

1 | Snack
0 | Time
1 | Ideas
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CONTENTS

EDUCATION

Activities	6
Concentration	6
Compare Sizes	6
Color	6
Lids	6
Can You Taste the Color?	7
What Shapes are Foods?	7
Smell	7
Teaching Pouring and Measuring Skills	7
Kitchen Gardens	8
Experiment with Growing Conditions	8
More to Do with Plants	8
A Planting Song	9
Talk with Children about Eggs and Milk	9
See How We Grow	9
The Food System	9
Where does Food Come From?... ..	10
Grocery Store Dramatic Play	10
Puzzles	10
Felt Board Activities	11
How Does Your Garden Grow?	11
Grains	12
Restaurant Dramatic Play	12
Water	12
Soup Pot Game	13
Grow an avocado plant	13

Recipes	14
Pilgrim Pudding	14
Tabbouli	14
Potato Pancakes (Latkes)	14
Indian Corn Pudding	15
Fresh Vegetables and Dilly Dip ..	15
Gazpacho	15
Corn Tortillas	16
Macaroni Salad	16
Tripearatops Pops	17
It's Me Salad	17
One Bowl French Bread	18
Creature Crackers	18
Pretzels	18
Pizzas	19
Hummus	19

NUTRITION

Activities	20
Food Family Sort	20
More Food Sorting	20
Food Families	20
The Vegetable Song	20
www.ChooseMyPlate.gov	21
Why Do We Eat Vegetables and Fruits?	21
Food Container People	21
More Felt Board Activities	22
Food Mobile	22
Stirring the Pot Game	22
Ideas for Puppet Shows and Skits ..	22
Hop Up to Good Health	23

New Food Treasure Hunt.....	24
What Food am I?	24
Food Bingo.....	24
Spud and Spoon Race.....	25
Toss a Food Group	25
Veggie Tasting Game	25

Recipes.....26

Spinach Surprise Dip.....	26
Yogurt Sundaes	26
Orange Fruit Salad	26
Cheese-Wheat Snacks	26
Banana Crunch Pops	26
Frozen Banana Pops.....	26
Homemade Applesauce	27
Rice Pudding.....	27
Snow Waffles.....	27
Macaroni Salad	27
Ambrosia Shake.....	27

SENSORY

Activities.....28

Vegetable Rainbow.....	28
Mixing Foods by Hand.....	28
Teach Children to Eat Healthfully	28
Taste It.....	29
Smell It	29
Feel It.....	29
Favorite Family Foods	30
Table Talk.....	30
Scoop Out a Pumpkin.....	30
Finger Lickin’ Snacks.....	30
How Do You Like Your Carrots?..	30
Touch and Size	31
Spice Traders	31

Cooking Means Changes.....	31
More about Temperature.....	31
Eating Colors.....	31
Natural Dyes	32
Shopping Spree	32
Grocery Helpers.....	32
Talk about Favorite Snacks	32
Guess the Food.....	32
How Bodies Grow	33
Food Makes Bodies Grow.....	33
Pets Grow too	33
Books and Stories about Food ...	33
Potato Sampler.....	33

Recipes.....34

Dried Apple Rings.....	34
Juicy Finger Blocks	34
Fruit Leather.....	34
Sweet Carrot Sticks.....	34
Iron-a-Sandwich	34
Rounds	34
Purple Cow	35
Golden Gelatin Eggs	35
Pink Deviled Eggs	35
Celery Vehicles.....	36
Peanut Butter	36
Peach Yogurt	37
Grape Punch	37
Celery Logs	37
Peach Crisp	37
Crunchy Critter Cookies.....	37
Cheese Toast.....	38
Peanutty Burrito Rolls.....	38
Glazed Carrot Wheels	38
Vegetable Soup	39

Dietary Cautions

BE AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING DIETARY CAUTIONS WHEN YOU PREPARE SNACKS AND PLAN NUTRITION ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN:

Be aware of choking risks and food allergies when preparing and serving meals and snacks. Think about the size, shape, and consistency when choosing foods due to the potential choking risks in children. Food cut in large chunks, small hard foods, and soft and sticky foods should be avoided. The top choking hazards for children include: hotdogs, meats, sausages, fish with bones, spoonfuls of peanut butter, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, raisins, whole grapes, raw carrots, fruits and vegetables with skins, and marshmallows. Be sure that food is cut in small pieces (no larger than ½ inch), grated, or finely chopped. Be sure that children are closely supervised when they are eating.

Do not give honey to children under 12 months of age. Honey contains spores that can cause infant botulism.

Many children have food allergies or sensitivities to food. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 90% of children's food allergies are from milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts (pecan/walnuts), fish, shellfish, strawberries, soy, wheat, and gluten. Carefully read food labels for potential risks and be sure to ask the parents if children have a known allergy or sensitivity.

Dental health is a growing concern with young children, so it is important to keep in mind that starchy, sticky, and sugary foods can cause tooth decay. Children should brush their teeth after any meal or snack, but particularly when you serve these foods.

Concentration

Make pairs of flashcards by pasting identical or similar pictures of foods cut from magazines onto 3" x 5" cards. Shuffle and arrange any number of cards, placing them face down in rows. One at a time, players turn over 2 cards per turn attempting to find a matched pair. If a pair is turned up, the player takes another turn. When no cards are left, the player with the most pairs wins.

Variation: For a word game, one card in a pair can have the name of the food written on it and one can have a picture of the food. Children should match the name of the food with the picture.

Compare Sizes

Note the sizes of foods. Let the children sort food by sizes, biggest to smallest, for example. Change the size of food by cutting, slicing, grating, chopping, or dicing.

Color

Identify, compare, and sample the colors of foods. For example:

- Same food, different colors (red, green, and yellow apples)
- Different foods, same color (oranges, carrots, and cantaloupe)
- Different foods, different colors (red apples, orange oranges, purple plums, yellow bananas)

Lids

Collect unbreakable food containers with reusable lids, such as oatmeal boxes or yogurt cups. (Be sure to check edges of containers to make sure they are safe for children to handle. Cover sharp edges with masking tape). Separate containers and lids and place them in separate piles. Ask a child to match the tops to the bottoms.

Variations: Preschool children may also enjoy sorting the containers by height, using them as building blocks, or "selling" them in a store.

Older children may find the lids game more challenging by playing for speed by racing against another child or the clock.

Another twist is to play the game by using the sense of touch. Blindfold the child or remove the lids and containers from sight by putting them in separate, covered boxes. Have the child feel the containers and lids to decide which ones go together.

NUTRITION LESSON:

Food is processed, preserved and packaged in many ways. What foods come in the containers used in this game? How many foods can you think of that come in bottles? Cans?

Can You Taste the Color?

Before the children arrive, prepare 3 pitchers of frozen lemonade. Use food coloring to color one pitcher orange, one green, and leave one its natural yellow color, so that the three look like: orangeade, limeade, and lemonade. When the children arrive let them sample the “mystery juice” from each pitcher and guess what flavors they are tasting. Many people believe their eyes rather than their taste buds. Discuss how the appearance of food can affect our enjoyment of its taste.

What Shapes are Foods?

Look for and name the shapes of foods, such as:

- carrot and celery sticks
- apple wedges
- green pepper rings (may resemble stars)
- round crackers
- square saltine crackers
- rectangular graham crackers

Smell

The world is full of smells. How a food smells can affect our enjoyment of it. Lots of people do not even know what “stinky cheese” tastes like, because they never got past the smell to try it.

Blindfold the children to go on a walk to see how many different smells they can find. Make a list of smells the children like and ones they do not like. Figure out why we think some smells are good and some are bad.

Teaching Pouring and Measuring Skills

Show children how to pour liquids. Use a lightweight, small plastic pitcher and non-breakable drinking glass. Help them with the pitcher or hold the glass and let them practice. Start by using water or put uncooked rice, beans, or macaroni in the pitcher.

When the children can pour without your help, let them pour milk and juice for snacks. Place a rubber band around the middle of a non-breakable drinking glass. Let children practice filling the glass to the mark.

Children can learn to measure dry ingredients too. Let them fill measuring cups and talk about the different markings and types of cups. Sifting and leveling a cup of flour are skills children can learn. Be sure to let them practice.



Kitchen Gardens

Many plants can be grown from food in your kitchen such as carrot and pineapple tops, beans, orange, lemon and grapefruit seeds, popcorn, sweet and white potatoes. Borrow or buy the book *Get Growing! Exciting Indoor Plant Projects for Kids* by Lois Walker from your county extension resource library, or bookstore for directions, craft ideas and recipes for these and other indoor planting possibilities.

