Welcome

Looking to add a fresh twist on your nutrition education for the little ones in your care?

Attached you will find ‘Grab and Go’ activities designed for early care providers. With Parent Handouts and Activity Plans for 12 different fruits and vegetables, you can find specific games, songs, recipes, facts, story books and resources all in one place!

These documents were created in support of Farm to Early Care & Education efforts, which encompasses gardening, nutrition education, and purchasing of local produce. There are a variety of great comprehensive classroom curricula, including one from Minnesota’s own IATP, and the CDC’s Grow It, Try It, Like It. We hope these materials are easy to use ‘grab and go’ activities for any provider who might not be ready to implement a full curriculum, or supplemental activities for providers using another curriculum.

Renewing the Countryside is dedicated to building a just, sustainable, and vibrant rural America. We believe Farm to Early Care is one great way to connect urban, suburban, and rural kids with where their food comes from. Check out our website for more early care activities and ideas!

We hope to reflect provider experiences and feedback as these documents continue to evolve. Have suggestions or feedback? Please email us at info@rtcinfo.org

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the many people who have already provided feedback and insight about these documents, including childcare providers in Saint Paul, members of the Minnesota Farm to Early Care network, and many others.

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www.renewingthecountryside.org
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetable</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPLES</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEETS</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARROTS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUCUMBERS</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAIRY</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEAS</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEPPERS</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POTATOES</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPINACH</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOMATOES</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TURNIPS</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZUCCHINI</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Provider,

Welcome to Pint Size Produce! We hope these are easy and intuitive to use - each activity group includes:

**Activity Plan** with a finger play or song, activity or taste test, and links to possible other resources

**Half Page Handout** great for a simple reference point, some providers have printed them and put them up near pick-up for parents to see

**Parent Handout** that can be printed and provided to parents

Please visit [www.pintsizeproduce.org](http://www.pintsizeproduce.org) to download editable versions of each of the documents - if you'd like to change text on the parent handout, note what changes you made for your setting, etc. If you have adaptations, suggestions, or questions please let us know at info@rtcinfo.org. Happy eating!

[www.pintsizeproduce.org](http://www.pintsizeproduce.org)
Supplies:

Book: Apple Farmer Annie
By Monica Wellington

Tasting:
- 2-3 varieties of local apples
- Apple corer or knife
- Cutting board

Activity:
- Red and green play dough
- Apple cookie cutters

Coloring Pages:
http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/fruits/apples

Apples!

Read the book “Apple Farmer Annie”.

Some items to point out:
- Trees/orchard
- Different varieties/colors of apples
- Farmers market stand

Watch a video of Apple Farmer Annie read aloud here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOX4iJsHns&t=8s

Tasting: Sliced Apples

Select 2-3 varieties of local apples. Include distinct differences – size, texture, color. Haralson and Honeycrisp contrast tart and sweet varieties, for example.

If possible, slice the apples in the classroom. Provide whole apples to pass around the class as well.

After tasting and comparing the various apples, discuss:
- Are the apples sweet or tart?
- Soft or crunchy?
Activity: Play Dough

For younger children especially, consider an interactive activity instead of a book. One possibility: play dough! Make red and green play dough, and discuss the color and shape of apples. Supply cookie cutters or shapes to press in the dough - apples, the letter A, trees, etc. Older children can also make their own ball 'apple' or worm 'stem'.

Play Dough Recipe:
3 cups flour
1-1/2 cups salt
3 cups water
2 Tablespoons cooking oil
1 Tablespoon cream of tartar
food coloring

Combine all ingredients except food coloring in saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly with a sturdy spoon, until the dough comes away from the sides of the pan and is hard to stir. Remove mixture from the pan. When cool, add food coloring and knead until color is distributed. Store in airtight container.

Fingerplay:

Three Red Apples*

Adapted from a song by Apple Jean Warren
Way up high in an apple tree (put arms up)
Three red apples smiled at me.
(pointer fingers to corners of mouth)
I shook that tree as hard as I could;
(pretend to shake tree)
Down came the apple
(wave arms down)
Mmmm, it was good!
(rub stomach)

More Resources

- Consider joining the Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch in October – an easy first ‘bite’ of Farm to Early Care!
- Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities: www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece
Apples!

