet potatoes growing in the field makes a great farm field trip for preschoolers. If a farm is not nearby, visit a produce stand or farmers market to see locally grown sweet potatoes.

The sweet potato lessons in this unit are arranged by day to teach over the course of 5 consecutive days. If possible, do the planting activities and enjoy homegrown sweet potatoes for several weeks. It is an easy vegetable to grow and can be planted in a garden bed or container. Planting and watching a plant grow can be an enjoyable activity for children.

ACTIVITY LENGTH

Most activities require only 10–15 minutes.

CREDITING TIPS

Some activities in this unit include children eating sweet potatoes. Check for food allergies before serving. If you plan to serve sweet potatoes as part of a reimbursable meal or snack for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), check the minimum serving sizes for each age group (Appendix G, page 330). There are also Crediting Tips with some of the recipes. If you plan to serve those as part of a reimbursable meal or snack, refer to the Crediting Tips for guidance.

For information on purchasing the correct amount of sweet potatoes, see USDA's Food Buying Guide at <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov>.

WORDS TO GROW

New Words To Use When Teaching About Sweet Potatoes

Vegetable	Sprout
Slips	Oblong
Eyes	Vines
Orange	Fall

LUNCH AND SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS

	Ages 1–2	Ages 3–5
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz eq	1 ½ oz eq
Vegetables	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Fruits	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.

SNACK MEAL PATTERNS

Select 2 of the 5 components for snack

	Ages 1–2	Ages 3–5
Milk	½ cup	½ cup
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz eq	½ oz eq
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.



Getting To Know Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are oblong-shaped, orange or tan-colored vegetables that taste sweet. In the garden, the leaves of a sweet potato plant grow above ground. The part of the sweet potato plant that we eat is the root of the plant and grows underground. Other types of root vegetables that grow underground are carrots, beets, radishes, yams, and white potatoes.

Sweet potato roots, called slips, are planted in the ground to grow more sweet potatoes. You can start a sweet potato slip at home by hanging a sweet potato in a jar of water. In a few weeks, leaves and roots will grow from the sweet potato. Sweet potatoes grow best in warm weather.

GROWING GUIDE

Sweet potatoes grow best in raised rows. In cooler areas, cover the rows with black plastic to keep the soil warm and promote growth. It's best to plant root sprouts, known as slips, which can be purchased or grown at home. In this unit, the children will grow their own sweet potato slips (pages 279–280). After planting the slip, the sweet potatoes will take 90–160 days to mature.

HOW SHOULD I STORE SWEET POTATOES?

Store uncut sweet potatoes in a cool, dry place, away from heat and light. Do not refrigerate uncooked sweet potatoes. If refrigerated, uncooked sweet potatoes may remain hard in the middle, even after they are cooked.



SIX SIMPLE WAYS TO SERVE SWEET POTATO

1. Baked, whole sweet potato sprinkled with cinnamon.
2. Grilled sweet potato—slice into ½-inch rounds and grill until lightly browned; drizzle with lime juice.
3. Whipped sweet potato.
4. Cubed and cooked in a soup or stew.
5. Baked sweet potato fries or wedges.
6. Cooked, cooled, and cubed in potato salad.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Yams sold in the United States are actually sweet potatoes. True yams belong to a different plant family and are not usually grown in the United States.
- Sweet potatoes are a great source of nutrients that help your body grow and be healthy. It is important to eat vegetables of different colors in order to get different kinds of nutrients.
- Sweet potatoes come in a variety of colors—not just orange! Look for white-fleshed or purple sweet potatoes at the store.



Sweet Potatoes

Please provide a print copy (or email a digital copy) of Growing at Home to families before, during, or after completing the sweet potato activities. These handouts and recipes are a great way to keep families informed about what their children are learning during the day.

Content from this handout can also be displayed on a family bulletin board or shared on your website.

In addition to the ideas above, text, tweet, or share daily sweet potato lesson highlights with the families.



MESSAGES FOR FAMILIES

DAY ONE

- Today your child learned what a sweet potato looks and feels like. #GrowIt
- Today your child learned that the inside of a sweet potato is orange or tan. #GrowIt

DAY TWO

- Try hidden veggies! Today your child learned that sweet potatoes grow underground. #GrowIt
- Today your child learned about colors. Ask your child to name an orange veggie. #GrowIt
- Today your child helped make whipped sweet potatoes. #GrowIt

DAY THREE

- Ask your child what he or she learned about sweet potatoes. #GrowIt
- We are growing sweet potatoes! #GrowIt (Include a picture of the sweet potato slips)
- Today your child danced to a fun song about sweet potatoes. Ask him or her to sing and dance it for you. #GrowIt

DAY FOUR

- Today we read a book that had fruits and vegetables as part of the story. Ask your child to describe his or her favorite part. #GrowIt
- Create your own story about vegetables with your children. #GrowIt

DAY FIVE

- Today your child learned about MyPlate and the five food groups. Ask your child which food group sweet potatoes are in. #GrowIt



PREPARATION TIME

5 minutes

COOKING TIME

20 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and a cutting board to cut sweet potatoes into quarters.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	80
Protein	1 g
Carbohydrate	15 g
Total Fat	2 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	1 mg
Calcium	26 mg
Sodium	131 mg
Dietary Fiber	2 g

Whipped Sweet Potatoes



INGREDIENTS

- 14 ounces sweet potatoes, fresh, peeled, cut into quarters (about 3 ½ cups)
- 1 tablespoon milk, 1% (low-fat)
- 1 tablespoon margarine, trans-fat free
- ¼ teaspoon salt, table
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper, ground
- Forks, plates, and napkins

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place sweet potatoes in a pot of water and bring to a boil. Cook until fork tender, about 20 minutes. Drain well. Heat to 145 °F for at least 15 seconds.
2. In a medium bowl, immediately combine drained sweet potatoes, milk, margarine, salt, and pepper.
3. Using an electric mixer, mix on medium speed until potatoes are smooth and fluffy.
4. Serve ¼ cup.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help scrub the potatoes with a vegetable brush.
- Help put the sweet potatoes in a pot before putting on the stove.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

“Eye” Wonder What This Is

Page 274

15 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Sweet Potato—A Look Inside

Pages 275–276

15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Stamped Wrapping Paper

Page 277

10 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review Make a Mystery Box or Bag, as needed (Basics, page 11).
- Wash and dry sweet potato.
- Place clean sweet potato in the Mystery Box or Bag.
- Make copies of Sweet Potato Growing at Home handout, one set per child (page 271–272), or draft an email for families.
- Have the children wash their hands before and after activity (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).

WORDS TO GROW

Vegetable	Orange
Oblong	Hard
Sweet Potato	Heavy
Soil	Bumpy

MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

“Eye” Wonder What This Is

Use the Mystery Box or Bag to create interest and excite their sense of touch. Have the children feel the outside of a sweet potato in the box or bag before revealing the “mystery” item to all.

OBJECTIVES

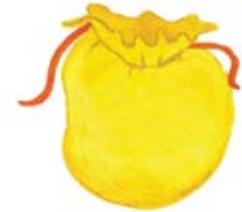
The children will be able to:

- Identify sweet potato as a heavy, oblong-shaped, orange-brown vegetable; and
- Describe the outward appearance and smell of a sweet potato.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- 1 uncooked sweet potato
- Mystery Box or Bag
- Paper and pencil or pen
- Baseball (*optional*)



INSTRUCTIONS

- Introduce the Mystery Box or Bag, or reintroduce it if you have used it before (see Basics, page 11).
- One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box or bag with the child.
- Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he or she feels.
- Allow children to share words with the group that describe how the object feels.
- After everyone has guessed, show the sweet potato to the children. Let the children hold the sweet potato, if desired.
- Note the children’s guesses that were close (a plant, food) or correct (sweet potato).
- Talk about the sweet potato. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.
 - Is sweet potato a fruit or a vegetable? (Vegetable)
 - What shape is it? (Oblong, like a squished ball)
 - What color is the outside of the sweet potato? (Cream, red, purple or brown)
 - How does the outside of it feel? (Bumpy)
 - Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell earthy like soil)
 - Is it light or heavy? (Heavy like a baseball—let the children feel the baseball if available)
 - Is it soft or hard? (Hard)
 - Has anyone ever tasted a sweet potato? (Yes or no)



TASTING ACTIVITY

Sweet Potato—A Look Inside



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes



Engage all the senses! The children see and feel the inside of a sweet potato, then smell and taste it.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the appearance, smell, and taste of a sweet potato; and
- Understand that all of the sweet potato can be eaten including the skin.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- 2 sweet potatoes
- Sharp knife
- Cutting board or surface
- Container for cooked potato pieces
- Forks, napkins, and plates

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Scrub the outside of the sweet potatoes with a vegetable brush under cool running water.
- Cook one sweet potato. Cool and cut into small bite-size cubes, at least one cube per child. May need more than one depending on size of the group.
- Assemble materials; keep the knife in a safe place until ready to use.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the sweet potatoes with the children.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children gather around the area with the uncooked sweet potato and cutting board. Review with children how to be safe around sharp knives: only adults use knives, children keep hands away, and don't touch a sharp knife.
- Review what was learned about sweet potatoes already. If this is your first activity, tell the children you have a sweet potato to share today.
- Tell the children that because sweet potatoes grow in the ground, we have to scrub the outside with a brush very well to remove soil (dirt) and germs before we cut it open. Tell the children you have already washed the sweet potato.
- Cut the sweet potato in half to reveal the inside. Pass the sweet potato around for the children to examine. Talk with the children about the inside of the sweet potato. Ask the questions below and ask additional questions if you like.
 - What colors are on the inside of the sweet potato? (Orange or tan, skin may be brown)
 - What part of the sweet potato can be eaten? (All of the sweet potato, including the orange inside part and the outside skin can be eaten)
 - How does the inside flesh feel? (Smooth and hard)
 - How does the sweet potato smell? (Earthy)
- Tell the children that you are all going to taste some sweet potato.

TIME TO TASTE!

- Once the children have explored the piece of sweet potato, invite them to taste a small bite-size cube of cooked sweet potato.
- Be a healthy role model! Enjoy a piece of sweet potato with the children.
- Continue the activity asking:
 - How does the sweet potato feel in their mouth? (Smooth)
 - How does the sweet potato taste? (Sweet)



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Stamped Wrapping Paper



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

The children make stamped wrapping paper with vegetable designs.

OBJECTIVE

The children will be able to:

- Assert individuality (designing wrapping paper that differs in color and design from other children); and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Sweet potatoes cut crosswise into halves or thirds (not the long way) with smooth flat surfaces
- *Optional:* Cut a design in one surface using a sharp knife or cut the pieces into shapes
- Acrylic craft paint (various colors)
- Paper plates for paint
- Large sheets of light-colored paper, at least one per child
- Smocks or bibs, if desired
- Table coverings, if desired

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Give each child a piece of paper.
- Show the children how to dip a potato piece in the paint. Press coated potato to paper; repeat until desired pattern is created.
- Repeat stamping with different colors and shapes if desired. Use a new potato for each new color or rinse and dry the potato stamp before switching colors.
- Set the papers on a flat surface to dry.
- Have the children wash their hands.

SUGGESTION

- Use the potato stamps to create greeting cards instead of wrapping paper.