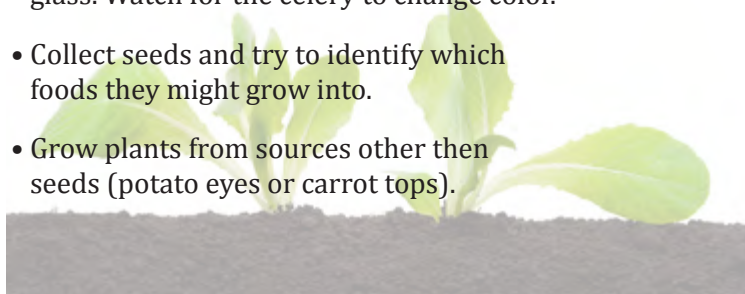
Experiment with Growing Conditions

Talk with the children about what they think plants need to grow. Make a list of their ideas. Experiment with water, heat and light. Plant grass seed in two cottage cheese cartons with the same amount of soil in each. Put one carton in a sunny warm spot and water it daily. Put the other carton in a dark cold spot and do not water. Check the cartons every day. Make a chart of the children's observations.

Place large seeds, such as beans or peas in wet paper towels or cotton in a clear container. Talk with the children about the seeds as they watch them sprout. This is the same thing that happens to seeds when they sprout in the soil outside.

More to Do with Plants

- Discover what parts of plants we eat. Talk about roots we eat (potatoes, beets, carrots, turnips, radishes), seeds (beans, peas), leaves (lettuce, spinach), fruits, etc.
- Watch what happens to the physical properties of a plant when you prepare, cook or process it. Sample one food in different ways, such as raw apples, stewed apples, applesauce, apple juice, etc.
- Stop fresh fruit from turning brown (oxidation) by dipping it in orange juice which contains vitamin C (an antioxidant).
- Watch a stalk of celery "drink" a glass of colored water. Place a few drops of food coloring into a glass of water. Stir and put a stalk of celery in the glass. Watch for the celery to change color.
- Collect seeds and try to identify which foods they might grow into.
- Grow plants from sources other than seeds (potato eyes or carrot tops).



A Planting Song

Sing to the tune of *Mary Had A Little Lamb* (Use the names of the children in place of Mary).

Mary had a little seed, little seed, little seed.

Mary had a little seed and hoped that it would grow.

She watered it and pulled the weeds, pulled the weeds,
pulled the weeds. She watered it and pulled the weeds,
with sprinkling can and hoe.

And every day the sun would shine, sun would shine, sun
would shine.

And every day the sun would shine and warm it for a while.

And soon a little sprout came out, sprout came out, sprout
came out.

And soon a little sprout came out. It made dear Mary smile.

A lettuce plant began to grow, began to grow, began to grow.

A lettuce plant began to grow, so fresh and crisp and green.

Then carefully she picked some leaves, picked some leaves,
picked some leaves.

Then carefully she picked some leaves and rinsed them nice
and clean.

Talk with Children about Eggs and Milk

Where do eggs come from? The eggs we eat usually come
from chickens. Talk with the children about the many ways
we eat eggs. Make a list of their ideas.

Talk about milk. Where does milk come from? How many
foods are made from milk? Cut out pictures of egg and
milk foods.



See How We Grow

Weigh, measure each child,
and trace his/her body
on a large sheet of paper.
Repeat in a few months
and compare. Is the child
the same size? If not,
why? What made him/her
grow? Food, of course!

The Food System

Hang posters showing the
people who work along
the path that our food
takes: farmers, factory
workers, truck drivers,
grocery store clerks,
cooks, and “eaters”! Let
children cut pictures
from magazines to make
collages showing the
people who help to bring
us our food. Be careful
to choose posters and
pictures that do not
show racial or sexual
stereotypes.

Where Does Food Come From?

Children who live on a farm may learn through everyday experiences from where their food comes. For other children it will take a variety of experiences for them to realize that food doesn't magically appear on their plates or even in the grocery store. Here are some suggestions of things to do to help children learn that many people work hard in the long, step-by-step process that brings the food to their tables.

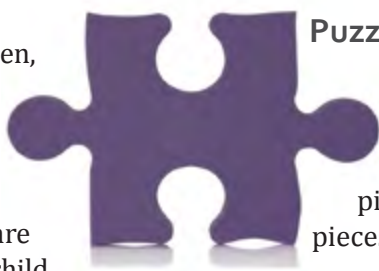
Plan field trips to places where food is grown, processed, sold and cooked, such as a farmer's market, plant nursery, orchard, farm, food processing factory, large supermarket, corner grocery store, commercial kitchen, restaurant, or take the children on a guided tour of the kitchen in your own child care center or family child care home.

Grocery Store Dramatic Play

You'll need:

- clean, empty food containers (children can bring from home)
- large cardboard box with a rope or string for a handle (can be used for a grocery cart)
- grocery bags (if young children are present, use paper or cloth bags, not plastic)
- adding machine or toy cash register
- purses, wallets
- play money
- dress-up clothes

Children can play grocer by wearing aprons and a baker's hat if they are working in the bakery section. They can unload and put the products for their store on shelves or boxes. Other children can play customers by wearing dress-up clothes and choosing items from the store. The customers should have a list of what they need, ask questions about the freshness of food items, etc. Grocers should be ready to explain why their products are good and how they could be used. Pay for items with play money and pack in bags.



Puzzles

Puzzles can be made from magazine pictures or posters. Paste the picture on stiff cardboard and allow it to dry. Cut out puzzle pieces with sturdy scissors. Six or eight puzzle pieces may be enough for young children.

A wooden jigsaw puzzle can be made in the same way by mounting a picture on a piece of light plywood and cutting it out with a jigsaw.

Felt Board Activities

Make a felt board by stretching felt or heavy flannel fabric around a piece of plywood or heavy cardboard. Figures cut from felt will stick to the felt board as will lightweight objects, such as magazine cutouts. Back heavier objects, such as cardboard food models, with sandpaper or Velcro™.

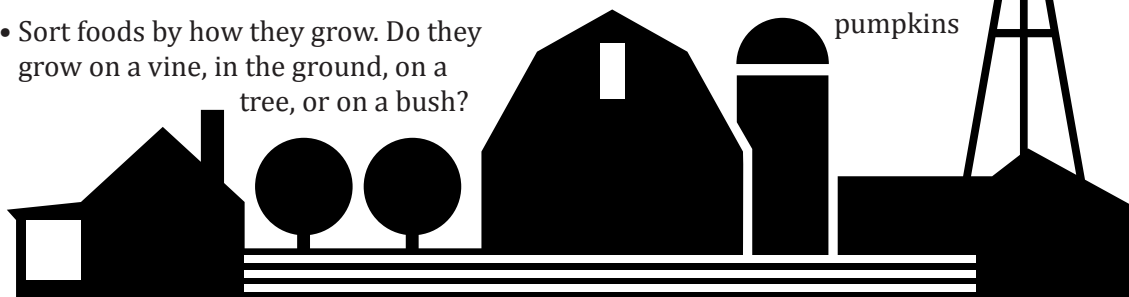
- Food rainbow — Make a rainbow from different colors of felt. Choose colors such as:
 - Yellow for bananas, corn, some apples, and some cheeses.
 - Red for strawberries, cherries, tomatoes, and some meats.
 - Green for broccoli, beans and kiwis.
 - Orange for oranges, carrots, and pumpkins.
 - White for milk, rice, pasta, and some meats and cheeses.
 - Brown for potatoes, breads, and some meats.
 - Blue or purple for grapes and blueberries.
- Have children match the color of food in pictures to the colors of the rainbow.
- Cut out foods from felt to match colors selected for each food group or cut pictures of food from magazines and paste on felt squares.
- Hang pictures of the children’s favorite foods. Discuss why they are favorites.
- Hang pictures of foods which are chewy, crunchy, sweet, or sour.
- Sort foods by how they grow. Do they grow on a vine, in the ground, on a tree, or on a bush?

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Children can “plant” their own garden using felt fruit and vegetables. Provide colors of felt such as:

- Brown for soil, potatoes
- Blue for sky, blueberries, plums
- Yellow for the sun, pears, squash, corn
- Black for rain clouds
- White for fluffy clouds, raindrops, onions
- Green for trees, plants, beans, onion tops, lettuce, broccoli, peas, peppers
- Red for apples, strawberries, tomatoes, peppers
- Peach for peaches

- Orange for carrots and pumpkins



Grains

Talk with the children about grain-based foods, such as bread, rice, pasta, crackers, cereals, even cakes and cookies. Children need at least half of their grains to come from whole grains. Talk about why we need to make sure that we choose some grain foods more often than others.