Try It!
Apples are delicious! Try:
- Grating an apple or making applesauce for toddlers
- Cutting through the core to see the star
- Tasting different varieties: what is your favorite apple?

Did you know?
In Minnesota, apples are in season from August to November. The Honeycrisp Apple is Minnesota’s state fruit, created at the University of Minnesota.¹

Look for local apples at the grocery store, or visit www.minnesotagrown.com to find local apples near you!

Fingerplay:
Way up high in an apple tree (arms up)
Three red apples smiled at me.
(pointer fingers to corners of mouth)
I shook that tree as hard as I could;
(pretend to shake tree)
Down came the apple (wave arms down)
Mmmm, it was good! (rub stomach)
Repeat for 2 apples, 1 apple

Resources
Find many farm to childcare resources on our website:
www.renewingthecountryside.org

Many more apple activities can be found here:
teaching2and3yearolds.com/amazing-preschool-apple-theme-activities/

1. https://mnhardy.umn.edu/varieties/fruit/apples/honeycrisp

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www.renewingthecountryside.org
Apples!

Did you know? The Honeycrisp apple is Minnesota’s state fruit. ¹
Minnesota’s farmers grow lots of apples – nearly 20 million pounds each year. ²

Today your child tasted a Sweetango apple, from Whistling Well, a local orchard. Ask them – was it sweet? Tart? Soft? Crisp?

1. https://www.sos.state.mn.us/about-minnesota/state-symbols
2. https://minnesotagrown.com/apples/

www.renewingthecountryside.org
Beets!

Book: Up, Down and Around
by Katharine Ayres

Read “Up, Down, and Around” by Katharine Ayres. Read the book through once, and then repeat, having children act out up, down, and around.

Discuss with children the different parts of plants. What part do we eat for different fruits and vegetables: the fruit? The leaves? The root?

Watch a video of Up, Down, and Around here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yY4ZNV3BQCw

Tasting: Steamed Beets

Peel and chop beets, cover in water, and microwave until soft. SAVE the water to paint with (see activity)!

Consider offering raw beets as well. Grate beets, and add a little dressing or orange juice to coat. Compare flavor and texture!
Activity: Beet Watercolor

This activity can let younger children practice putting tape on the paper, and holding a paintbrush. Preschoolers can make patterns with tape and make a painting!

1. Peel and chop a beet, cover in water, and microwave until soft.

1. Give children a piece of paper and brush. Provide pieces of tape to make a pattern on paper, if desired.

1. Pour small portions of the brightly colored water into containers, and let kids paint with the watercolor!

Talk about the colors of beets, and where the beet grows (under the ground).

Song:

Eat a Beet*

(Tune: “If You’re Happy and you Know It”)

If you’re hungry and you know it, eat a beet!
If you’re hungry and you know it, eat a beet!

Beets are red, orange and striped;
Open wide, and take a bite!

If you’re hungry and you know it, eat a beet!

More Resources

• Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities: www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

• One curriculum to check out – with high quality photos of beets and many other fruits and vegetables: www.harvestforhealthykids.org/

Sources of Information

* https://www.harvestforhealthykids.org/
Song
Tune: "Muffin Man"

Do you eat your vegetables, vegetables, vegetables? Oh, do you eat your vegetables - each and every day?
Yes, we eat our vegetables, vegetables, vegetables: Oh, yes we eat our vegetables - each and every day!

Continue the song, substituting each child’s name and favorite vegetable. For example:
Oh Jonas eats beets, beets, beets,
Oh Jonas eats beets - each and every day!

Did you know?
In Minnesota, peak season for beets is July to October. Red beets are most common, Chioggia beets (pictured left) are striped, and golden beets are orange! Beets are a good source of potassium and iron. ¹ Look for local beets at the grocery store, or find beets near you using www.minnesotagrown.com.

Try It!
Try offering both raw and cooked beets – grated beets can be good for younger eaters. Add dressing or orange juice to raw beets and mix.

See which one is your favorite!

Resources
Find many farm to childcare resources on our website: www.renewingthecountryside.org/12e

More beet activities can be found here under ‘activity kits’: www.harvestforhealthykids.org/

2. //www.itp.org/documents/farm-childcare-curriculum-package

www.renewingthecountryside.org
Did you know? Beets come in different colors, including orange (golden), and striped (Chioggia, pictured above)! The peak harvest season for beets in Minnesota is from July to October.¹

Ask your child what they learned about beets today! Do they grow under the ground or above the ground? What are the different ways you can eat beets?