Sweet Potato: Where Do You Come From and How Do We Eat You?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Sweet Potatoes Grow From Eyes and Slips

Pages 279-280

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Whipped Sweet Potatoes

Pages 281-283

15 minutes



CRAFTING ACTIVITY

Decorated Produce Placemats

Page 284

15-20 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Sweet Potato Says"

Page 285

10 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Sweet Potatoes Grow From Eyes and Slips



The children see and touch the eyes of sweet potato and learn how slips grow from the eyes of the sweet potato.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how a sweet potato grows from a slip into a plant that produces more sweet potatoes.
- Describe how sweet potatoes are harvested; and
- Describe the resources needed to grow sweet potatoes.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Fresh sweet potatoes with eyes
- Sweet potato *Grow It!* Cards

INSTRUCTIONS

- Tell the children that today they will learn about how sweet potatoes grow. Show the children a fresh sweet potato with eyes on it. Eyes or buds are small bumps on the sweet potato's peel that can be rubbed off. Let the children hold and touch the sweet potato.
- Explain that sweet potatoes grow from slips (sprouts) that grow from the "eyes" or buds of the sweet potato.
- Explain that the sweet potato slips are planted in long narrow rows and covered by the soil.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

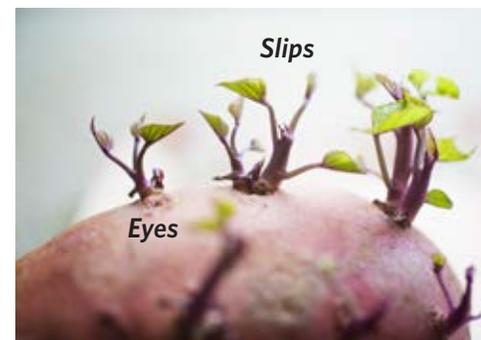
10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

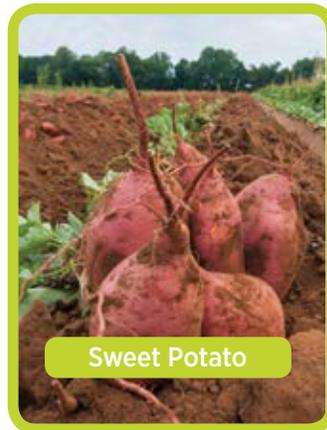
- Organize materials.

WORDS TO GROW

Seeds	Soil
Sun	Water
Space	Plants
Eyes	Slips



- Explain that the sweet potato slips grow in the soil; the sun, air, soil, and rain help them grow.
- Explain that sweet potatoes grow under the soil while their leaves grow above the ground.
- Explain to the children that sweet potatoes are gently removed from the soil before the weather turns cold.
- Explain that sweet potatoes are grown in gardens or on farms.
- Use the *Grow It! Card* to show sweet potatoes pulled out of the ground.
- Explain to the children that after the sweet potatoes are gently pulled up out of the ground, they are carefully placed in baskets or boxes so the tender peel (skin) is not hurt.
- Explain that the sweet potatoes are taken to a store or a farmers market where people buy them and take them home to eat. Show the card of sweet potato on a plate from the *Grow It! Cards*.



Sweet Potato Grow It! Cards.



TASTING ACTIVITY

Whipped Sweet Potatoes

The children taste whipped sweet potatoes. They explore the feel, smell, and taste of sweet potatoes.

OBJECTIVE

The children will be able to:

- Taste a new food featuring sweet potatoes; and
- Describe the appearance, smell, and taste of sweet potatoes.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Whipped Sweet Potatoes ingredients (recipe, page 283)
- Plates, spoons, and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Explain that we should always wash and scrub potatoes under cool running water before they are eaten. Let the children know you have already washed the potatoes.
- Describe how you have prepared the potatoes. Explain that you have to remove the skin before mashing the potatoes. You can scoop out the flesh of the cooked potatoes in front of the children or do this step before depending on time.
- Ask the children if they have had sweet potatoes at Thanksgiving or other holiday or family meal.
- Make sure potatoes are not too hot.
- Let each child take a turn mashing the potatoes.
- Tell the children they will taste the sweet potatoes.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Prepare whipped sweet potatoes—see Whipped Sweet Potato Recipe on page 283, Steps 1–6.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.



WORDS TO GROW

Sweet Potato Mash

Scoop

TIME TO TASTE!

- Give each child a small serving of whipped sweet potatoes. Make sure the potatoes are warm but not too hot.
- As the children are eating, ask them to describe how the whipped sweet potatoes:
 - smell (sweet);
 - feel in the mouth (smooth, warm); and
 - taste (sweet).



RECIPE

Whipped Sweet Potatoes

This is a USDA standardized recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 14 ounces sweet potatoes, fresh, peeled, cut into quarters (about 3 ½ cups)
- 1 tablespoon milk, 1% (low-fat)
- 1 tablespoon margarine, trans-fat free
- ¼ teaspoon salt, table
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper, ground
- Forks, plates, and napkins (one per child)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place sweet potatoes in a pot of water and bring to a boil. Cook until fork tender, about 20 minutes. Drain well. Heat to 145 °F for at least 15 seconds.
2. In a medium bowl, immediately combine drained sweet potatoes, milk, margarine, salt, and pepper.
3. Using an electric mixer, mix on medium speed until potatoes are smooth and fluffy.
4. Serve ¼ cup to each child.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help scrub the potatoes with a vegetable brush.
- Help put the sweet potatoes in a pot before putting on the stove.

PREPARATION TIME

5 minutes

COOKING TIME

20 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving (¼ cup) provides ¼ cup vegetable. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and a cutting board to cut sweet potatoes into quarters.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories80
Protein	1 g
Carbohydrate	15 g
Total Fat	2 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	1 mg
Calcium	26 mg
Sodium	131 mg
Dietary Fiber	2 g





ACTIVITY LENGTH
15-20 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Arrange to laminate the finished placemats, if desired.

CRAFT ACTIVITY

Decorated Produce Placemats

The children draw and color sweet potatoes or other root vegetables on a placemat.

OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to:

- Engage with sweet potatoes in a fun and creative way; and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- White poster board or construction-weight paper (8 x 12 inches), one per child
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Sweet potato *Grow It! Cards* or a real sweet potato
- *Optional:* Laminating material for each placemat

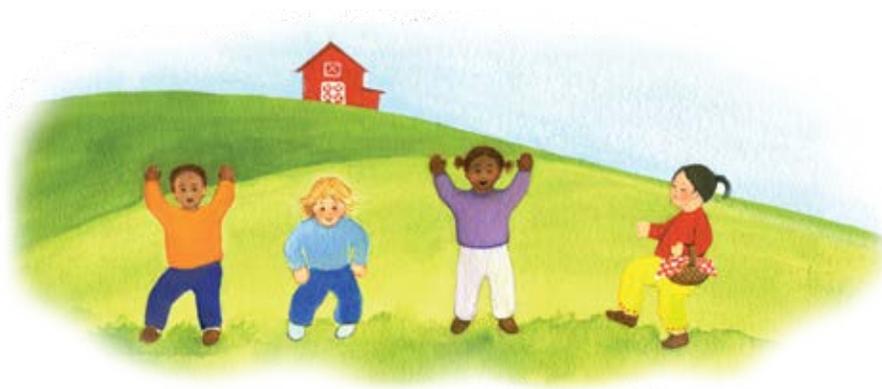
INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show a sweet potato to the children.
 - Talk with the children about how a sweet potato looks different on the outside from the inside.
 - Review the shape (oblong) and colors of a sweet potato (outside—white to yellow, red, purple or brown, inside—orange to tan) and how the sweet potato grows (leaves above ground, root below ground).
- Give each child paper. Explain that they are going to decorate a placemat with drawings of sweet potatoes.
- Some children may choose to color the outside of the sweet potato; some may depict the inside. Children may also choose to draw mashed sweet potatoes or a sweet potato growing underground.
- Have each child write his or her name on the placemat.
- *Optional:* Collect the finished placemats and laminate.
- Have the children think of uses for the placemats they just created. Some ideas include:
 - Use it at the family child care home;
 - Give it to a family member;
 - Use it at home; and
 - Other ideas the children suggest.



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Sweet Potato Says"



"Sweet Potato Says" is the Tasty Acres Farm version of a popular children's game.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move and stretch during a group game;
- Follow instructions from a peer or adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Optional:* Shirt, badge, or other accessory for the leader to wear that lets everyone know he or she is the Farmer.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit in a circle or stand in a group.
- Choose one person to be the Farmer (leader).
- The Farmer orders the other children to do all sorts of different and fun things, the funnier the better.
- But the Farmer's orders are only to be followed when they start with "Sweet Potato says."
- When someone follows an order that doesn't begin with "Sweet Potato says," he or she is out of the game. However, make sure to keep the children moving even if they are "out." Ask them to stand off to the side and do different movements to find and dig for sweet potatoes. For example, children can march through the fields, pretend to dig in the dirt and squat to pick up the sweet potato, skip home from the farm, etc.
- Repeat until only one person is left. That person is the winner and can be Farmer in the next round.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Clear or designate an open space for children to move about during the activity.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Start a Sweet Potato Slip

Pages 287-288

10 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Sweet Potato Style

Pages 289-290

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples

Pages 291-292

10-20 minutes



GROWING ACTIVITY

Start a Sweet Potato Slip

The children start a sweet potato slip from sweet potatoes and learn what slips need to grow into plants.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the resources needed to grow sweet potatoes; and
- Experience starting a sweet potato slip.

Optional: Start a sweet potato slip one month before doing the activity to have a slip to show the children.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Unwashed sweet potatoes with eyes, one per child
- Sharp knife
- Permanent marker
- Wooden craft sticks, three per sweet potato
- Narrow-mouth quart-size jar (an empty mason jar works well), one per child
- Distilled or spring water

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Explain to the children that sweet potatoes are different from plants that start from seeds. Sweet potatoes start from slips that grow from the eyes on the sweet potato. Show the children a slip, if one was started in advance, or show them a picture of a sweet potato slip.
- Tell the children that after the sweet potato slip grows, it is planted in the soil. Tell the children that today they are going to start a sweet potato slip.
- Help the children fill their jars with water, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of space between the water and top of the jar.
- Give each child a sweet potato and three wooden craft sticks. Write each child's name on one of the wooden sticks with permanent marker. Help each child push a wooden craft stick into each slit, at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch into the sweet potato flesh. The wooden craft sticks create a tripod that supports the sweet potato on the rim of the jar. This allows half of the potato to be below the water level and half above.
- Explain to the children that the sweet potato grows in the jar like plants outside grow in the soil. Explain that when planted in the ground, the tops of the sweet potatoes grow as vines that cover the ground.
- Take the children to the window. Point to the sun. Ask them to think about how the sun feels on their skin (warm). Explain that the light and warmth of the sun helps plants to grow.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Make three $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch horizontal slits evenly spaced around the middle of each sweet potato.
- Organize materials.



Green Thumb Guide

Sweet potatoes require a warm, long growing season. Sweet potato slips started at the end of April can be planted at the end of May.



The plants will produce sweet potatoes ready to gently pull from the soil and eat in the fall. For best results in growing sweet potatoes that produce more sweet potatoes, purchase sweet potato slips from a nursery or mail order catalog; follow instructions provided. Sweet potatoes from the grocery store will sprout in a jar, but will not produce more sweet potatoes.