Discuss with the children foods that can be made with grains.

Read the story “The Little Red Hen”. Grains, like the wheat in the story, are the seeds of grasses. We eat many kinds of grass seed. The little red hen could have taken any of these to the miller: rice, corn, barley, rye, oats or wheat.

Taste test breads made from different grains so that the children can see and taste the difference.

Use nutrition posters for a large puzzle or have children choose magazine pictures or draw pictures of food and food related ideas, such as farms, plants, gardens or animals.

Restaurant Dramatic Play

You’ll need:

- place mats
- unbreakable dishes, eating utensils, and napkins tables, chairs
- toy grill or stove and refrigerator
- cash register, play money
- aprons
- menus
- pads of paper and pencils

Make food for the restaurant by cutting pictures from magazines and covering them with clear self-stick paper. Children can pretend to be cooks, servers, cashiers, and diners. Servers can set the tables, serve plates filled with the food pictures, clear tables, and give diners their checks. Cooks can wear aprons and hats while preparing foods, filling orders, and doing dishes. Cashiers can seat people in the restaurant, accept play money payment, and make change. Diners can choose items from the menu, discuss the food while eating, and pay for the meal with play money.

Water

Show children water in each of its three physical states: liquid, solid and gas. Have the children help to put water in an ice cube tray. Put the tray in the freezer until the water freezes. Show the children the solid water (ice). Place some ice cubes in a bowl. Let them set out on a counter so the children can watch them melt back into a liquid. Boil water in a pan on the range. Talk with the children about the water in the air (steam).

Find out where water hides in foods. Set out a moist food in heat or sunlight. What happens? Mix corn starch and water in a bowl. Let it sit for a few minutes. What has happened?

Soup Pot Game

This is a good game to play while preparing vegetables to make soup or while waiting for a turn during a cooking activity.

Everyone sits in a circle and pretends there is a big soup pot in the center.

Decide with the children what vegetables to prepare. All chant the following rhyme and make the motions of peeling, chopping, and stirring.

Peel, peel, peel the (name of the vegetable),

Then chop, chop, chop, chop, chop!

Stir it into the soup that's cooking in the pot!

(Child's name), will you add your (vegetable name) to the pot?

Child whose name is called goes to the make-believe pot and pretends to add the vegetable.

BOOKS TO READ ALOUD:

Growing Vegetable Soup, L. Ehlert

Boober's Colorful Soup, J. Barkan

Stone Soup, M. Brown



Grow an Avocado Plant

Use the avocado pit left from making guacamole. Allow the pit to “rest” for a few days before putting it into water.

Insert four toothpicks around the middle part of the avocado pit. Place the pit into a container of water. The toothpicks should rest on the lip of the container so only the bottom of the pit (the wide part) is in the water. Add water as needed so the bottom of the pit stays in water at all times.

In a few weeks, roots will begin to grow. The pit can now be placed in soil. Make sure the soil is appropriate for plants. Potting soil is best.

Place the bottom half of the pit in the soil. Water to keep moist, but not wet. In one month you will have the beginning of an avocado tree.

(Note: Use this activity along with the recipe for Guacamole Dip.)



Pilgrim Pudding

- 4 slices whole wheat bread
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk, divided
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup unsweetened apple juice concentrate
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup molasses
- dash salt

Dice bread slices and crumble in a blender. Place bread crumbs in a bowl. Blend together $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of milk, apple juice concentrate, eggs, cinnamon, ginger, molasses and salt. Pour the mixture over the crumbs and stir. Pour into a greased baking dish. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk over the top and bake for 25 more minutes. Makes 6 to 8 small servings.

Tabouli

- 1 cup bulgur wheat
 - 2 cups boiling water
 - 1 cup carrots, grated
 - 2 medium tomatoes, diced
 - 1 small bunch green onion, diced
 - 1 cup cucumber, diced
 - 1 cup parsley, finely chopped
 - 1 tablespoon fresh or dried mint
 - $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups garbanzo beans, cooked and drained
- DRESSING**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice
 - 4 tablespoons olive oil
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon oregano
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cumin

Soak bulgur in boiling water for 1 hour. Drain well, pressing out all excess water. Add all chopped vegetables, parsley, mint, and garbanzo beans to the bulgur.

Shake the dressing ingredients in a jar. One hour before serving, add the bulgur/vegetable mixture. Toss the mixture with the dressing. Makes 10 ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) servings.

Potato Pancakes (Latkes)

- 10 medium potatoes
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons matzoh meal or 4 tablespoons flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil for frying pan

Peel potatoes and grate them on a fine grater. Add eggs, matzoh meal or flour, baking powder, and salt; mix well. Drop spoonfuls of mixture into a nonstick griddle or frying pan coated with vegetable oil. Cook, turning once, until golden. Makes 14 (4-inch) pancakes. Cut in half for younger children.

Zucchini Bread

- ½ cup raisins
- ¼ cup unsweetened apple juice concentrate
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 1 ripe banana, sliced
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- ½ cup all purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup shredded zucchini

Heat raisins and apple juice concentrate in a saucepan until raisins are soft, about 3 minutes. Puree raisins and juice in a blender. Add egg, vegetable oil, banana and vanilla to blender and mix. In a large bowl, stir dry ingredients together. Add blender ingredients and zucchini. Mix all ingredients. Pour into a greased and floured loaf pan. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes at 350°F.



ZUCCHINI MUFFINS

Make the same batter as zucchini bread. Pour batter into greased and floured muffin tin cups and bake at 350°F for 30 to 40 minutes. Makes 12 muffins.

Indian Corn Pudding

- 2 cups drained whole kernel corn (frozen, fresh, or canned)
- ½ teaspoon honey
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 2 beaten eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 2 tablespoons wheat cracker crumbs.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix the ingredients and pour into a 1 quart greased baking dish. Set the dish into a pan with about 1 inch of water in the bottom. Bake for 70 minutes. Pudding is done when a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Fresh Vegetables and Dilly Dip

any combination of fresh vegetables, such as carrot sticks, green pepper sticks, celery sticks, cucumber sticks, broccoli sticks, cauliflowerets

- 1 cup plain yogurt
 - 1 teaspoon dill weed
 - 1 teaspoon parsley
- Wash and prepare fresh vegetables.

DIP

Blend together yogurt, dill weed, and parsley. Give each child his/her own bowl of dip. Let the children choose their own fresh vegetables.

Gazpacho

- 2 ripe tomatoes
 - ½ green bell pepper, chopped
 - 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 - 1 can (6 ounces) tomato juice
 - ½ cucumber, peeled and chopped
 - ¼ cup chopped onion
 - dash garlic powder
- Blend all ingredients together in a blender. Chill. Serve in bowls. Makes 6 to 8 small servings.

Corn Tortillas

- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 cup yellow or white cornmeal
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 to 2½ cups whole wheat flour

Pour boiling water over the cornmeal. Let the mixture sit for 10 minutes. Mix salt and wheat flour together. Knead flour into the cornmeal mixture. Keep kneading for 5 to 10 minutes. Let sit for 5 minutes. Pinch off pieces of dough the size of golf balls. Shape the pieces into balls. Roll out the balls with a rolling pin on a floured board until it forms a circle, 4 inches in diameter. Cook on an unoled hot griddle or skillet for approximately 2 minutes on each side.

Flour Tortillas

- 4 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- about 1 cup warm water

Mix flour and salt. Add oil. Mix together with fingers. Stir in enough warm water to make a firm ball of dough. Knead until smooth. Let the dough sit for 20 minutes. Pinch off pieces of dough the size of golf balls. Shape the pieces into balls. Roll out the balls with a rolling pin on a floured board until it forms a circle, 4 inches in diameter. Cook on an unoled hot griddle or skillet for approximately 2 minutes on each side.

Macaroni Salad

- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 1 tomato, diced
- ½ cup cheese cubes
- 2 cups cooked elbow macaroni
- 2 tablespoons plain yogurt

Wash the vegetables and cut them into pieces. Cut the cheese into cubes. Add the vegetables and cheese to the cooked macaroni. Add the yogurt and stir to mix well. Makes about 6 (½ cup) servings.

Beef Burrito

- ½ pound lean ground beef for snack-size servings (or double first three ingredients for lunch-size servings)
- 1 small onion, finely diced
- 6 tablespoons mild taco or tomato sauce
- 6 (6-inch) soft flour tortillas
- 1½ tablespoons margarine, melted

Break up ground beef into small pieces and brown with diced onion. When cooked, drain well and stir in taco or tomato sauce. Place 2 tablespoons (for snack) or 4 tablespoons (for lunch) of meat mixture into center of each soft tortilla. Fold tortilla over meat mixture to form a rectangle. Brush each burrito with margarine and bake 10 minutes or until slightly brown in a 350°F oven. Makes six burritos; one burrito per child. May cut burritos in half for 1 to 2 year old children.