¹. https://minnesotagrown.com/whats-in-season/
Carrots!

Story: The Carrot Seed

Questions you might ask while reading:
• What does the little boy give the plant to help it grow?
• What did everyone keep telling the little boy?

Highlight that the carrot is a root vegetable, so the part we usually eat grows beneath the soil.

Watch a video of The Carrot Seed read aloud here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_bKqYUc-2M

Tasting: Carrot Salad

This salad is a fun way to get preschoolers involved in preparing food, and they can be more willing to try unfamiliar flavor combinations if they helped put it together!
1. Grate carrots – little hands can help.
2. Add raisins, pineapple chunks, and sunflower seeds, if using.
3. Stir in mayonnaise, just enough to coat the salad.

Alternate:
Offer raw and steamed carrots – grate raw carrots, steam diced carrots in a microwave. Compare flavor and texture!
Activity: Carrot Tops and Bottoms

Note: The egg carton can be cut and separated so children can have their own “carrot patch”

1. Use a scissors to poke a small hole in each carton, if there isn’t one already.
2. Make “carrots” by folding the “bottom” around the “tops”, and twisting the pipe cleaner together. Make sure the tops are easy for little fingers to grab.
3. Push three different colored carrots through each “carrot patch”/ egg carton. Have students pull them up, and collect in their own garden basket!

Talk about the colors of carrots, and where the carrot grows (under the ground).

Song:
Planting Song

(Tune: “The Farmer in the Dell”)

It’s time to plant the seeds,

It’s time to plant the seeds,

Heigh-ho, the derry-o,

It’s time to plant the seeds.

Other verses:

The warm sun shines all day...

The rain comes gently down...

The plant pops through the soil...

We need to water and hoe...

We help our garden grow...

Invite children to act out the words!

More Resources

• Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities:
  https://www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

Sources of Information

Carrots!

Try It!

Tasting is a key part of learning about food. Try offering carrots both raw and cooked – grated carrots can let younger eaters try raw carrots.

See which one is your favorite!

Fingerplay:

See the carrots in the ground (use arms to form a carrot shape)
I pull them up without a sound (pull them out)
I wash and clean them up and down (rub palms together)
I love to eat them all year round (pretend to eat carrots)!

Resources

Find many farm to childcare resources on our website:
www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

Find more carrot activities can here:

Did you know?

In Minnesota, peak carrot season is from August to October. In addition to orange, carrots can also be white, purple, and red!

Carrots are a great source of fiber. 1

Look for local carrots at the grocery store, or use www.minnesotagrown.com to find local carrots near you!

2. //www.iatp.org/documents/farm-childcare-curriculum-package

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Carrots!

Did you know? The heaviest carrot on record was grown in Minnesota in 2017 – it weighed over 22 pounds!¹

The peak harvest season for carrots in Minnesota is from August to October.²

Ask your child what they learned about carrots: did they try them hard or soft?


Cucumbers!

Story: I Hear A Pickle

Talk about our senses, and how we use each of them when we eat!

Watch a video of the story read aloud here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JetHl3q2Idw

Alternate: “I will Never, Not Ever Eat a Tomato” by Lauren Child. If you prefer, access a video of this story being read aloud here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiHg3bRgSKc

Tasting: Cucumbers

Cucumbers are delicious eaten raw. One fun thing to do with young kids is to make refrigerator pickles! See details for this under the “activity” section.

There are lots of other great ways to try cucumbers too – crunch one raw, dip it, or make a cucumber sandwich with bread and cream cheese – take your pick!
Activity: Pickles

This is an easy cooking activity – the youngest eaters can put a cucumber slice into a jar. For toddlers, give them their own jar so cucumber slices that go in mouths are not part of the pickles!

Refrigerator Pickles *

1. Thinly slice small to medium size cucumbers – pickling “Kirby” cucumbers or seedless cucumbers will work best, but try with what you have!
2. Put slices into a mason jar or other lidded container.
3. Add salt and dill (if using), then add vinegar. Seal with a lid and shake to mix.
4. Place in refrigerator – shake again after a couple of hours.