- Place the jars in a warm location at or above 65 degrees Fahrenheit.
- In about a month, the slip sprouts will grow 8-10 inches, which is the best length for transplanting to the garden.
- Have the children check the jars weekly to see the progress of their slip sprouts.
- Explain to the children that once the sweet potato slips are big enough they will then be planted in the soil outside. The slips need soil, water, sun, and time to grow into sweet potato plants.





MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm

SWEET POTATO STYLE

The children sing about growing and eating sweet potatoes and act out motions to this familiar tune.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Sing and act out motions to familiar tune; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Sweet potato lyrics to “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” (page 290)
- Large space for the children to move about

INSTRUCTIONS

- Lead the children in singing these new words to the tune “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” and demonstrate the suggested motions or make up new ones.
- Encourage the children to move about as they are singing.
- Explain that skipping, wiggling, stretching, running, jumping, and playing actively every day helps us to feel good and stay healthy.



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Become familiar with the words and motions of the song.

MIXED-AGES TIP

Grow It! Buddies can take turns leading the song.





Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Sweet Potato Style

1ST VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some sweet potatoes, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry a basket of sweet potatoes)*
With plant slips here and plant slips there,
Here a slip, there a slip, everywhere plant slips! *(Pretend to hoe ground and plant slips using large, vigorous motions)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

2ND VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some sweet potatoes, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry basket of sweet potatoes)*
With a tater vine here and a tater vine there,
Here a vine, there a vine, everywhere a tater vine! *(Squat, wiggle arms and hands like vines, jump forward in squat and repeat motions)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

3RD VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some sweet potatoes, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry basket of sweet potatoes)*
Sweet tater here, and sweet tater there, *(Pretend to dig a sweet potato)*
Here a tater, there a tater, everywhere sweet tater. *(Pretend to dig a sweet potato)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

4TH VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*
On this farm he grew some sweet potatoes, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry basket of sweet potatoes)*
With a bite, bite here, and a bite, bite there, *(Pretend to eat a sweet potato)*
Here a bite, there a bite, everywhere a sweet bite. *(Pretend to eat a sweet potato)*
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*



TASTING ACTIVITY

Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples

The children taste a new sweet potato recipe and talk about different ways to eat sweet potatoes.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Taste baked sweet potatoes;
- Describe many different ways to eat sweet potatoes;
- Describe the smell, taste, and feel of sweet potatoes; and
- *Optional*: Help prepare the recipe.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples ingredients (recipe, page 292)
- Forks, plates, and napkins

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about a sweet potato.
- Encourage responses such as how and where a sweet potato grows; how it looks, feels, smells, and tastes; and other material covered in the unit.
- Serve the children the Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples.
- As the children are eating, ask:
 - What sweet potato recipes have they made with their families?
 - What different ways have they eaten sweet potatoes?
 - What new ways do they think sweet potatoes could be eaten? (Give suggestions such as sweet potato pancakes, in potato salads, cooked with apples, or mashed)



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10–20 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Make the Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples
OR
- Organize recipe ingredients and let the children help make the Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the sweet potatoes with the children.



PREPARATION TIME

7 minutes

COOKING TIME

40 minutes

MAKES

6 servings

CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) provides $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fruit. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and a cutting board to cut sweet potatoes and apples into pieces.

NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	102
Protein	1 g
Carbohydrate	21 g
Total Fat	3 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	19 mg
Sodium	104 mg
Dietary Fiber	2 g

RECIPE

Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples

This is a USDA standardized recipe.



INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons brown sugar, packed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon, ground
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt, table
- 2 cups sweet potatoes fresh, peeled, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubed
- 3 cups apples, fresh, peeled, cored, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubed
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange juice
- Nonstick cooking spray
- Forks, plates, and napkins (one per child)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Lightly coat a medium baking dish (about 8" x 8") with nonstick cooking spray.
3. In a medium bowl, combine brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt.
4. Toss sweet potatoes, apples, oil, and orange juice in the cinnamon-sugar mixture.
5. Place the sweet potato and apple mixture in the baking dish.
6. Cover with foil and bake for 40 minutes, or until sweet potatoes are tender. Heat to 140 °F for at least 15 seconds.
7. Serve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup to each child.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help scrub the potatoes with a vegetable brush.
- Help put the sweet potatoes on the baking sheet.



Sweet Potato: How Do You Grow?

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



GROWING ACTIVITY

Make a Pretend Sweet Potato Hill

Pages 294-295

15 minutes



CRAFT ACTIVITY

Make a Scarecrow

Pages 296-297

30 minutes



READING ACTIVITY

Page 298

10-20 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Attach the papers to the wall with the brown (the soil) below and the blue (the sky) above to represent ground and sky.
- Copy Sweet Potato Blackline Master (Fun Extras, page 310) on white paper, one per child.
- Organize materials.

WORDS TO GROW

Sweet Potato
Underground
Leaves

Slip
Roots

GROWING ACTIVITY

Make a Pretend Sweet Potato Hill



The children make a pretend sweet potato hill and learn about the growing stages of sweet potatoes.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the resources needed to grow sweet potatoes; and
- Experience making a pretend sweet potato hill.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Large pieces of brown and blue paper, each 3–6 feet long and 18 inches wide
- Sweet Potato Blackline Master (Fun Extras, page 310)
- Sweet potato *Grow It! Cards*
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils (green, cream, red, purple and brown)
- White yarn cut into sets of 3-, 5-, and 7-inch lengths, one set per child
- Blunt-tip scissors
- Hole punch
- Double-sided tape



INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Review with the children how sweet potatoes grow from slips planted in the ground. The slips need soil, water, sun, and time to grow into a sweet potato plant. While the plant leaves grow above the ground, the sweet potatoes grow below the ground. The sweet potatoes are grown and ready to be dug up from the ground when the weather turns cool in the fall. The farmer gently pulls the sweet potatoes from the soil, removes the tops, and sends them to stores or farmers markets. That is where we buy sweet potatoes to take home to eat. Tell the children they are going to make a pretend sweet potato hill.
- Show the children photographs of sweet potatoes using the *Grow It! Cards*. Give each child a copy of the Sweet Potato Blackline Master (Fun Extras, page 310). Ask the children to color the parts of the sweet potato plant on their sheet just like the *Grow It! Cards*. The leaves are green and outside of the potato is cream, red, purple or brown.
- Help the children cut out, or cut for them, the colored sweet potato parts.
- Take the sweet potato and make a hole with a paper punch through each of the three eyes.
- Give each child a set of cut yarn lengths. Help each child thread yarn through the three holes and tape the tip of the yarn to the backside of the potato to represent the roots of a slip.
- Position the sweet potato on the brown paper so that the end of the potato without the yarn touches where the brown and blue papers meet. Use a piece or two of additional double-sided tape to secure the potato to the paper.
- Position the green leaves on the blue section directly touching the top of the potato.
- When finished, the assembled pieces should look like a sweet potato with slips growing underneath the ground and green plant leaves growing above the ground.
- Talk about how the plant grows sweet potatoes while attaching each part of the sweet potato plant to the paper.



VARIATION

MAKE INDIVIDUAL PRETEND SWEET POTATO PLANTS

If wall space is limited, have children create their own pretend sweet potato plant instead of creating a sweet potato hill as a class.

- Overlap 8 ½ x 11-inch sheets of brown and blue paper ½ inch along the 11-inch edge and tape together to create a surface approximately 16 x 11 inches. Make one set per child.
- After the drawing is colored, cut, and the yarn is attached, tape the plant to the colored paper. Position the green leaves on the blue section and the potato in the brown section to resemble a sweet potato with slips growing underneath the ground and green plant leaves growing above the ground.
- Write each child's name on the sheet of paper.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

30 minutes

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize the materials.
- Create a cross from the two pieces of wood using nails or a staple gun. The longer piece (5 feet) should be vertical and the shorter piece (3 feet) should be horizontal.

CRAFT ACTIVITY

Make a Scarecrow



OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Experience making a scarecrow; and
- Discuss how fruits and vegetables grow

MATERIALS

- Two pieces of lightweight wood, approximately 5 feet and 3 feet in length
- Hammer and nails, or heavy duty staple gun and staples
- Old clothing such as plain t-shirt, long-sleeved shirt, pants, socks, shoes, hats, gloves
- Straw, old rags, or plastic grocery bags
- Rope, at least 30 inches long
- Large, sturdy rubber bands

INSTRUCTIONS

- Take the children and supplies outside or into a large space.
- Ask the children “What is a garden?” If they do not know, explain that a garden is an area of soil where vegetables and fruits grow. For example, sweet potatoes grow in gardens.
- Tell the children they are going to make a very special garden friend, a scarecrow.



- Explain that birds, rabbits, and squirrels will eat the fruits and vegetables in a garden. A scarecrow in a garden “scares the crows” or other animals away. The animals think the scarecrow is a real person in the garden. They are afraid to come and eat the fruits and vegetables. Then the fruits and vegetables can be harvested for people to eat. Scarecrows also make a friendly decoration for the fall holidays.
- Make the head from an old t-shirt stuffed with straw, old rags, or plastic bags. Rubber-band the head onto the top of the cross (longer, vertical piece of wood). Help each child place a clothing item on the scarecrow in the appropriate place. See steps below for clothing ideas.
- Place the shirt on the horizontal stick and stuff with straw, old rags, or plastic bags. Use rubber bands to gather sleeves closed so the stuffing does not fall out.
- Place a pair of pants on the vertical stick, below the arms. Tuck the shirt into the pants and secure the waist with a piece of rope. Stuff the pants.
- Do the same with socks and shoes, gloves, and hat.
- Post the scarecrow in a garden or use as a decoration.

OPTION: Ask each parent or caregiver to bring an item of clothing such as a t-shirt or long-sleeve shirt, pants, socks, shoes, hats, gloves. Consider making two scarecrows so each child can contribute an item.





ACTIVITY LENGTH

10-20 minutes
depending on the
length of the book

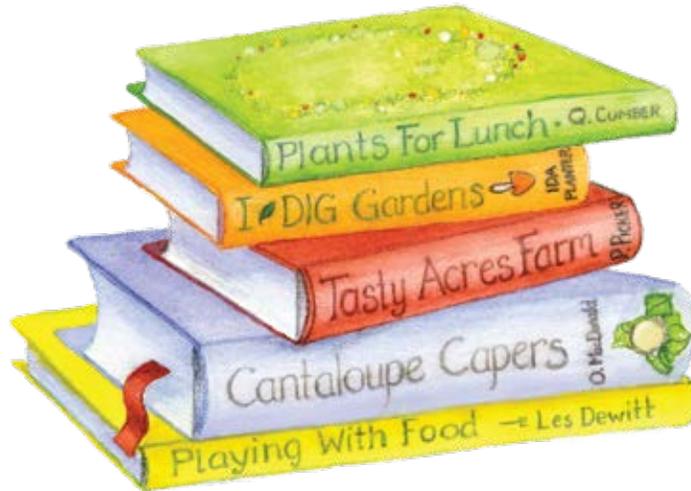
WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Clear a space for the children to sit around you.
- Choose a book from the Harvest of Books list (Basics, page 15).
- Borrow the book you select from a library or purchase it.
- You can also use other books related to fruits and vegetables that may already be available to you.

MIXED-AGES TIP

- Hold the baby on your lap while reading to other children.
- Give the baby a fruit or vegetable board book.
- Have *Grow It! Buddies* read to younger children.