Homemade Granola

- 6 cups oatmeal, uncooked
- 2 cups wheat germ, toasted or untoasted
- 2 cups coconut, sweetened or unsweetened
- 4 tablespoons cinnamon
- 4 tablespoons brown sugar
- ½ cup powdered milk
- 2/3 cup honey
- 2/3 cup oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla

Mix all dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Add honey, oil and vanilla. Mix well, coating all dry ingredients. Place mixture on a jelly roll pan or cookie sheet with sides. Bake at 300°F for 20 minutes, stirring several times. Watch closely! It will burn very quickly. Makes 22 (1/3 cup) servings.

VARIATION:

seeds, nuts, raisins, or dates can be added after the mixture has cooled.



Shake a Pudding

- instant pudding mix
- low-fat milk
- plastic bowl with tightly fitting lid

Pour the amount of milk called for on the pudding package into a plastic bowl. Add contents of the pudding mix. Place lid on bowl. Let the children take turns shaking the bowl of pudding mix. Spoon into bowls and eat!

Tripearatops Pops

- 2 cans (16 ounces each) pear halves in juice
- 1 can (29 ounce) pear halves in juice
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice

Puree pears and juice in a blender. Combine pureed pears with water, honey and lemon juice. Pour into popsicle molds or 4-ounce paper cups. Partially freeze pear mixture. Push plastic spoons into the center of each cup. Freeze until firm. Makes 15 (2½ ounce) pops.



It's Me Salad

Give each child a peach or pear half for his/her body and half a hard cooked egg for a head. Hair can be made from dry cereal, shredded cheese, or grated carrot. Use small pieces of tomato for mouths, celery or carrot sticks for arms and legs. Prunes, raisins, or plum halves make good shoes. Let each child come up with his/her own combinations.

One Bowl French Bread

- 3 to 3½ cups unsifted flour
- 4 teaspoons sugar
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1 package dry yeast
- 2 tablespoons soft margarine
- 1¼ cups very hot water (105 - 115°F)

Combine 1 cup flour, sugar, salt, and undissolved dry yeast in a large bowl. Mix thoroughly. Add margarine. Add very hot water gradually to dry ingredients. Beat two minutes. Add 1 cup of flour or enough to make a thick batter. Beat 2 or 3 minutes. Stir in enough additional flour to make a soft dough. Cover bowl tightly with plastic wrap.

Let rise in a warm place for 45-60 minutes. Stir dough down, turn out onto heavily floured surface. After washing, flour children's hands and have them knead dough until smooth. Shape dough into one large oblong or let the children experiment with different shapes and sizes. Try pretzels, animals, letters, numbers, or holiday shapes.

Place on a greased baking sheet and let rise (40 to 50 minutes for large loaf, less time for small shapes). Bake at 400°F (40 minutes for large loaf, 8-10 minutes or until golden brown for small shapes).

Creature Crackers

Set out cheese slices, crackers in various shapes and small cookie cutters. Let children cut shapes from their cheese slices to lay on their cracker(s).

Encourage children to talk about the shape of the crackers and the creature(s) they have made.



Pretzels

- 1 pkg dry yeast
- 1½ cups warm water (105-115°F)
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- 4½ cups flour
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 teaspoons water
- coarse salt
- non-stick spray

Dissolve yeast in warm water; add sugar. Mix in flour and knead 5-10 minutes. (Children enjoy taking turns to do this.) Place dough in an oiled bowl. Let it rise, covered, until double in size.

Divide dough into 30 pieces and form into pretzels or other shapes. (Allow each child to design his/her own shape.)

Place dough shapes on a cookie sheet, sprayed with non-stick spray. Mix together egg yolk and water. Brush dough with egg/water mixture and sprinkle with salt. Bake at 475°F for 10 minutes or 375°F for 20 minutes.

Pizzas

- 1 pkg. 10-12 refrigerator biscuits
- 1 jar prepared pizza sauce
- 1 (6-8 oz.) pkg. grated mozzarella cheese
- aluminum foil
- non-stick cooking spray

Line a cookie sheet with aluminum foil (for easy cleaning) and spray with non-stick cooking spray. Give each child a refrigerator biscuit. Have them shape the biscuit dough until it is as “flat as a pancake.” Spread 2-3 tablespoons pizza sauce on top of each biscuit and sprinkle with cheese. Place in 400°F oven until the cheese melts (about 15 minutes). Makes 10 - 12 pizzas.

You may want to read the book *Curious George and the Pizza* before you make pizzas with the children.

Guacamole Dip

- 1 large ripe avocado
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 small tomato, diced
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- Dash of garlic salt and chili pepper to taste



Remove the green peel from the avocado. Carefully cut the flesh away from the pit. (Save the pit to grow an avocado plant.) Have the children mash the avocado flesh in a bowl. Add other ingredients and mix well. Give each child his/her own bowl of dip and some fresh vegetables, tortillas, or bread cubes for dipping.

Hummus

- 1 (15 ounce) can cooked chickpeas (drained, save the liquid)
- ¼ cup tahini (sesame paste)
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 3 large cloves garlic
- ½ teaspoon salt

Place chickpeas, tahini and lemon juice in bowl. Let each child mash until mixture reaches the consistency of a coarse paste (use as much chickpea liquid as needed). Peel garlic and allow children to squeeze garlic through a garlic press. Add garlic and salt to bowl. Cover hummus and refrigerate 1 hour. Serve as a spread on crackers, pita bread or with vegetables.

Fruity Dip

- 1 (8 ounce) carton of plain low-fat yogurt
- 1 tablespoon orange juice concentrate
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- sprinkle of cinnamon

Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Give each child his/her own small bowl of dip. Use as a dip for fresh fruit such as melon balls, banana slices, strawberries, blueberries, chunks of apple, peaches, or pears.

Food Family Sort

Write the name of a different food family on large sheets of construction paper. Have the children cut pictures of foods from old magazines. Hold up each food picture. Let the children decide the food family in which the picture belongs. Have the children paste the food pictures on the construction paper with the name of the food family.

More Food Sorting

There are a number of ways to sort foods. Have the children cut out pictures of foods from magazines. Make up your own categories for sorting. You may want to use some of the following:

- colors
- seeds/ no seeds
- crunchy/not crunchy
- sweet/ not sweet
- eat cooked/ raw/ both ways
- juicy/ not juicy

Food Families

Foods which have things in common belong to food families. In a food family, all foods are not the same but they have some things in common.

There are six food families:

- Grain (including cereals, pasta, rice, bread)
- Vegetable
- Fruit
- Dairy (including milk, yogurt, cheese)
- Protein Foods (including meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dry beans, nuts)
- Fats, oils, and sweets

Talk with the children about foods that they see near each other at the grocery store. Most stores group many food family items together.

We need to eat a certain number of servings of food each day from all the food families.

Ask children to bring in a fruit or vegetable to share or set out a variety of fruits and vegetables yourself. Ask children which ones are fruits; which ones are vegetables. How do we know?

The Vegetable Song

Sing to the tune of *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*

Carrots, peas, and broccoli

Vegetables taste good to me.

For my snack and in my lunch,

Veggie sticks are great to munch.

Carrots, peas, and broccoli,

Vegetables taste good to me.



www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

To help people use the MyPlate model and make healthy food choices, the USDA has launched the ChooseMyPlate.gov website with resources for nutrition and health. There are pages for educators, health care professionals, parents, and children, including an interactive page specifically designed to meet the unique, individualized needs of preschoolers, two to five years of age.

TOPICS COVERED INCLUDE:

- Growing up healthy
- Developing healthy eating habits
- Trying new foods
- Playing active every day
- Following food safety rules
- Daily food plans for preschoolers
- Sample meal patterns, meals, and snacks
- Kitchen activities
- Ideas for being a health role model
- Links to other nutrition and health organizations

Why Do We Eat Vegetables and Fruits?

While children are eating vegetables and fruits, explain to them that everyone needs to eat vegetables and fruits every day to stay healthy.

Vegetables and fruits help them see better (point to eyes); make their skin healthy (point to skin); give them strong teeth and bones (point to teeth and bones); and they will be happy because they are healthy (big smile).

Food Container People

Ask parents to save empty food containers, such as cracker boxes, cereal boxes, gelatin boxes, pudding mix boxes, etc. Let the children use the boxes to create food carton people. Set out pieces of scrap paper and yarn to complete their creations.