These can be eaten as soon as 2 hours after making, or will last a couple of weeks in the refrigerator.

Song:
Do you Eat your Vegetables?

(Tune: “The Muffin Man”)
Do you eat your vegetables, vegetables, vegetables?
Do you eat your vegetables, every single day?

Continue with specific vegetables and names:

Maria eats her cucumbers, cucumbers, cucumbers.
Maria eats her cucumbers, every single day.

More Resources
- Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities:
  https://www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

Sources of Information
https://www.goodreads.com/
* https://smittenkitchen.com/2014/07/easiest-fridge-dill-pickles/
Cucumbers and broccoli, Vegetables are good for me. For my snack and in my lunch, Veggies are so great to munch.

Cucumbers and broccoli, Vegetables are good for me.

Did you know?
Cucumbers are in season in Minnesota from July to September. They are easy to grow, and fun for kids to pick!
Find local cucumbers at your local grocery store or farmer’s market, or use the www.minnesotagrown.com directory to find local cucumbers near you!

Resources
Find many farm to childcare resources on our website: www.renewingthecountryside.org
Some great cucumber recipes and activities can be found here: https://growing-minds.org/tag/cucumbers+recipe/

Try It!
Cucumbers are great to eat raw. Try dipping them in cottage cheese or hummus, or make cucumber sandwiches with cream cheese and bread.
What is your favorite?

Fingerplay:
Cucumbers and broccoli, Vegetables are good for me.
For my snack and in my lunch, Veggies are so great to munch.
Cucumbers and broccoli, Vegetables are good for me.

2. www.iatp.org/documents/farm-childcare-curriculum-package
Cucumbers! Cucumbers are in season in Minnesota from July to September.¹

Try making a cucumber salad – mix chopped cucumbers and Greek yogurt. Leave it in the fridge for a bit, then eat as a dip or with a spoon! ²

Ask your child what the cucumber was like! Was it big or little, sweet or salty?


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Dairy!

**Story: The Milk Makers**

Read “The Milk Makers” by Gail Gibbons.

- What color are the dairy cows you saw in the book?
- What do dairy cows eat? What do they drink?

Talk about what other products are made from milk. What is your favorite dairy food?

Watch a video of “The Milk Makers” read aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQcwYnSB3xo

Or a video about where milk comes from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYFA2-4Zzhk

**Tasting: Butter**

Follow the instructions on the next page for making your own butter. This will result in fresh butter, and the resulting liquid is buttermilk. The buttermilk can be consumed directly or used in recipes.

Alternate: Pick a few different dairy items, talk about them, and taste them. Milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, etc. – what is your favorite?
Activity: Butter

This activity can involve both toddlers and preschoolers in preparing snack!

1. Fill spill-proof containers partway with heavy whipping cream – make individual containers or take turns as a group.
2. Shake and dance until the cream turns into butter – you will be able to hear the change when it separates.
3. Pour off the buttermilk (liquid) – let kids taste it. Spread the fresh butter on a cracker or piece of bread and enjoy!

Note: Fresh butter should be consumed soon after it is made. If you are storing it, rinse the buttermilk off under cold water first.

Want more detail? Want to make your own butter regularly? Bon Appetit wrote all about it: https://www.bonappetit.com/test-kitchen/ingredients/article/how-to-make-butter

Song: Minnesota Milk

Give me a long M (Mmmmm)
Give me a short M (M)

Don’t give me no pop, no pop
Don’t give me no tea, no tea
Just give me that milk (moo moo moo moo)
Minnesota milk (moo moo moo moo)

Repeat with other letters, then...
Give me a long milk (Chocolate)
Give me a short milk (Skim)...

More Resources

- Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities: www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece
- Minnesota Ag in the Classroom has some great videos - while they focus on K-12, their Dairy videos would be great for younger kids too: https://minnesota.agclassroom.org/educator/video_dairy.cfm
Milk!

Did you know?
Milk is Minnesota’s official state drink, and the state produces 9 billion pounds of milk each year! ¹

Look for local milk at the grocery store, or visit www.minnesotagrown.com to find local milk near you!

Try It!
Tasting is a key part of learning about food. Try comparing a few of the products that milk is made from – milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese.