Reading Activity



Read story books to the children that are about growing and/or eating fruits and vegetables. Listening to such stories can encourage children to adopt positive behaviors that can last a lifetime, like trying new fruits and vegetables.

OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to:

- Describe the fun and interesting stories about fruits and vegetables that were read to them.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Books from a library or purchased books
- Space for the children to sit

INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit around you as you read the book.
- Ask the children to listen for the names of vegetables and fruits as the story is read. If possible, have the children act out parts of the book to encourage movement during story time.
- Ask the children which fruits and vegetables were named in the story and what happened to them. For example,
 - Where were the fruits and vegetables grown?
 - What happened to the fruits and vegetables after they were picked?
 - Who ate the fruits and vegetables?
- Add other questions that relate to the story.



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

You Say Potato, and I Say Potato

Pages 300-302

20-25 minutes



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Potato Sack Hop

Pages 303-304

10 minutes



TASTING ACTIVITY

Rainbow of Potatoes

Pages 305-306

10-15 minutes





ACTIVITY LENGTH

20 minutes;
25 minutes if optional
coloring activity
conducted

WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review the foods and activities shown on the *MyPlate Poster*.
- Display the *MyPlate Poster*.
- *Optional*: Make copies of MyPlate coloring sheet, one per child.

FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

You Say Potato, and I Say Potato



Introduce the children to the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. The children will learn that sweet potatoes are part of the **Vegetable Group.**

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Say that sweet potatoes are found in the Vegetable Group;
- Say that eating vegetables like sweet potatoes helps keep us healthy;
- Say that being physically active every day helps us feel good and is fun;
- Say that eating foods from the different food groups each day helps us grow and be healthy; and
- Identify a food from each of the 5 food groups.

MATERIALS NEEDED

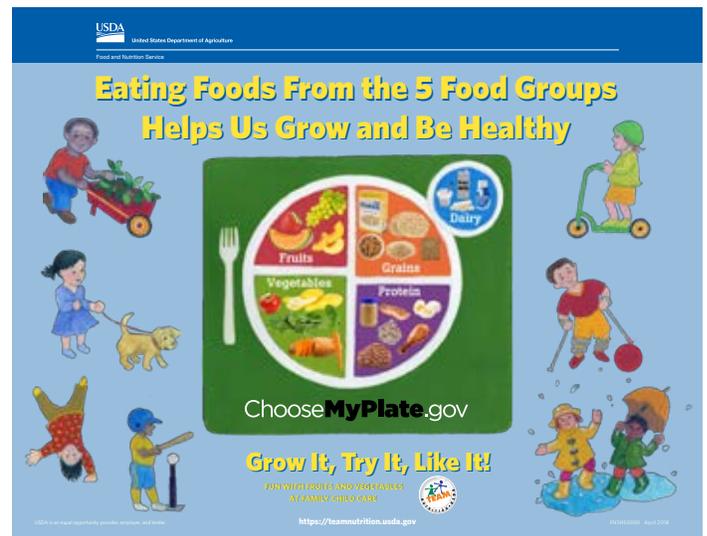
- *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*
- *Optional*: Make copies of the MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child.



INSTRUCTIONS

Learning the Food Groups

- Seat the children in a semicircle on the floor in view of the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*.
- Tell the children that today they are going to learn about ways to be healthy and have fun every day. Tell the children that the best part is they already like to do what helps them be healthy: they like to eat a variety of foods and they like to play.
- Show the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster* to the children. Ask the children to tell you what they see on the poster. Accept all correct answers, such as food, specific foods by name, children playing, specific activities by name, etc.
- Explain that MyPlate shows the five food groups a person should eat from each day. Each food group has its own color. Point to the different sections as you discuss. The Fruit Group is red, the Vegetable Group is green, the Grains Group is orange, the Dairy Group is blue, and the Protein Foods Group is purple. Eating foods from each food group helps us to grow and be healthy. Explain that sweet potatoes are part of the Vegetable Group.



The Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster shows foods from the five food groups.



GRAINS

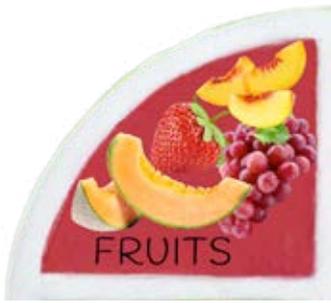
- Tell the children that foods made from grains are in the Grains Group represented by the orange-colored section on MyPlate. Point to the food group on the poster and state that grain foods like bread, cereal, rice, and pasta give us energy to play.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a food in the orange section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Grains Group also give us energy to play.
- Children this age may not know what a grain is. Tell them grains come from plants such as wheat, oats, rice, and corn. Grains are used to make foods like cereal, bread, tortillas, and pasta.



VEGETABLES

- Tell the children that many foods from plants are in the Vegetable Group and are represented by the green section of MyPlate. Point out the sweet potato on the poster. Ask the children to name this vegetable (sweet potato). Ask the children to name the color of sweet potatoes (orange). Explain that eating orange vegetables, like sweet potatoes, can help them to be healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a vegetable in the green section, and name the vegetable. After each child names a vegetable, repeat the name of the vegetable and state that (the vegetable named) and other foods from the Vegetable Group also help keep us healthy.





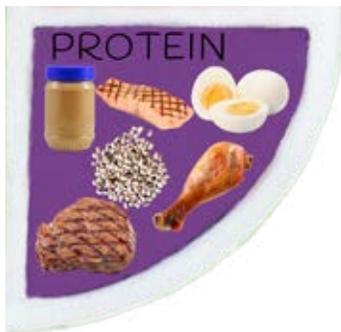
FRUITS

- Tell the children that some foods from plants are in the Fruit Group represented by the red section. Point to the strawberry shown on the poster and state that strawberries help keep us healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a fruit in the red section, and name the fruit. After each child names a fruit, repeat the name of the fruit and state that (the fruit named) and other foods from the Fruit Group help keep us healthy.



DAIRY

- Tell the children that milk and foods made from milk are in the Dairy Group represented by the blue section. Point to the milk and yogurt on the poster and state that milk and yogurt help us build strong bones.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the blue section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Dairy Group also help us build strong bones.

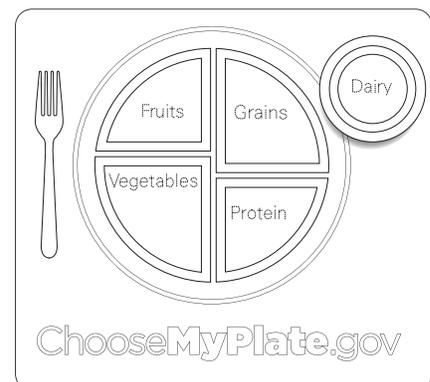


PROTEIN FOODS GROUP

- Tell the children that foods from animals and some plants are in the Protein Foods Group represented by the purple section. Point to the meat, fish, egg, and peanut butter on the poster and state that these foods help our muscles grow.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the purple section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Protein Foods Group also help our muscles grow. (Note: if only foods that come from animals are selected, point out a food from plants and name it. If only foods from plants are selected, point out a food that comes from animals and name it.)

OPTIONAL COLORING ACTIVITY

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Distribute a copy of the MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333) to each child.
- Ask the children to color the Vegetable Group section of MyPlate green and draw and color a sweet potato near it. Help the younger children who may not know their colors yet.
- With older children, have them copy the dot-to-dot outline of the word "Vegetables."



MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Potato Sack Hop



ACTIVITY LENGTH
10 minutes



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Display the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster.

Potato sack hop is a fun and interactive game for children.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move during a group activity;
- Follow instructions from an adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster



Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster



INSTRUCTIONS

- Point to the various activities depicted on the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. Ask the children to tell you why it is important to be physically active and play every day (it helps you be strong and healthy, and it is fun). Tell the children that today they will learn to be active in a way that reminds them of sweet potatoes.
- Take the children to a large open space or outdoors. Ask the children to stand in a straight line across one end of the open space. Explain to the children that farmers sometimes ship potatoes in large, sturdy fabric bags. Tell the class that children who grew up on farms created a fun game using those empty bags.
- Tell the children they are going to play with imaginary potato sacks today and pretend to give each child a sack. Tell the children the sack is large enough for each child to step into the sack and pull it up to his or her waist. Explain that since both legs are in the sack, the children can only hop to move—they cannot run, walk, or skip. Show the children how to step into their imaginary sack and pull it up to the waist.
- Tell the children that when you count to three, each child should hop in his or her imaginary potato sack toward the other end of the open space. Tell the children that when they reach the end of the space, they should hop around and hop back to where they started.
- Ask the children to pull their imaginary potato sacks securely around their waists, and say, “1, 2, 3, Hop!”
- Conclude the activity by telling the children it is fun to be physically active by doing a Potato Sack Hop.

NOTE TO CAREGIVER

Active play and movement are important for every child's growth and development. Although they may seem to be active and energetic, most children do not get the amount of physical activity they need for good health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children get 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.



TASTING ACTIVITY

Rainbow of Potatoes



ACTIVITY LENGTH

10–15 minutes



WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Wash potatoes, leave one of each type whole, and cut one of each type in half.
- Prepare bite-size pieces of baked or cooked sweet, red, and white skinned potatoes, one per child.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

The children will discuss sweet potato facts and taste the difference between sweet potatoes and other potatoes.

OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the smell, feel, and taste of different varieties of potato;
- Compare sweet potatoes to other potatoes;
- Describe many different ways to eat potatoes; and
- Describe how sweet potatoes are grown, harvested, and eaten.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Sweet potatoes, white potatoes, and red skinned potatoes, three of each (two to show and at least one of each to cook)
- Plates, forks, and napkins (one per child)

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the potatoes with the children.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about sweet potato.
- Encourage answers such as how and where sweet potatoes grow; how they look, feel, smell, and taste; and other information covered in the unit.
- Ask the children:
 - Is sweet potato a fruit or a vegetable? (Vegetable)
 - What shape is a sweet potato? (Oblong like a squished ball)
 - What color is a sweet potato? (Orange)
 - How does the outside feel? (Bumpy, yet smooth)
 - Do sweet potatoes grow above or below the ground? (Below the ground on a farm)
 - Where can our families buy sweet potatoes once they are shipped from the farm? (Grocery stores and farmers markets)
- Have the children name some of the ways that sweet potato can be eaten. (As roasted wedges/fries, baked whole and sprinkled with cinnamon, cooked with apples, or mashed)

TIME TO TASTE!

- Show the children the sweet potato and red and white skinned potatoes.
- Tell the children that the red and white skinned potatoes are similar to the sweet potato, but different in color and taste.
- Give the children small bites of each potato to taste and compare to the sweet potato. Modify the size and texture of the potatoes for younger children as needed (see Appendix F: Choking Prevention).
- Invite the children to feel and smell the different whole and cut potatoes.
- Continue the activity asking the children to describe the smell, look, feel, and taste of the potatoes. How are they the same and how are they different?