This activity helps to show children the foods that come in certain boxes. If they have never tasted the food in the box they are using, plan to prepare some and let the children try it.

More Felt Board Activities

See page 11 for building instructions.

Using a felt board can perk up a story or a discussion about food. Let the children select and hang pictures of foods on the felt board. They may use felt board pictures to talk about foods they like and dislike or other food habits.

Another use can be to have children talk about what they ate before they came to day care.

Food Mobile

Many different kinds of materials can be used for making mobiles. Tie a string to each item and hang them at various lengths from a coat hanger or a piece of wood. (Be sure to supervise children when fastening the strings to the coat hanger or wood.) When completed, the mobile may be hung from the ceiling.

Try some of these items for a nutrition mobile: magazine pictures pasted on cardboard, cardboard food models, clean empty food containers, or hardened playdough shaped like foods.

Stirring the Pot Game

Children are seated in a circle around a large pot. Give each child a picture of a food. Begin the chant below. Have the children join in.

Stirring, stirring, stirring the pot (stirring motion).

Bubbly, bubbly, bubbly hot (pretend to make pot boil).

Look to the moon (point and look up).

Laugh like a loon (laugh).

(Name a child) stir something into the pot. (child names the food in the picture and places it into the pot)

Repeat the chant until each child has had a turn to add a "food" to the pot.

Variation: stir in only a certain kind of food. For example, just fruits or vegetables or just Vitamin A foods.

Ideas for Puppet Shows and Skits

Use children's books, nursery rhymes, finger plays, and songs for ideas for nutrition skits and puppet shows.

Read to the children such books as:

The Carrot Seed

The Gingerbread Man

Stone Soup

Bread and Jam for Frances

These stories are exciting and fun. They often contain nutrition messages. Caregivers may want to use the books to introduce a nutrition lesson to the children. Talking nutrition is easier if you start with an exciting story.



Hop Up to Good Health

This game will help children learn about different foods and help them understand the difference between anytime snacks and sometime snacks. Anytime snacks can help us grow, make us strong, and may help keep us healthy. Sometime snacks contain fewer nutrients than anytime snacks.



FOOD	NUMBER
Milk	2
Orange Juice	2
Apple	2
Peas	2
Banana	2
Cheese	2
Green vegetables	2
Tomato	2
Peanuts	2
Carrot	2
Soda	1
Candy	1
Chocolate Cake	1
Potato Chips	1
Sugar Cookies	1

You will need:

- game cards
- box to hold game cards
- chalk or tape lines marked on the floor for a starting line and the Good Health Goal line (30 feet away from the starting line)

Make game cards on 3" x 5" cards by pasting the picture of each of the foods from the list below to one side of each card. Write the number, 2 or 1, on the back of each card to show the category of the food.

To play the game, have 2 to 4 children at a time stand behind the marked starting line. Each child, one at a time, draws a food game card from the box. Each player says the name of the food on the card and reads the number on the back. If it is an anytime snack the card will have a number 2 on the back. This means the child may take two hops forward. If it is a sometime snack, the card will have the number 1 on the back. This means the child may take one hop forward. The object of the game is to be the first to reach the Good Health Line by hopping.

More about Field Trips

Plan field trips ahead of time so that the visit is not complicated by too much to see, too far to go, or too long to visit. Take small groups of children with one adult for about three children.

Visit orchards, gardens, dairies, chicken farms, canneries, or bakeries. Learn where food comes from, how it is grown, what it looks like before and after it is ready to be sold to consumers.

Follow field trips with activities such as music, pretend play, and art. Talk with the children about what they learned on their visit. These activities give each child a chance to use what has been learned.

New Food Treasure Hunt

Gather some small plastic bowls with lids and a variety of nonperishable new foods (breads, fruits, and vegetables work well). Prepare each new food so it is ready to taste. Wash fresh fruits and vegetables. Cut into bite-size pieces. Place foods into plastic containers. Use a different container for each food.

Hide the containers, either inside or outdoors. Have the children try to find the containers of food. When all the containers are found, each child should bring his or her “treasure” to the table to share with the other children.

What Food am I?

Tape food models or pictures of food to each child’s back. The object of the game is for each child to find out what food is attached to their own back by asking “yes” or “no” questions. If a child is having trouble, give lots of hints such as: “Your food has lots of Vitamin A” or “Your food is in the fruit/vegetable group.”

Food Bingo

Have the children help you to make Food Bingo cards. Use one piece of cardboard or construction paper for each card. Divide the card to make six columns. At the top of each column, write the name of a food family (grains, vegetables, fruit, milk, meat, fats/oils/sweets).

Draw lines across the paper to make five boxes below the name of each food family. Place a food sticker or paste a picture of a food from each of the food groups in a square under the food family categories.

To play, give each child a handful of dry macaroni to use for markers. (Use larger pasta shapes for young children.) Name a food on the children’s bingo cards. If that food is on a child’s card, he or she can place a macaroni marker on the picture. The game is won when one child has markers on all the foods in a row, across, down, diagonally or in the four corners of the bingo card.

Nutrition Fishing

Have the children cut pictures of food from magazines or use cardboard food models. Tape paper clips to the back of the pictures or food models. Tie a piece of string to a wooden spoon to make a simple fishing pole. Tie a small magnet on the end of the string.

For a pond, use a pie pan, plastic dishpan or place a hula-hoop on the floor. Put food pictures in the pond. Have children fish for a well balanced meal. The magnet will attract the paper clips. Give children enough turns so everyone can catch a balanced meal. Talk about the foods with the children and help them to group the foods in the proper food families.

Spud and Spoon Race

Give each child a spoon and a small potato. Mark a starting line and a finish line on the floor with chalk or tape. The object is to race a given distance carrying the potato on the spoon. Fingers must stay clear of the potatoes. If a potato is dropped, the

child must go back to the starting line and start over. The first child across the finish line wins. *Spud and spoon* may also be played as a team relay race.

NUTRITION LESSON:

Potatoes contain carbohydrates, a source of energy. Potatoes also have vitamin C (ascorbic acid). In which food family are potatoes? How do they grow? How many ways can we cook potatoes?

Toss a Food Group

Have players sit in a circle. The leader tosses, rolls, or passes a ball to any other player and calls out the name of a food family. The player who catches the ball must name a food from that food family, toss the ball to another player, and call out the name of another food family. And so on, until each player has had at least one turn.

VARIATIONS:

Use a ball of yarn instead of a regular ball. Each player keeps hold of the yarn when he tosses the ball to another player making a web of yarn

stretching from player to player. The leader may then point out that in the same way that the players are all “tied” to each other, foods from the food groups work together to help us grow.

You may also choose other groups like favorite foods or holiday foods.

Veggie Tasting Game

Here is a game for tasting new vegetables. Cut the following vegetables into bite-size portions: broccoli, cauliflower, radishes, zucchini, cucumber.

Say riddles for the children to select vegetables:

- Taste the vegetable that looks like a white flower. (cauliflower)
- Find the little trees (broccoli).
- Taste the red rock (radish).
- Taste the vegetable wheels (zucchini or cucumber slices).

Serve with the recipe Spinach Surprise Dip.

Spinach Surprise Dip

2 cups fresh spinach
(chopped very fine)
¼ cup dried parsley
½ cup plain low fat yogurt
1 cup green onions,
including tops

Mix all ingredients together. Give each child his/her own bowl of dip and some fresh vegetables for dipping.

Yogurt Sundaes

Give each child a small plastic bowl or clean empty margarine tub and plastic spoon. Set out a bowl of plain yogurt. Have the children help prepare a fruit plate of sliced peaches, strawberries, banana slices, blueberries, crushed

pineapple, etc. Each child makes a sundae by spooning yogurt into the dish and topping it off with a choice of fruits. Granola may also be added.

Orange Fruit Salad

Give each child one half of an orange. Help them scoop out the orange sections with a spoon. Set the rinds aside to use as bowls. An adult should cut the orange sections into bite-sized pieces. Put them into a bowl.

Let the children use serrated plastic knives and cutting boards to cut banana and apple slices into chunks, grapes in half and pineapple slices into smaller pieces.

Add these fruits to the orange pieces and mix together. Each child fills an orange rind with a scoop of the fruit salad. Serve with milk.

Cheese-Wheat Snacks

7½ cups bite sized shredded wheat
5 tablespoons margarine, melted
parmesan cheese, grated
salt

Place shredded wheat in a bowl; pour melted margarine on it. Sprinkle with grated cheese. Add salt to taste. Stir ingredients together and place on a cookie sheet. Bake for 5 minutes at 350°F. Serve warm or cold. Makes 15 (½ cup) servings.