Which is your favorite?

Resources
Find many farm to childcare resources on our website: www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

Make your own butter! www.bright hubeducation.com/preschool-crafts-activities/63684-making-butter-with-preschoolers/

Song: “The Wheels on the Bus”
Oh, the tractor on the farm goes round and round, round and round, round and round
Oh, the tractor on the farm goes round and round, all around the farm
The cow on the farm...
The chicken on the farm... etc.


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Make your own butter! www.bright hubeducation.com/preschool-crafts-activities/63684-making-butter-with-preschoolers/
Today we talked about milk.

Did you know? Milk is Minnesota’s official state drink, and 9 billion pounds are produced each year in our state. ¹

What is your child’s favorite product made from milk? Ask them what they learned about milk today!

¹. https://www.sos.state.mn.us/about-minnesota/state-symbols/state-drink-milk
Peas!

Book: The Little Green Pea

Read the book “The Little Green Pea”.

This story follows a little pea until it is eaten by a worm and used in the making of a tree. It’s a great opportunity to discuss the plant life cycle!

Watch a video of a read aloud here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jq1Jh-h8h_w

Tasting: Exploring Pea Pods

1. Starting with the whole pea pod, and have children observe what the pod looks/feels/smells like.
2. Have children guess how many peas might be in their pea pod.
3. Demonstrate opening the pea pod along the seam. Teach children how to pluck peas out of the pod. How do the peas taste? Are they soft? Sweet? Juicy? Bitter?
4. If the pea pods are still vibrant in color, they will be sweet to eat. When the children are finished with their peas, have them taste the pod on its own, too!
Activity:

**Little Peas**

1. Using clay, give children enough to roll one or more “peas”.
2. Dry the clay “peas”. This can be done faster by placing in the microwave for 30 sec. at a time.
3. Have children draw faces on their peas, if desired!
4. Play “Little Peas Around the Classroom”: Children can take turns hiding their peas around the classroom, making for a fun hide-and-seek!

Alternate: children can also tightly roll green construction paper to use as their “peas”.

**Peas in a Pod**

1. Have children paint or color their paper plate green, dry, and fold in half.
2. Enclose the peas (from “little peas” activity above) by either stapling the plate on the edges, or having children punch holes along the edge of the plate, and allowing children to lace the “pea pod” shut. See right for example.

Fingerplay:

**Five Little Peas**

Five little peas in a pea pod pressed (closed fist)
One grew, two grew and so did all the rest, (one, two, and the last 3 fingers up)
They grew.....and grew.....and did not stop (hands expanding like blowing up a balloon)
Until one day the pod went POP! (hands up above head and clap on “Pop”)

Altmore Resources

- To find more play-based Pea activities, visit: https://teachpreschool.org/2012/10/15/little-peas-all-around-the-classroom/
- Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities: www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece
Peas!

**Try It!**
Peas can be eaten fresh or combined with other ingredients to create a tasty snack! Try roasting them: mix peas with parmesan and a bit of oil. Spread on baking sheet, bake at 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes. Let cool and enjoy!

**Did you know?**
In Minnesota, peas are in season from June to July. They provide a great source of fiber, protein, and vitamins B & C.

Look for local peas at the grocery store, or visit www.minnesotagrown.com to find local peppers near you!

**Fingerplay**
Five plump peas in a peapod pressed (interlace fingers together with palms touching)
One grew (touch pointer fingers together)
Two grew (touch middle fingers together)
So did all the rest (extend fingers, palms together)
And they grew, and they grew, and they grew (move hands apart)
Until they grew SO big that the pea pod popped (clap!)

**Resources**
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2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QF1gkX_R-s

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www.renewingthecountryside.org
Today we learned all about peas and pea pods.

Did you know? Peas are high in fiber, protein, and vitamins B and C!

Ask your child about pea pods, how they ate them, and what they did with peas today!

1. https://easyscienceforkids.com/pea/

www.renewingthecountryside.org
Bell Peppers!

Supplies:

- Book: *We Eat Food That’s Fresh* by Angela Russ-Ayon
- Tasting:
  - 2-4 different colors of local peppers
  - Knife
  - Cutting board
- Activity:
  - Colored construction paper
  - Leftover seeds from bell peppers
  - Glue sticks or bottle
  - Scissors


**Book: We Eat Food That’s Fresh**

Discuss the different ways we can eat fresh foods: baked, blended, stir-fried, creamy, hot, cold, chilled, and more!