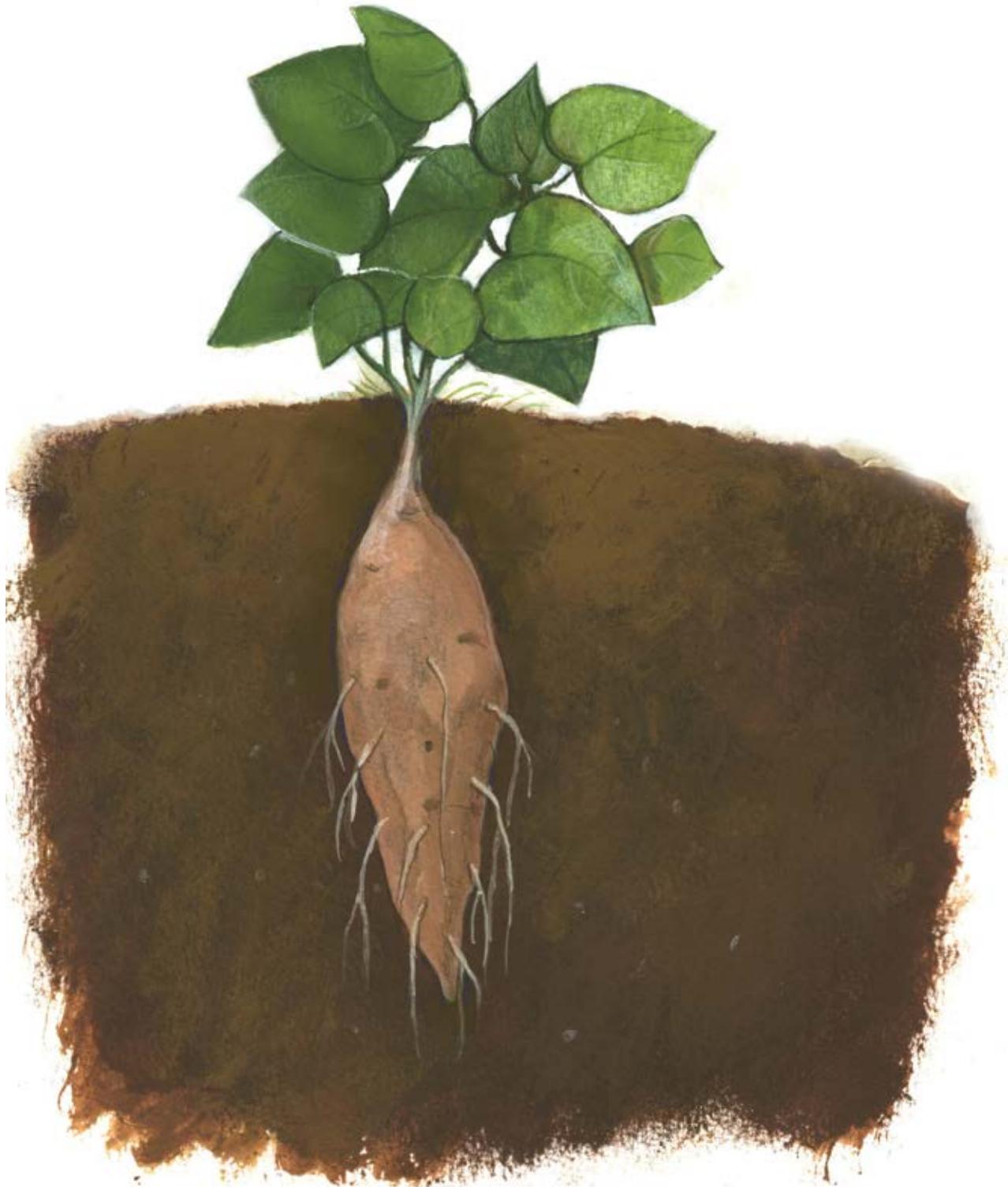


Fun Extras



Sweet Potato

Sweet Potato in the Ground



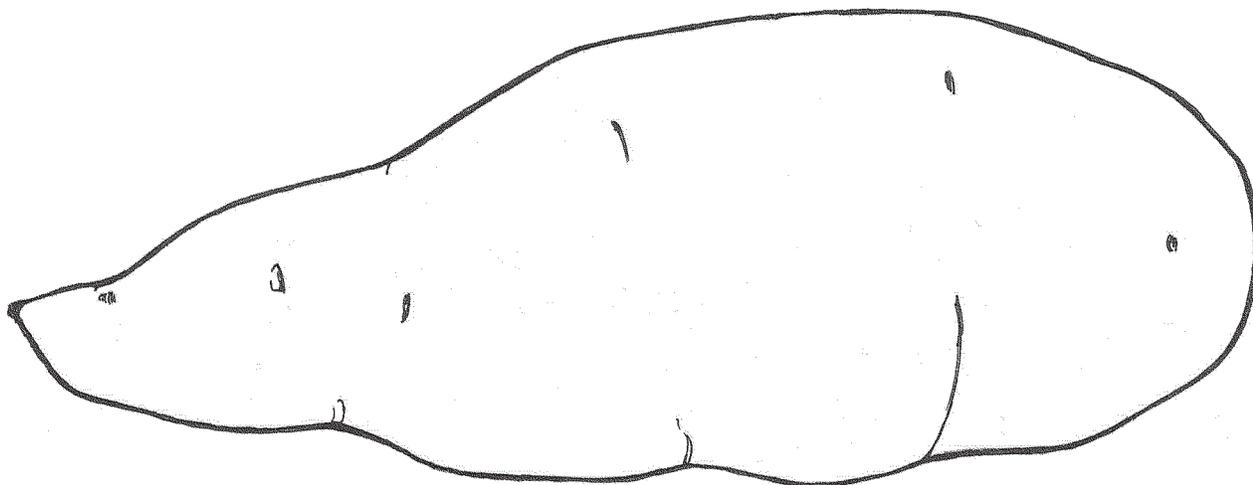
Sweet Potato

Sweet Potatoes at the Farmers Market



Sweet Potato

Blackline Master

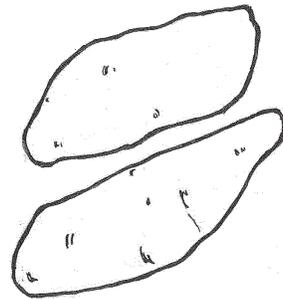
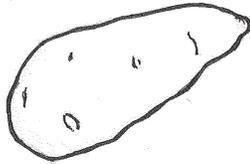


Sweet Potato Number Match

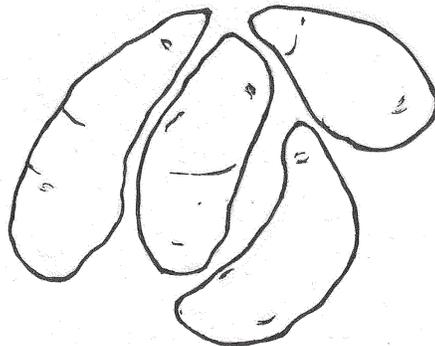
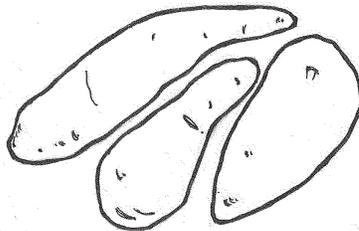
Dear Family:

Your child has been learning about sweet potatoes. A sweet potato is an oblong-shaped, orange or flesh-colored vegetable that tastes sweet. Help your child count the sweet potatoes and draw a line between each sweet potato group to the correct matching number. See if your child can tell you five facts about sweet potatoes.

1

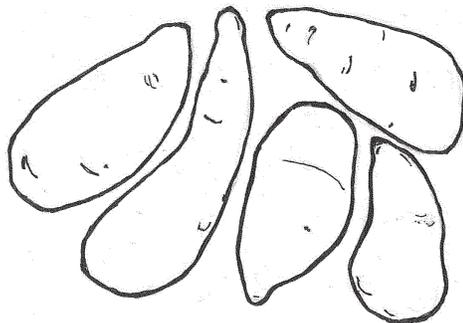


2



3

4



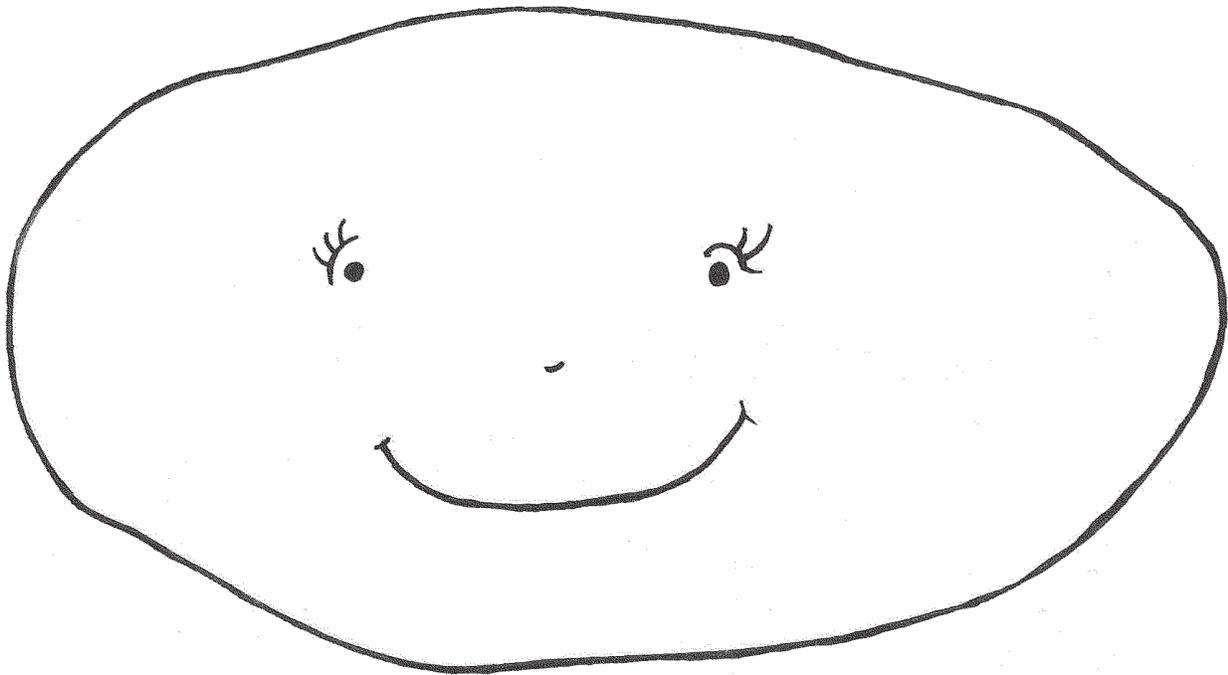
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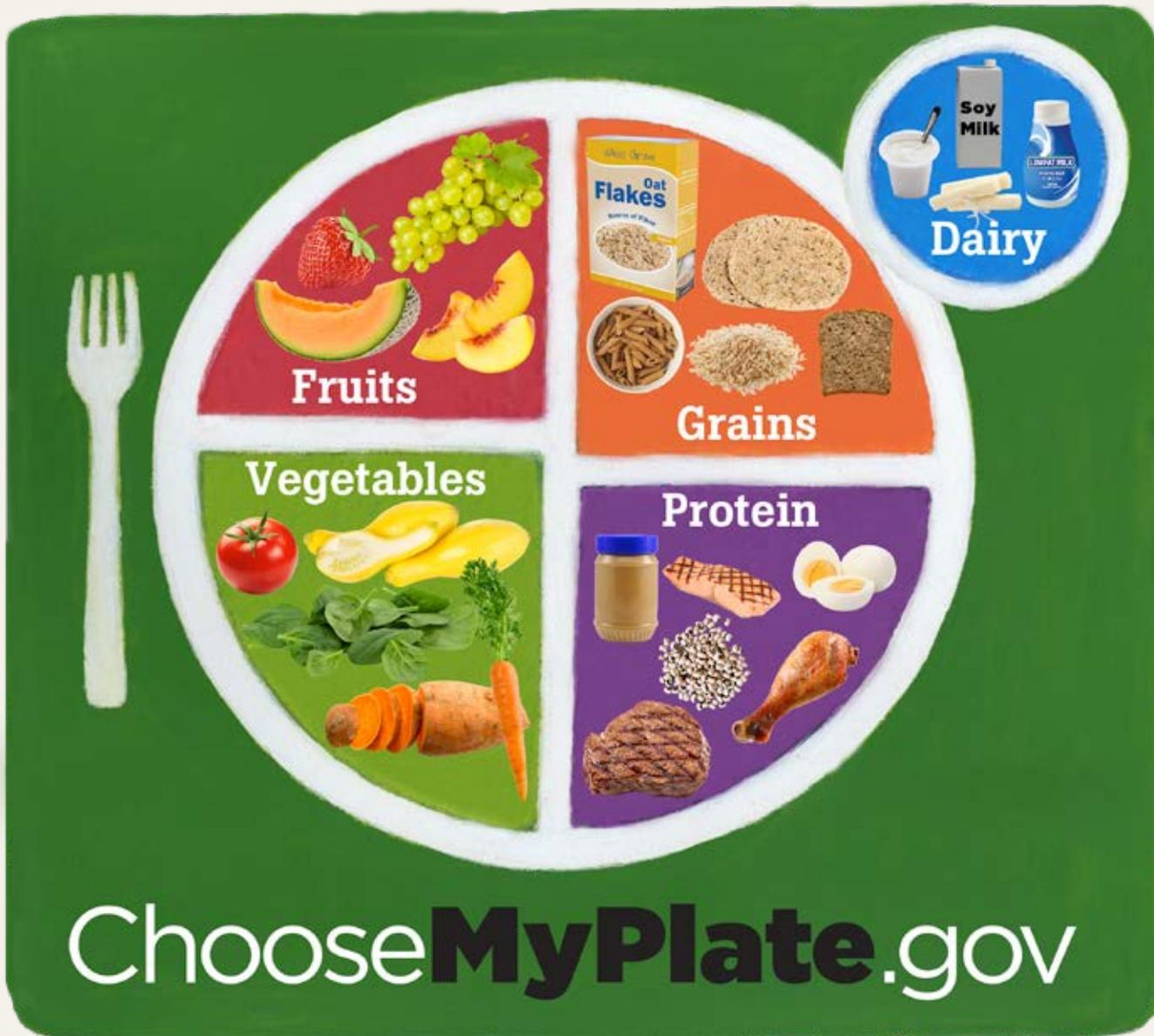
Make a Sweet Potato Windsock