Banana Crunch Pops

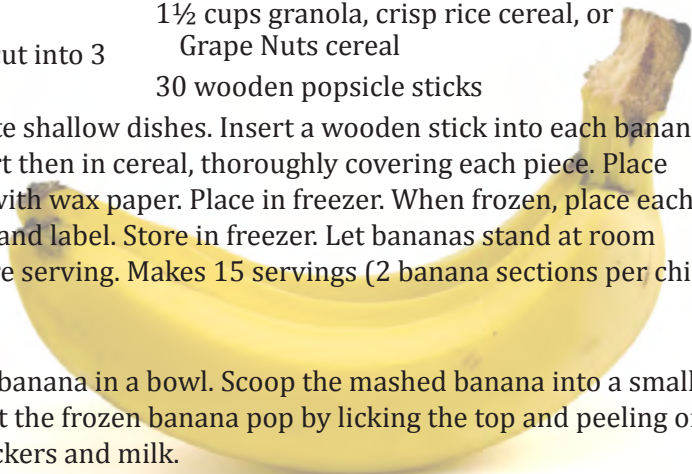
8 ounces yogurt (any flavor)
10 medium bananas, peeled and cut into 3 pieces each

1½ cups granola, crisp rice cereal, or Grape Nuts cereal
30 wooden popsicle sticks

Place yogurt and cereal in separate shallow dishes. Insert a wooden stick into each banana piece. Roll banana pieces in yogurt then in cereal, thoroughly covering each piece. Place bananas on a baking sheet lined with wax paper. Place in freezer. When frozen, place each banana in a plastic sandwich bag and label. Store in freezer. Let bananas stand at room temperature for 10 minutes before serving. Makes 15 servings (2 banana sections per child).

Frozen Banana Pops

Let each child mash half of a ripe banana in a bowl. Scoop the mashed banana into a small paper cup and freeze. Children eat the frozen banana pop by licking the top and peeling off the paper. Serve with graham crackers and milk.





Homemade Applesauce

- 15 medium apples
- 6 tablespoons honey*
- 2 teaspoons cinnamonwater

Core, peel, and chop apples. Boil in $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of water until apples are tender. Add honey and stir. Sprinkle with cinnamon and eat. Makes 15 ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) servings.

Macaroni Salad

- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 1 tomato, diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cheese cubes
- 2 cups cooked elbow macaroni
- 2 tablespoons plain yogurt

Wash the vegetables and cut them into pieces. Cut the cheese into cubes. Add the vegetables and cheese to the cooked macaroni. Add the yogurt and stir to mix well. Makes about 6 ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) servings.

Rice Pudding

- 2 egg whites
- 1 egg
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups cooked rice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins
- 2 cups milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cinnamon



Heat oven to 325°F. Beat egg whites and egg in an ungreased 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ quart casserole dish. Stir in remaining ingredients. Bake uncovered for 50 to 60 minutes, stirring after 30 minutes. Remove from oven when a knife inserted halfway between the center and the edge comes out clean. Sprinkle with ground cinnamon. Serve warm or cold. Immediately refrigerate any remaining pudding. Makes about 10 ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) servings.

Ambrosia Shake

- 4 ripe bananas, sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. vanilla
- 4 cups milk

Have the children help peel the bananas. Older preschoolers may be able to slice the bananas, using a serrated plastic knife and a cutting board. Let the children pour the ingredients into a blender. Blend until smooth. Makes 12 ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) servings.

Snow Waffles

Toast frozen waffles. Let each child use cookie cutters to cut a waffle into wintertime shapes (snowmen, trees, etc.). Sprinkle powdered sugar on the top of the waffle shapes. Serve with cocoa, cider or apple juice.

Teach Children to Eat Healthfully

As children eat with adults, they become used to eating healthy foods. Starting healthy eating habits as children is a lot easier than trying to change unhealthy habits that have been built over a lifetime.

Starting children off on a lifetime of healthy eating means giving them healthful food and showing them good eating behaviors. It also means helping children learn about foods, their bodies, and how choosing a good diet can help people to stay healthy.



Preschool children are at a good age to learn that eating nutritious foods is part of a healthy lifestyle. Children and adults can eat and enjoy foods from all food groups. Children like to explore different tastes, textures, colors, and shapes of food. Through this they can learn about food differences.

Preschool-age children like to explore the senses that are developing. They are excited to do activities that stimulate taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell.

Vegetable Rainbow

Have the children wash their hands. Let the children wash a rainbow of vegetables including red cherry tomatoes; orange carrots; yellow, red, and green peppers; green celery and broccoli; and purple cabbage. An adult should do any cutting and slicing. Arrange the vegetables in a rainbow pattern on a large platter or cookie sheet. Encourage each child to taste every color of the rainbow.

Make a simple vegetable dip by combining cottage cheese and ranch dressing. Mix to taste. Give each child his or her own serving of dip in a small cup or bowl.

Mixing Foods by Hand

Mix a batch of peanut butter cookies and a batch of oatmeal cookies. Ask children to wash their hands so they can mix the ingredients together with their hands. Discuss the difference in textures. For example, oatmeal is more grainy and firm while the peanut butter is soft and smooth. If your recipe has raw eggs, do not let children taste the batter.

NUTRITION LESSON

Mention that peanut butter is in the meat group while oatmeal is in the grain group. Both would be good for a snack food.

Hear It

Ask the children to close their eyes or tie a bandanna over their eyes. Make the following sounds and ask the children to identify the foods using only their sense of hearing.



- eggs breaking - pouring water
- crumbling crackers
- beating eggs
- corn popping
- celery crunching
- soda water fizzing

Taste It

Stir the following items into plain water. Give each child four spoons to dip into the solutions to taste. Ask them which foods taste salty, sweet, etc.



- salt (salty)
- white vinegar (sour)
- sugar (sweet)
- unsweetened grapefruit juice (bitter)

Smell It

Place some of the items below in small containers. Cut a slit in the lid. Glue small pictures from magazines or drawings of each food onto a piece of paper. Have the children take turns smelling the containers. Ask them to match the canister to the correct food picture.



- tuna
- vanilla
- lemon juice
- onion
- citrus peel
- cocoa
- cloves
- cinnamon
- peanut butter
- pepper
- chili powder

Feel It

Place sturdy foods, such as the ones listed below, inside clean socks or paper bags. Ask the children to reach into the sock or bag



and identify the foods by touch only. You may want to have pictures of the foods pasted onto a sheet of paper. Ask the children to match what's inside the bag to the pictures. Ask them about how the foods feel. Are they smooth? Bumpy? Fuzzy? Round? Long? Large or small?

- dry beans
- uncooked rice
- dry cereal
- flour
- raisins
- prunes
- cornmeal
- kiwi



Favorite Family Foods

Invite parents to share the ways that they prepare their homes and families for holidays or special occasions. Special foods, decorations, traditions and clothing could be incorporated into the housekeeping area.

Many recipes are passed from generation to generation. Talk with the children and their parents about the special recipes/foods in their families. Are the recipes the same or different from other families in your child care?

Ask parents to bring in a recipe or a sample to taste so everyone at child care can try special foods from each family. Some foods that look different have similar tastes and some foods taste different but look the same. Talk about them and sample them.

Table Talk

Another way to point out texture and other sensory variations is to play guessing games at the table. Ask the children, "What do you have on your plate that is crunchy?" (a carrot) "What is red and slippery?" (jello) "Can you think of the only true blue food?" (a blueberry).

Scoop Out a Pumpkin

Each child should have a spoon, a large dish for pumpkin pulp, and a paper cup for seeds. Separate the pulp from the seeds and discuss the texture of pumpkin. Use the pulp to make pumpkin pies, bread, muffins, or cookies for the children to sample. Roast or fry the pumpkin seeds in oil and salt for a snack.

NUTRITION LESSON

Place the food used in this activity into its food group: pumpkin pulp is in the vegetable group. For older children, mention that pumpkin is one of the dark yellow vegetables that should be included in their diet several times a week. Pumpkin seeds are in the meat group.

Finger Lickin' Snacks

Plan a snack or a meal that can be eaten with the fingers. Nuts, crackers, fruits, and vegetables are easy. Be brave and experiment with peanut butter, yogurt, and other foods that are normally eaten with a utensil. Be sure the children have clean hands before they start this activity. Use spoons in the serving bowls. As they eat, talk with the children about how foods feel.

How Do You Like Your Carrots?