Dear Family:

Have your child color the drawing with crayons, paint, or markers. Help your child cut along the dashed lines of the windsock. Make sure to cut each individual vine banner separately so they can move freely. Help tape or staple together the edges of the paper to form a tube with the sweet potato at the top and the vine banners hanging down. Punch the two holes in the top of the windsock at the dark circles. Thread ribbon, yarn, or string through the holes and tie together. Hang the windsock up and watch the sweet potato and vines dance in the breeze.



Appendixes



Appendixes

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APPENDIX A

The Five Food Groups

The following is an at-a-glance chart of foods that belong to each food group. It is not a complete list. For more information on each group visit: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/>.

FOOD GROUP	FOODS IN THE FOOD GROUP		
<p>Fruits</p> <p>Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed.</p>	<p>Apples</p> <p>Apricots</p> <p>Bananas</p> <p>Cherries</p> <p>Grapefruit</p> <p>Grapes</p> <p>Kiwi fruit</p> <p>Mangoes</p>	<p>Oranges</p> <p>Papaya</p> <p>Peaches</p> <p>Pears</p> <p>Pineapple</p> <p>Plums</p> <p>Raisins</p>	<p>BERRIES</p> <p>Blackberries</p> <p>Blueberries</p> <p>Raspberries</p> <p>Strawberries</p> <p>MELONS</p> <p>Cantaloupe</p> <p>Honeydew</p> <p>Watermelon</p>
<p>Vegetables</p> <p>Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as a member of the Vegetable Group. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed. There are five Vegetable Subgroups: Beans and Peas, Dark Green, Red and Orange, Starchy, and Other Vegetables.</p>	<p>BEANS AND PEAS</p> <p>Black beans</p> <p>Black-eye peas</p> <p>Chickpeas (<i>garbanzo beans</i>)</p> <p>Lentils</p> <p>Red beans</p> <p>Soy beans</p> <p>Split peas</p> <p>White beans</p> <p>DARK-GREEN VEGETABLES</p> <p>Bok Choy</p> <p>Broccoli</p> <p>Collard greens</p> <p>Dark-green leaf lettuce</p> <p>Kale</p> <p>Romaine lettuce</p> <p>Spinach</p>	<p>RED AND ORANGE VEGETABLES</p> <p>Butternut squash</p> <p>Carrots</p> <p>Red/orange bell peppers</p> <p>Pumpkin</p> <p>Sweet potatoes</p> <p>Tomatoes</p> <p>STARCHY VEGETABLES</p> <p>Corn</p> <p>Green peas</p> <p>Plantains</p> <p>Potatoes</p> <p>Taro</p>	<p>OTHER VEGETABLES</p> <p>Asparagus</p> <p>Avocado</p> <p>Beets</p> <p>Cauliflower</p> <p>Celery</p> <p>Cucumber</p> <p>Eggplant</p> <p>Green beans</p> <p>Iceberg lettuce</p> <p>Mushrooms</p> <p>Radicchio</p> <p>Sugar snap peas</p> <p>Yellow bell pepper</p> <p>Zucchini</p>



FOOD GROUP	FOODS IN THE FOOD GROUP		
<p>Protein Foods</p> <p>All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the Protein Foods Group.</p> <p>Beans and peas are also part of the Vegetable Group.</p>	<p>BEANS AND PEAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black beans Black-eyed peas Chickpeas (<i>garbanzo beans</i>) Lentils Red beans Soy beans Split peas White beans <p>SEAFOOD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anchovies Catfish Clams Cod Crab Crawfish Flounder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobster Oysters Salmon Shrimp Tilapia Tuna <p>NUTS AND SEEDS (<i>and Butters</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almonds Peanuts Pumpkin seeds Sunflower seeds Walnuts <p>PROCESSED SOY PRODUCTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tofu “Veggie burgers” 	<p>POULTRY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chicken Duck Turkey <p>EGGS</p> <p>MEATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beef Ham Lamb Pork Veal





APPENDIX B

Green Thumb Guide

WHEN TO START THE PLANTING ACTIVITIES: TIMING FOR PEAK SEASON

Generally speaking,

- Strawberries and spinach are spring and early summer crops;
- Cantaloupe, crookneck squash, and peaches are summer and late summer crops; and
- Sweet potatoes are early fall and fall crops.

Growing all or some of the fruits and vegetables in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* provides children with fun-filled growing seasons. Check with local garden experts to determine the right month to start each plant indoors or for when small starter plants are available at nurseries. You can also find more information at:

- USDA Extension Service (<https://nifa.usda.gov/partners-and-extension-map>)
- USDA Plant Zone Map (<https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>)

TYPES OF GARDENS

There are three types of gardens that are most adaptable to home gardening needs: in-ground gardens, raised beds, and container gardens. Which one you select is influenced by how much space is available, the quality of the soil on your property, and your preference.

Here are the basics on each garden type:

An **in-ground garden** is a plot of land on your property. Depending on its size, its advantages are that you can grow a large quantity of different vegetables and many children can work in the garden at the same time. The larger the garden plot, the more labor will be required to build and maintain the garden.

The soil available in your in-ground garden is important. First, you will want to test the soil. Soils can be acidic, alkaline, or neutral as measured by the pH level. Vegetables prefer soils with a pH reading of 6.0 to 7.0, which means slightly acidic to neutral. When you find out what the pH level of your soil is, you can determine what kind of amendments, such as fertilizer, that you may need. You also want to test for contaminants, such as lead, to make sure that the food you grow in the garden is safe to eat. You can ask your local Cooperative Extension agent ([https://](https://nifa.usda.gov/land-grant-colleges-and-universities-partner-website-directory)

nifa.usda.gov/land-grant-colleges-and-universities-partner-website-directory) who can provide you with sampling materials for a lab in your State.

Take a trip

Check with your local nurseries, orchards, and farms to plan field trips to see as many farm-grown fruits and vegetables as possible.



In-ground garden



Secondly, soil type plays an important role in whether the fruits and vegetables you plant in an in-ground garden will thrive. There are three types of soil: sand, clay, and loam. Sandy soil is loose and helps the roots of plants breathe because it lets the air pass through easily. Clay soil absorbs water faster and keeps it inside longer, so a soil composition that has more clay particles in it would be ideal for places that are too hot and the soil dries up quickly. Loam is a mixture of about 40 percent sand, 40 percent silt (quartz particles), and 20 percent clay. You can amend your soil to make it easier for your garden to grow. Again, your Cooperative Extension agent or Master Gardener can help guide you.

A **raised bed garden** is one built on top of your plot of land. Raised bed gardens can be contained, (e.g., with wood boards to keep the bed intact) or they can be more free form, with soil and amendments merely piled several inches high. Raised bed gardens offer several advantages:

- They allow you to compensate for poor soil in the ground by using new soil.
- They warm more quickly in spring, allowing you to work the soil and plant earlier.
- They drain better.
- They may be easier to work because you don't need to bend as low to the ground.



Raised bed garden

Container gardening is the practice of growing plants in containers instead of planting them in the ground. Containers may include terracotta or plastic pots of different sizes, as well as half-barrels and other large containers. The advantages to growing plants in containers include:

- There is less risk of soil-borne disease because you provide the soil.
- Containers eliminate most weed problems.
- Movable pots allow more control over moisture, sunlight, and temperature.
- Container gardens are possible for most homes.

The disadvantage, of course, is that you can grow only a small quantity of fruits and vegetables in a container garden.

If you opt for a container garden, make sure there is a hole in the bottom of the pots to allow water to drain out.



Container garden





Clay pots, empty plastic buckets, and, milk cartons can be used to create a container garden.

GARDENING IN CONTAINERS

Containers and Container Size

Remember: All containers need drainage holes. Suitable containers include clay pots, empty plastic buckets, cans, milk cartons, and used pallets made from untreated wood. (Search the Internet for information on pallet gardening). Give an old plastic wading pond new life as a miniature garden spot. Fill it with soil or with pots of plants.

Garden in a Bag

Look for commercial growbags or make your own. Find a thick plastic bag of potting soil (it is important that the bag is sturdy and will not break apart easily). Poke drainage holes in the bottom. Plant spinach seeds or strawberry starts in holes in the top.

Watering a growbag can be the hardest part. During summer heat, water every day. A plastic pipe with holes drilled in the sides can be inserted the length of the bag to help deliver water evenly.

Soil and Fertilizer

Use store-bought potting soil instead of soil from your yard or garden. It is lightweight and will keep the container from getting too heavy. Container gardens may need more fertilizer because the water draining from the pot washes nutrients out of the soil. Check with a local garden or nursery center for more information on using fertilizers without container gardens.



*Every fruit and vegetable, featured in *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* can be grown in a container.*

Water and Drainage

Container gardens need to drain water. Containers must have a few drain holes for water to flow out. Standing water in the bottom of a pot can rot the plant's roots. Use flat stones to lift a pot off the ground for drainage. Or, nestle a pot with drainage inside a solid pot.

Weather conditions and container size will influence water needs. The soil inside the pot can get very hot and "cook" plant roots. This can also happen if the pot is too small for the plant. Check the soil in the pot for dryness frequently and talk with local garden experts for guidelines on watering plants in pots.



Sunlight

Container gardens need several hours of sunlight each day. This will vary depending on the type of plant you are growing. The soil in containers can become hot. Long hours of direct sunlight may be too much for plants in containers. If you live in a very sunny or hot area, try using light-colored containers. Containers placed on black surfaces, such as asphalt, should be raised above the surface. Flat stones, boards, or bricks can be used for this purpose.

Seeds or Plants

Some fruit and vegetable plant varieties thrive in pots. Look for seed packets and plant starts, which are new plants started from seeds, specifically for containers at nurseries. Be sure to find out if more than one plant is needed for pollination.



Hardening Seedlings for Transplanting Outdoors

Before the seedlings are planted outside (when climate conditions permit), the plants need to be “hardened.” Hardening helps plants adjust to the harsher conditions outdoors. Plants are ready to harden once the seedlings have developed a few green leaves. Set the containers outside for increasingly longer periods each day. Start with a few hours and increase to a full day over the course of a week or so. Be careful not to leave the tender seedlings in hot, direct sunlight for too long. Plants hardened for about a week are ready to plant outside. After planting, watch local weather forecasts and cover the plants if frost is predicted overnight.



GARDENING IN RAISED BEDS OR PLOTS

Plants need soil, water, sun, and time to grow. Plants can grow in nearly any plot of soil with enough sun and water. Plots of soil next to sidewalks, flowerbeds, and even shrubs can do double duty as garden spots. If you do not have space, check for community garden spots or other nearby locations suitable for garden activities. Combine container and traditional gardens, if necessary.

Follow these tips to produce the best results. Check out the resources listed for more information on gardens.



Soil and Fertilizer

If you plan to eat the food grown in your garden, first have your soil tested for pH, nutrients, and lead contamination. Contact your local Cooperative Extension office (<https://nifa.usda.gov/partners-and-extension-map>) to learn how to get your soil tested. If your soil is contaminated, the simplest solution might be to plant in containers (see Gardening in Containers, pages 320–321).

If your soil is fit for planting, prepare the soil for planting by tilling or breaking it up. A large garden spot can be prepared with a rotor-tiller. Add fertilizer or some sort of compost, manure, or chemical types. Young children need the soil prepared for them. If necessary, dig out the soil from a spot and replace with potting soil. It's a quick way to prepare and fertilize the soil.

Water and Drainage

Gardens need a ready supply of water. The soil needs to drain extra water deeper into the ground. The soil type will determine how well water drains.

Weather conditions and garden locations will influence water needs. The soil beside asphalt and concrete can be very hot.

Seeds or Plants for Different-Size Spaces and Zones

Some fruit and vegetable plant varieties thrive in small spaces. Look for seed packets, or starter plants at nurseries if space is limited. Be sure to find out if more than one plant is needed for pollination, since some plants require pollination to make fruit.



Match the type of plant to the planting zone where you live. Every fruit and vegetable (in some variety) featured in *Grow It! Try It! Like It!* can be grown throughout the United States with the exception of sweet potatoes. These plants require warm nights and may not grow in northern climates. Check with local experts for plant varieties that thrive in your area.

Sunlight

Gardens need several hours of sunlight each day. Long hours of direct sunlight may be too much for some plants such as spinach and strawberries. Check with local garden experts for guidance on sunlight for plants in your area.

Weeds

Weeds are any plants that are growing where you don't want them. Learn to tell the difference between weeds and the plants you are trying to grow so you can remove the weeds. It is easier to recognize the plants you are trying to grow if plant starts are used. Use grass clippings or mulch to cover the spaces between rows for a walk-on weed barrier.



APPENDIX C

Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind



Children are more likely to try a taste of a new food if they don't feel pressured to swallow something they dislike. When children taste foods they do not want to swallow:

- Teach them to remove the food politely from their mouth with a napkin;
- Show them how to discard the napkin quietly in a wastebasket.

Review these polite food taster tips with your child:

- Polite food tasters wait until everyone else has received their food before they start eating.
- Polite food tasters do not make faces or express their dislike loudly. They know that they may not like a food this time, but may like it next time. Sometimes foods taste different when prepared different ways.
- Polite food tasters can share how they feel about a food by completing a score card.

Grow It, Try It, Like It!
FOR MOTHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS BY FAMILY CARE LAB

Score Card for Preschoolers

Child's name: _____

Name of food tasted: _____

Drawing of fruit or vegetable tasted:

How did it taste?

I liked it! It's okay. Maybe next time.

Beets 25



APPENDIX D

Hand Washing

Everyone must wash hands before and after preparing, handling, or sampling foods. If soap and clean, running water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.

WHEN WASHING HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air-dry them.

WHEN USING HAND SANITIZER

- Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between fingers, and under your nails.
- Keep hand sanitizer out of the reach of children.
- Supervise the use of hand sanitizer.



APPENDIX E

Food Allergies

Each year, millions of Americans have allergic reactions to food. Although most food allergies cause relatively mild and minor symptoms, some food allergies can cause severe reactions and may even be life-threatening. Before you begin any tasting or food preparation activity, be sure to find out if any of the children in your care have food allergies.

TOP 8 FOOD ALLERGENS

There are eight foods that most commonly trigger an allergic reaction. These foods, and any ingredients made from them, are known as “The Top 8 Foods” and should be identified as allergens on food labels. These foods include: **fish, shellfish, eggs, milk, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts,** and **soybeans**.

For additional food allergy management and prevention information, refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies In Schools and Early Care and Education Programs at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/index.htm>.

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of food allergies typically appear from within a few minutes to a few hours after a person has eaten the food to which he or she is allergic. Allergic reactions can include:

- Hives
- Flushed skin or rash
- Tingling or itchy sensation in the mouth
- Swelling of the throat and vocal chords
- Dizziness and/or lightheadedness
- Face, tongue, or lip swelling
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Abdominal cramps
- Coughing or wheezing
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of consciousness

Quickly call for emergency medical help quickly if someone is having a severe allergic reaction.



APPENDIX F

Choking Prevention

Children under 4 years of age are at the greatest risk of choking. Almost 90 percent of children who die from choking are **under the age of 4**. Young children are still learning how to chew properly, and they often swallow things whole. Young children also like to put things in their mouths, but their small airways can become easily blocked. Nearly any food can cause choking in children. It is important to make sure that food is served in the appropriate sizes, shapes, and textures to reduce the risk of choking. Always supervise children during eating time.

WHAT TYPES OF FOODS CAUSE CHOKING RISKS?

Some foods are easy for young children to choke on when swallowing because they are the same size and shape as a child's airway. For example, peanuts, may block the lower airway. A chunk of hot dog or a whole grape may completely block the upper airway. Avoid serving foods that are as wide around as a nickel, which is about the size of a young child's throat. Foods likely to cause choking come in many shapes, sizes, and textures.

Child care providers should not offer to **children under 4 years of age** foods that pose the highest risk for choking. These include foods that are round, tube-shaped, small, hard, thick and sticky, smooth, slippery, or easily molded to stick to the airway. Prevent choking by avoiding these foods or by changing their shape, size, and texture before offering them to children during meals and snacks.

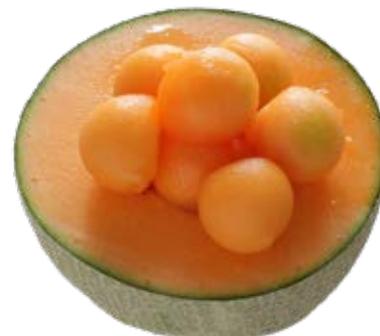
WHAT ARE SOME COMMON FOODS THAT MAY CAUSE CHOKING AND SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN TO CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 4?

Firm, smooth, or slippery foods that slide down the throat before chewing, such as:

- Whole grapes, cherries, berries, melon balls, or cherry and grape tomatoes
- Hot dogs and similarly shaped foods, including sausages, meat sticks, and cheese sticks (even when cut into round slices)
- Peanuts, seeds, and nuts
- Whole beans
- Hard or round candy, jelly beans

Small, dry, or hard foods that are difficult to chew and easy to swallow whole, such as:

- Popcorn
- Hard pretzels
- Potato and corn chips, or other similar snack foods
- Small pieces of raw vegetable (like raw carrot rounds, baby carrots, string beans, or celery) or other raw or partially cooked hard vegetables



- Apples or other hard pieces of raw fruit, especially those with hard pits or seeds
- Cooked or raw whole-kernel corn
- Raw green peas
- Peanuts, nuts, and seeds (like sunflower or pumpkin seeds)
- Plain wheat germ
- Whole-grain kernels (like rice or wheat berries)
- Crackers or breads with seeds, nut pieces, or whole-grain kernels

Sticky or tough foods that do not break apart easily and are hard to remove from the airway, such as:

- Chunks or spoonfuls of peanut butter or other nut and seed butters
- Large, hard pieces of uncooked dried fruits or vegetables
- Tough meat or large chunks of meat
- Large chunks of cheese, especially string cheese
- Fish with bones
- Marshmallows
- Chewing gum
- Chewy fruit snacks
- Caramels, gum drops, and gummy candies, or other gooey or sticky candy

HOW CAN YOU SERVE TABLE FOODS SO THEY ARE EASY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN TO CHEW?

You can help reduce the risks of choking on some foods by changing their shape, size, or texture, and by serving certain foods in small, manageable bites. Offer 2- to 4-year-olds the same variety of foods as the rest of the children in your care, but prepared in forms that are easy for them to chew and swallow. Use these simple tips to make child care menu items safe options for 2- to 4-year-old children.

- **Cook foods until soft enough** to pierce easily with a fork.
- **Cut soft food into thin slices or small pieces**—no larger than one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ "). Cut soft, round foods, like hot dogs or string cheese, into short strips rather than round pieces.



- **Remove all bones** from fish, chicken, and meat before cooking.
- **Grind up meat**, chicken, and other tough foods.
- **Cook foods such as carrots and celery** until slightly soft. Then, cut into sticks.
- **Mash or purée food** until it is soft.
- **Remove seeds** and hard pits from fruit.
- **Cut grapes, cherries, berries, or melon balls in half lengthwise**, and then cut into smaller pieces.
- **Grate or thinly slice** cheeses.
- **Chop peanuts, nuts, and seeds finely** or grind before adding to prepared food.
- **Spread peanut butter, nut butter, or seed butter thinly** on crackers. Or, mix with applesauce and cinnamon and spread thinly on bread. Use only creamy, not chunky, peanut, nut, and seed butters.
- **Avoid serving foods** that are as wide around as a nickel.
- **Serve shredded carrots and chopped tomatoes** instead of baby carrots and cherry tomatoes.
- **Make sure that children do not eat during times of high activity.** Eating while walking, running, or other active playing may increase a child's risk of choking.
- **Monitor activities and games.** Avoid games that involve catching a food item in the mouth or stuffing large amounts of food into the mouth.