Prepare cooked, raw, and frozen carrots. Dice or mash the cooked carrots. Don't add salt, butter, or spices. Serve raw carrots in sticks or rounds. Slice the frozen carrots into thin sticks or rounds.

Invite the children to taste each of the different ways to prepare carrots. Ask them which they like the best and why. Try serving other foods, such as potatoes, eggs, green beans, spinach, and apples in several ways.

Touch and Size

Blindfold older children. Younger children may prefer just to close their eyes. Give children several different sizes of dried beans, uncooked pasta, or nuts. Pick foods with an aroma so children can identify foods by the way they smell or feel. Ask children to sort the foods by smell or by size: small foods together, medium together and large.

NUTRITION LESSON

Discuss the foods used for this activity. This might become a math activity by comparing which foods are bigger or smaller than others or by counting the number of foods used in the activity.

Spice Traders

Children will often refuse to eat spicy foods. A good time to talk with them about spices is when you talk about foods from other countries. Pop some popcorn. Divide it into separate bowls. Sprinkle each bowl of popcorn with a different spice or herb. Onion, garlic, and seasoned salt are especially tasty, but you can try cinnamon, nutmeg, oregano and others, too.

Cooking Means Changes

You will need 4 eggs for this activity. Boil water in a saucepan. Number the eggs 1, 2, 3, and 4 by writing on the shells with a waterproof, permanent marker. Place all the eggs into the pan of boiling water.

Remove egg #1 after 1 minute. Remove egg #2 after 3 minutes, egg #3 after 5 minutes, and egg #4 after 10 minutes. Crack each egg into a different bowl to show the difference in cooking times on the eggs. Explain that cooking and heat also help kill many germs.

Make certain that no child eats the eggs used in this activity.

More about Temperature

1. Freeze different shapes of ice cubes. Why did the water turn hard?
2. Boil water and watch the steam. When we see steam rising, what is happening?
3. Melt the ice cubes to show children how temperature can change foods.

Eating Colors

1. Serve the same food in different colors, such as red, green and yellow apples. Ask the children if the different colors of apples taste the same or different.
2. Serve different foods that are the same color, such as oranges, carrots and cantaloupe. How are these foods the same? How are these foods different?
3. Serve different foods that are different colors, such as red apples, orange oranges, purple plums, yellow bananas. How are these foods the same? How are they different?

Natural Dyes

This is a messy activity but very interesting. (You might want to do this outdoors in the summertime.) Choose some colorful berries, fruits, or vegetables, such as grapes, walnuts, grass, beets, onions. Place the food in a saucepan. (Use a separate pan for each food). Add water, cover, and bring to a boil. Allow to simmer for ½ hour. Remove the food from the pan with a slotted spoon or pour into a colander or strainer. Be sure to save the liquid. Allow the liquid to cool.

Set out the pans of cool liquid. Give the children small pieces of white cloth (pieces of old sheets are great). Let them dip the pieces of cloth into the pans of liquid. See if they can guess which foods made each dye.

In many parts of the world, natural dyes are still used for dying clothing. You may want to ask parents to bring a white t-shirt for the children to dye or let them dye fabric to make curtains for the classroom. Also, try dying a peeled cooked egg in beet juice!

NUTRITION LESSON

Select some of the foods used for dyes for a snack. A lesson on color can be taught with this activity, for example, mixing blue and yellow to get green.

Shopping Spree

Save clean leftover food containers with the labels until there are enough for the children to play store. Separate food packages according to the food groups. Combine them in different ways to plan meals for a day.

Grocery Helpers

Ask the children to help put groceries away. Talk with the children about foods. Compare them by color, shape, texture, and taste.

Talk about Favorite Snacks

Help the children write down a list of their favorite snacks. Make up a list of categories such as the ones listed below. Talk with the children about which snacks belong in each category.

- baked in the oven
- comes out of the refrigerator
- comes out of a box
- grows on a farm
- tastes sweet
- tastes salty

Guess the Food

Put three or four favorite foods on each child's plate. Have the children pick one food out and put it in your hand or mouth while you cover your eyes. You try to guess by touch or taste which food it is. Then switch roles, and let each child try to guess.



Potato Sampler

Give each child a potato to scrub. Cut one clean raw potato into slices. Let each child feel, smell and taste a slice of raw potato.

Place another potato into a saucepan. Add water and simmer until tender. Or bake a raw potato until tender.

Peel remaining potatoes. Place in a saucepan with water and cook until they are soft enough to mash. Have children take turns using a hand masher to mash the cooked potatoes. Let one child pour milk into the potatoes, another add margarine, and another put in a dash of salt. Have the children take turns mixing.

Allow each child to take a small portion of the boiled or baked potato and a portion of the mashed potato. Talk with the children about the changes in taste and texture of the potato from when it was raw to cooked to mashed.



How Bodies Grow

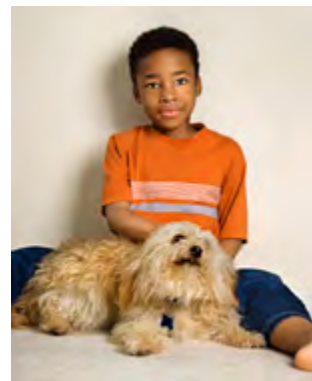
Trace each child's body shape on a large piece of paper. Cut out the shape and color it to look like the child. Cut out pictures of food from magazines. Paste the pictures on the body cutout. Talk about how food helps the body grow. Ask the children if their bodies are the same size and shape. Compare the cutout to your body size. Explain that bodies grow in different shapes, and sizes, and at different rates. Ask parents to bring in a baby picture of each child. Discuss how the children have grown.

Food Makes Bodies Grow

Make or buy a growth poster. Along the unruled edge, paste pictures of food or have the children draw pictures of foods. Talk about how important food is to growth. Show them how their height increases with age.

Pets Grow Too

Talk about the family pet, or the children's pets. Discuss the importance of giving a pet food and water every day to help it grow and keep it healthy.



Books and Stories about Food

Select children's books and stories that talk about food or make up your own stories about food and health.

Preschoolers like animals and other children as characters. Ask the children questions about the story. Avoid books that encourage inappropriate food uses - reward, punishment or toys.

Dried Apple Rings

(older children can help to make this recipe)

½ apple per child

1 part lemon juice

4 parts water

Wash, peel, and core apples. Slice into 1/8" thick rings. Mix lemon juice and water in a bowl. Dip apple rings in lemon-water mixture. String rings on a clean, strong thread. Don't let rings touch each other. Let rings hang until fruit is dried.

Juicy Finger Blocks

3 envelopes unflavored gelatin

¾ cup boiling water

1 can (12 oz.) frozen apple, orange, grape, or other juice concentrate

Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Add juice and stir until mixed. Pour into a lightly greased 9"x13" pan. Chill in the refrigerator until firm (about 2 hours). Cut into squares or use cookie cutters to make shapes. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

Fruit Leather

2 cups fully ripened fruit (do not use bananas or citrus fruit)
2 tablespoons honey or sugar

Optional: a combination of any of the following seasonings to equal 1 tablespoon: ground cinnamon, nutmeg, lemon or orange peel and/or cloves.

Wash fruit well (don't remove edible peels). Cut into large chunks. Put fruit in blender with honey or sugar. Add desired seasonings. Blend for 15 seconds.

Cover baking sheet with plastic wrap (mixture should not leak under the wrap). Spoon individual servings of the fruit mixture onto plastic wrap (fruit should be about 1/8" thick). Set on sunny window sill for approximately 12 hours until firm and not sticky (cover with a nylon net if bugs are a problem) OR put in oven at 150°F with door ajar for 4 hours.

Fruit leather can be frozen or stored in a sealed container for 6 months to 1 year.

Sweet Carrot Sticks

Cut raw carrots into sticks. Place in a container and pour in unsweetened pineapple juice to cover. Chill for an hour or more before serving.

Iron-a-Sandwich

Prepare cheese sandwiches as you would for grilling. Butter the outsides of each slice of bread. Wrap the sandwiches in aluminum foil. Iron the sides of each sandwich with a warm iron for 1 or 2 minutes on each side. This is a fun snack for a rainy day.

Rounds

Slice carrots, cucumbers and zucchini into rounds. Let the children spread them with cream cheese, peanut butter, egg salad, etc.

Purple Cow

¼ cup unsweetened grape juice
1 cup milk
1 banana, sliced

Mix all ingredients together in a blender.
Makes 4 to 6 small servings.