APPENDIX G

Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns

BREAKFAST MEAL PATTERNS				
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12 & 13-18	
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	
Vegetables, fruits, or both	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	

*Meat and meat alternates may be used to substitute the entire grains component a maximum of three times per week. Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.

LUNCH AND SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS				
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12 & 13-18	
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz eq	1 ½ oz eq	2 oz eq	
Vegetables	⅓ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	
Fruits	⅓ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.

SNACK MEAL PATTERNS <small>Select 2 of the 5 components for snack</small>				
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12 & 13-18	
Milk	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq	1 oz eq	

*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.

Note: All serving sizes are minimum quantities of the food components that are required to be served.



APPENDIX H

Grow It, Try It, Like It! Glossary

Below is a list of gardening and nutrition terms defined that you may see throughout the units.

Annuals	Plants whose life cycle lasts only 1 year, from seed to blooms to seed
Bolting	Vegetables which quickly go to flower rather than producing the food crop. Usually caused by late planting and too warm temperatures. Plants that have bolted often taste bitter.
Bud	Early stages of development.
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	CACFP provides aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth and development of young children, and the health and wellness of older adults and chronically impaired disabled persons.
Compost	An organic soil amendment resulting from the decomposition of organic matter.
Cultivate	Process of breaking up the soil surface, removing weeds, and preparing soil for planting.
Fertilizer	Organic or inorganic plant foods which may be either liquid or granular, used to amend the soil in order to improve the quality or quantity of plant growth.
Flower	A part of the plant that produces seeds
Germinate	The process that transforms the embryo within a seed into a seedling.
Grow It! Buddy	A <i>Grow It! Buddy</i> is an older child in the group that can help the younger children with activities.
Harden off	The process of <i>gradually</i> acclimatizing greenhouse or indoor grown plants in stages to different temperatures or to outdoor growing conditions.

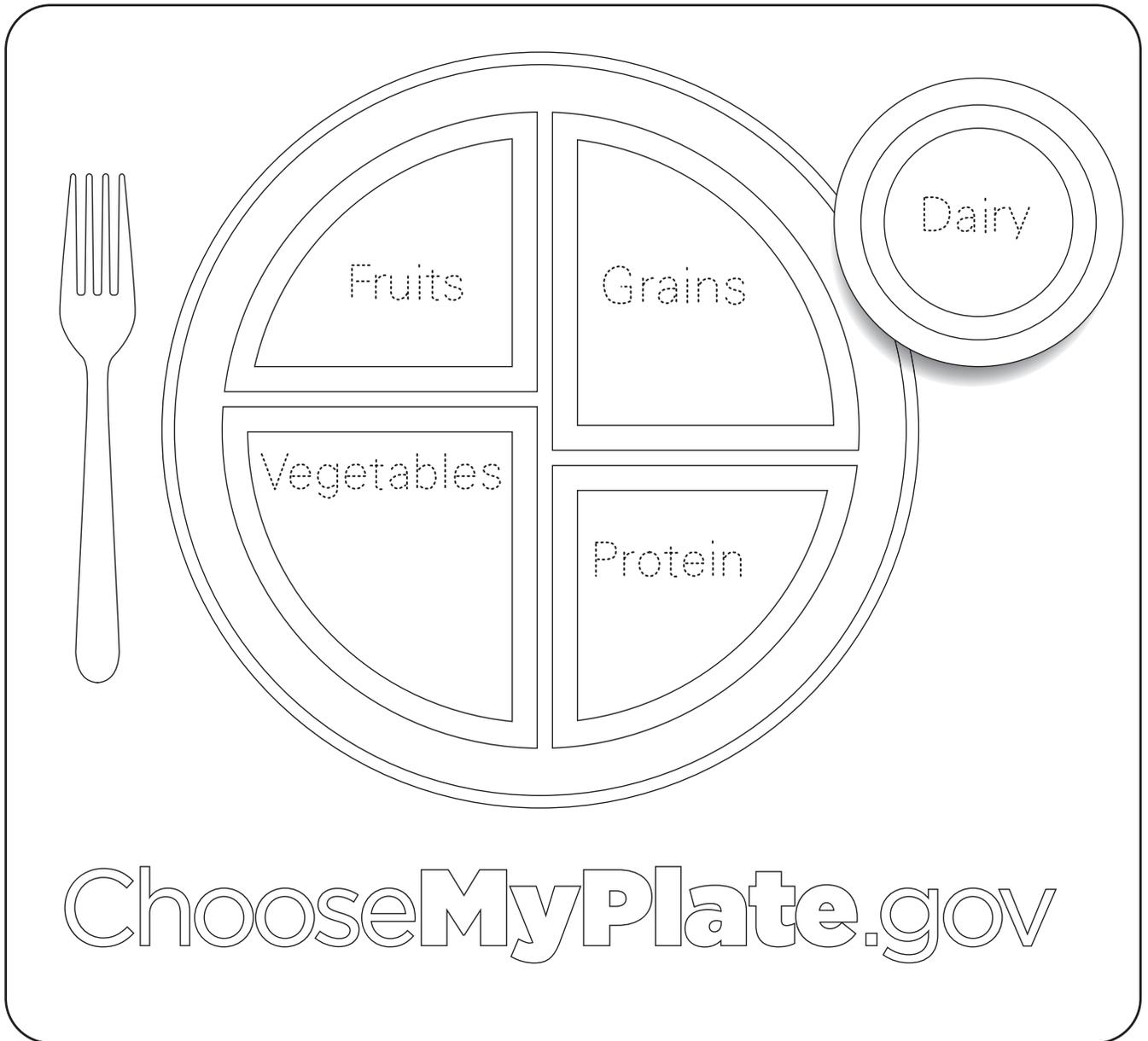


Herbaceous	A stem with little or no woody tissue and lasting usually only for a single growing season
MyPlate	MyPlate was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a nutritional guide for most Americans that replaced the MyPyramid.
Pit	A hard seed or stone of a fruit.
Seed tape	A strip of tape in which seeds have been placed at evenly space intervals.
Seedling	A young plant which can be newly sprouted or several weeks old and ready to set out in the garden.
Slip	Shoots that are grown from a mature sweet potato.
Sprout	To grow or spring up.
Stem	A part of the plant that supports the leaves and transports water and nutrients.
Stolon	An above-ground spreading stem or runner that often produces a new plant at the tip, as seen in strawberry plants.
Stone fruit	Fruits with one or more seeds surrounded by fleshy, usually edible tissue. They are common in the genus Prunus. Example: apricots, plums, cherries and mangoes.
Thinning	Removing excess seedlings, to allow sufficient room for the remaining plants to grow. Thinning also refers to removing entire branches from a tree or shrub, to give the plant a more open structure.
Vines	Twining/climbing plant with relatively long stems, can be woody or herbaceous.



APPENDIX I

MyPlate Coloring Sheet



APPENDIX J

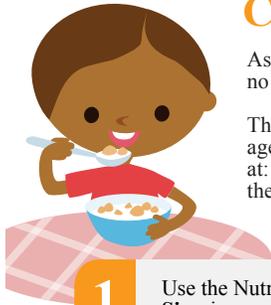


United States Department of Agriculture

Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars

As of October 1, 2017, breakfast cereal served in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce.

There are many types of cereal that meet this requirement. You can use any cereal that is listed on any State agency's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)-approved cereal list, found as part of the State's approved food lists at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/links-state-agency-wic-approved-food-lists>. You can also find cereals that meet the requirement using the Nutrition Facts label and by following the steps below:



1 Use the Nutrition Facts label to find the **Serving Size**, in grams (g), of the cereal.

2 Find the **Sugars** line. Look at the number of grams (g) next to Sugars.

3 Use the serving size identified in Step 1 to find the serving size of your cereal in the table below.

Serving Size*	Sugars
If the serving size is:	Sugars cannot be more than:
12-16 grams	3 grams
26-30 grams	6 grams
31-35 grams	7 grams
45-49 grams	10 grams
55-58 grams	12 grams
59-63 grams	13 grams
74-77 grams	16 grams

4 In the table, look at the number to the right of the serving size amount, under the "Sugars" column.
If your cereal has that amount of sugar, or less, your cereal meets the sugar requirement.

*Serving sizes here refer to those commonly found for breakfast cereals. For serving size requirements in the CACFP, please visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>.

Yummy Brand Cereal

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size ¾ cup (30g)	
Servings Per Container about 15	
Amount Per Serving	Cereal
Calories 100	100
Calories from Fat 5	5
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0.5g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 0g	
Monounsaturated Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 140mg	6%
Potassium 90mg	3%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%
Sugars 5g	
Other Carbohydrate 14g	
Protein 3g	

Test Yourself:

Does the cereal above meet the sugar requirement?
 (Check your answer on the next page)

Serving Size: _____

Sugars: _____

Yes No

More training, menu planning, and nutrition education materials for the CACFP can be found at <https://teammnutrition.usda.gov>.



APPENDIX K

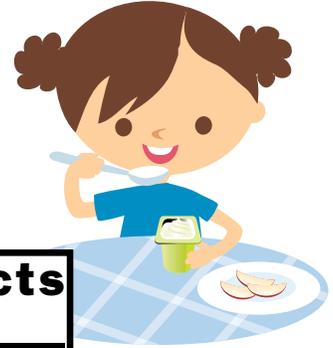


United States Department of Agriculture

Choose Yogurts That Are Lower in Added Sugars

As of October 1, 2017, yogurt served in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) must not have more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces.

There are many types of yogurt that meet this requirement. It is easy to find them by using the Nutrition Facts label and following the steps below.



1 Use the Nutrition Facts Label to find the **Serving Size**, in ounces (oz) or grams (g), of the yogurt.

2 Find the **Sugars** line. Look at the number of grams (g) next to Sugars.

3 Use the serving size identified in Step 1 to find the serving size of your yogurt in the table below.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 8 oz (227g)	
Servings about 4	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 130	Calories from Fat 20
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 2g	3%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 10mg	3%
Potassium 400mg	1%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 21g	7%
Dietary Fiber 4g	17%
Sugars 9g	
Protein 10g	
Vitamin A 6%	Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 35%	Iron 0%
Vitamin D 6%	

TIP: If the serving size says “one container,” check the front of the package to see how many ounces or grams are in the container.

Serving Size* Ounces (oz)	Serving Size Grams (g) (Use when the serving size is not listed in ounces)	Sugars Grams (g)
If the serving size is:		Sugars must not be more than:
2.25 oz	64 g	9 g
3.5 oz	99 g	13 g
4 oz	113 g	15 g
5.3 oz	150 g	20 g
6 oz	170 g	23 g
8 oz	227 g	31 g

4 In the table, look at the number to the right of the serving size amount, under the “Sugars” column. **If your yogurt has that amount of sugar, or less, the yogurt meets the sugar requirement.**

Test Yourself:

Does the yogurt above meet the sugar requirement?
(Check your answer on the next page)

Serving Size: _____

Sugars : _____

Yes No



*Serving sizes here refer to those commonly found for store-bought yogurts. Homemade yogurt is not creditable in the CACFP. For serving size requirements of yogurt in the CACFP, please visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>.

More training, menu planning, and nutrition education materials for the CACFP can be found at <https://teamnutrition.usda.gov>.