Golden Gelatin Eggs

3 cups unsweetened apple juice, divided
2 envelopes unflavored gelatin
diced fruit (optional)
lettuce
10 plastic eggs

Wash plastic eggs. Allow to dry. Bring 1 cup of the apple juice to a boil in a saucepan. Empty 1 envelope of gelatin into a bowl and pour in the hot apple juice. Stir until gelatin is dissolved. Add ½ cup cold apple juice and stir.

Place the top halves of 10 plastic eggs in a thoroughly washed empty plastic egg carton. If desired, spoon a small amount of diced fruit into each egg half. Fill the egg halves with the gelatin mixture. Carefully place the egg carton in the refrigerator. Chill for about 2 hours or until the gelatin has set.

Make another batch of apple juice gelatin. Hold one egg bottom in your hand and fill it with gelatin. Place an egg top over the egg bottom. Secure the two halves tightly. Place the egg, top half down, in the egg carton. Return eggs to the refrigerator. Allow gelatin to set for about 2 more hours.

To unmold, place each egg in hot water for 1 minute. Carefully remove the plastic eggs. Place each golden egg on a bed of lettuce on a small plate. Makes 10 gelatin eggs.

Pink Deviled Eggs

4 eggs
1 small can beets
1 tablespoon mayonnaise
½ teaspoon prepared mustard

Hard cook eggs. Cool and remove shells. Cut eggs in half lengthwise and scoop out yolks into a small bowl. Pour juice from the can of beets into a cup. Soak each egg white half in the beet juice for 1 minute. (The egg whites will not taste like beets.) Remove egg whites and drain on a paper towel. Mix egg yolks with mayonnaise and mustard. Fill the pink egg halves with the yellow deviled egg mixture. Makes 8 deviled eggs.



Muffins

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup whole-wheat or graham flour
- 1 egg
- ½ cup unsweetened apple juice concentrate
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 banana, sliced

Sift together all-purpose flour, baking powder and salt. Stir in whole wheat or graham flour. Blend egg, apple juice concentrate, oil, milk, and banana in a blender. Combine dry and liquid ingredients. Spoon into greased or lined muffin cups. Bake at 400°F for 20 to 25 minutes. Makes 12 muffins.



VARIATIONS:

Fruit Muffins

Add 1 cup chopped fresh or canned fruit to the muffin mix before filling muffin cups. Peaches or blueberries are especially delicious!



Bran Muffins

Substitute 2 cups bran flakes for the whole-wheat or graham flour.

Celery Vehicles

Wash celery stalks. Cut each stalk into pieces (2-3 inch long). Fill the center of each piece with peanut butter or egg salad.

It's easy to turn filled celery pieces into transportation snacks. Hook two together with toothpicks to make an outrigger. Add a paper sail to one to make a sailboat. Attach carrot wheels to the sides of another with toothpicks to make a racing car.

Peanut Butter

Have the children help you to shell a package of roasted unsalted peanuts. Grind the peanuts in a food grinder. Mix the ground peanut mixture with softened margarine. Add salt to taste. Spread the peanut butter onto crackers.

For a special treat spread the peanut butter on whole-wheat toast and top with warm applesauce.

Peach Yogurt

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- 1 cup diced peaches
- ¼ cup unsweetened apple juice concentrate

Mix all ingredients together in a blender. Spoon into cups. Makes 6 to 8 small servings.

Grape Punch

- 5 cups unsweetened grape juice
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened orange juice concentrate
- 1 cup water
- Ice cubes
- Orange slices

Stir first 4 ingredients together. Pour into glasses over ice cubes and garnish with orange slices. Makes 24 small servings.

Celery Logs

Mix equal portions of grated carrots, peanut butter and crumbled spoon-sized shredded wheat. Press mixture into celery stalks, cut into 2-3 inch long pieces.

Peach Crisp

- 4 to 5 fresh peaches
- 1 cup nut-like cereal
- ¼ cup unsweetened apple juice concentrate
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon margarine
- milk (optional)



Peel and dice peaches. Place in a greased pie pan. Stir in cereal, apple juice concentrate and cinnamon. Top with dabs of the margarine. Bake at 350°F for 25 minutes. Serve warm, plain, or with milk. Try topping it with Peach Yogurt. Makes 10 to 12 small servings.

Crunchy Critter Cookies

- 1 cup mixed nuts
- ½ cup dried mixed fruit
- 3 ripe bananas, mashed
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 3 cups rolled oats
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon

Chop nuts in a blender and put them into a large bowl. Then chop dried fruit in the blender and add it to the nut mixture. Add bananas, vanilla, vegetable oil, rolled oats, salt and cinnamon. Stir ingredients thoroughly. Let stand a few minutes for oats to absorb moisture. Place spoonfuls of the dough on an ungreased cookie sheet and flatten each one with a fork. Bake for 20 minutes at 350°F.

Makes 4 dozen cookies.

Cheese Toast

Lightly toast slices of bread. Put bread slices on a cookie sheet and cover with shredded Cheddar cheese. If desired, sprinkle on sesame seeds or sunflower seeds. Broil until cheese is melted. Cut each slice into 3 sections.

Watermelon Popsicles

- 1 cup seedless watermelon chunks
- 1 cup unsweetened orange juice
- 1 cup water

Blend all ingredients together in a blender. Pour into small paper cups. Place in freezer. When partially frozen, insert popsicle sticks or small plastic spoons for handles. Freeze until solid. Unmold by running hot water over bottoms of cups for a few seconds.



Toasted Sunflower Seeds

Shell raw sunflower seeds. Place seeds on a cookie sheet. Spray them with nonstick vegetable cooking spray or sprinkle them with a small amount of vegetable oil. Stir and spread them out evenly. Bake at 300°F until crispy, about 25 minutes. Add salt if desired.

Peanutty Burrito Rolls

- 2 cans (16 ounces each) diced peaches in juice*
- 1¼ cups peanut butter
- 10 (6-inch) whole grain or enriched flour tortillas**

Drain peaches. Spread 4 tablespoons peanut butter equally over one side of each tortilla, covering the entire surface evenly. Divide peaches evenly between tortillas. Roll up, tucking in sides, to form a burrito. Cut each roll in half to serve. Makes 20 servings (1 burrito equals 2 servings.)

* Also try shredded carrots or shredded apples instead of peaches.

** Use the soft tortilla shells that are sold in the dairy case. They can be rolled without preheating if they are left out of the refrigerator for about one hour.

Glazed Carrot Wheels

Read Ruth Krauss's book *The Carrot Seed* before and after you do this activity.

- 1½ pounds carrots
- 2 tablespoons margarine
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ½ cup water

Scrape and slice carrots. Melt margarine in an electric skillet or saucepan. Mix water and honey. Pour into the skillet or saucepan. Add carrots, cover, and cook on low heat, stirring occasionally until tender.

This recipe makes about 16 ¼-cup servings of vegetables.

Fruit Dip

- ½ cup plain yogurt
- ground cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened frozen orange juice concentrate
- fresh fruit, such as apples, peaches, oranges, bananas, berries, pears

Have the children help you to wash the fruit. An adult should cut the washed fruit into finger size pieces (be sure the pieces are small enough so children won't choke).

Have the children mix the orange juice and yogurt in a small bowl. Let them sprinkle some cinnamon on top.

Give each child his or her own small bowl of yogurt dip. Have each child spoon fruit onto a small plate, then dip the fruit pieces into the yogurt dip and enjoy.

NUTRITION LESSON

While eating and preparing the food, talk about the different colors, tastes, and shapes of the fruit and yogurt mixture. Tell the children that yogurt is made from milk, so it has calcium that helps make strong bones and teeth.

Vegetable Soup

Read the book *Stone Soup* by A. McGovern. Making vegetable soup is a fun cooking activity to use with a number of stories. (*Peter Rabbit* is another favorite.) Talk with the children about the textures tastes, and how the vegetables look.

You'll need 1 cup of each vegetable:

- potatoes
- celery
- green peppers
- carrots
- 2 cups water
- 2 cups tomato juice

Have the children help you wash the vegetables. An adult should cut the vegetables into small pieces. Place vegetables in a pot with water and tomato juice. Bring ingredients to a boil and reduce heat. Simmer for 15 minutes.

This recipe makes approximately 12 ½-cup servings of vegetables.



Frozen Waffle Treat

- 1 12-ounce box (48 frozen mini-waffles each)
- 8 ounces fruit flavored yogurt

Have each child use crayons to decorate his or her own plastic sandwich bag.

Spread yogurt on one waffle. Use just enough yogurt to cover the top of 24 waffles (about 2 teaspoons per waffle). Top each waffle with another waffle, making a sandwich. Place waffles in decorated sandwich bags. Freeze until firm. Makes 24 mini-waffle sandwiches.

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