Watch a video of *We Eat Food That’s Fresh* read aloud here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOX4liJsHns&t=8s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOX4liJsHns&t=8s)

And here is a link to the tune for a singalong: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqts2dvezkc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqts2dvezkc)

**Tasting: Sliced Peppers**

Select 2-4 varieties of local peppers - include different colors. Start with the whole peppers and have children feel and smell the outside of the pepper. Slice the peppers and allow the children to smell, taste, and touch the different colors. Save the seeds to use in the following activity!

After tasting and comparing the various peppers, discuss:

- Are the peppers sweet or tart?
- Soft or crunchy?
- Which color was your favorite?
Recipes: Bell Peppers

Try some of these ways to help kids try peppers:

**Savory Stop Lights:** Cut red, yellow, and green peppers into small pieces – circles if you are feeling fancy. Top celery sticks with cream cheese, and have children turn their celery into a stop light!

**Ants on a Different Log:** Instead of celery, put a strip of peanut butter on strips of bell pepper, top with raisins, and enjoy.

**Bell Pepper Boats:** Combine cream cheese and chives and add a dollop of the mixture on top of bell pepper pieces. Children can help with the mixing, topping, and eating!

Activity: Bell Pepper Outlines

Have children create a simple bell pepper art project while incorporating the use of their small-motor skills.

1. Let pepper seeds dry.
2. Draw an outline of a bell pepper onto construction paper, or white paper and have children color it in. Make dots with glue (or have children use cotton swabs to create dots of glue) inside the pepper outline.
3. Have children decorate their bell pepper by putting pepper seeds inside the outline.
4. Let dry, cut out, and enjoy the art work!

More Resources

- Visit the MN Grown website to learn more about when bell peppers are in season, along with other local produce: [https://minnesotagrown.com/whats-in-season/](https://minnesotagrown.com/whats-in-season/)

- Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities: [www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece](http://www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece)
Bell Peppers!

Try It!
Bell peppers make for easy and tasty snacks! Try:
• Pepper nachos: top sliced peppers with shredded cheese, olives, onions, etc. and microwave
• Celery topped with cream cheese and diced peppers

Did you know?
In Minnesota, bell peppers are in season from July to September. They are a wonderful source of vitamins A and C!

Activity:
Try a scavenger hunt for a bell pepper rainbow!
Peppers come in (nearly) every color of the rainbow. Shop for local peppers and see if you can find red, orange, yellow, green and purple! Use this opportunity to learn more about the differences between them - how do they taste the same? How are they different?

Resources
Find many farm to childcare resources on our website:
www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

Scholastic put together 8 kid-friendly bell pepper recipes. Find those here:

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Scholastic put together 8 kid-friendly bell pepper recipes. Find those here:

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Peppers!
Did you know? Bell peppers are high in fiber. They also contain both vitamin C and vitamin A.

Peppers come in many colors, and at the farmers market you can even find different shapes and varieties of sweet peppers.

Ask your child about peppers: what color did they like best?

Supplies:

Book:

*Potato Joe*
By Keith Baker

*The Enormous Potato*
retold by Aubrey Davis

Tasting & Activity:

- Potatoes
- Sweet potatoes
- Butter
- Milk
- Masher
- Microwave safe bowl

Coloring Pages:

http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/vegetables/potatoes

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Potatoes

**Story:** Potato Joe

Find a read aloud version of "Potato Joe"
here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKJoscy3Xr8

Alternate: for older children, "The Enormous Potato" retold by Aubrey Davis is a fun repeating story about the parts of the plant.

Watch “The Enormous Potato” read aloud here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nKMD9SSOg

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**Tasting:** Sweet potatoes

While orange sweet potatoes are most common, sweet potatoes also come in purple and white, and all are grown in Minnesota! See if you can find them at your farmers market or local foods-focused grocery. Microwave, then taste and compare. Which one is your favorite?

Alternate: If you can’t find multi-colored sweet potatoes, compare sweet potatoes and different varieties of potato (red, Yukon gold, russet). What do kids notice about the different flavors?
Activity:
Mashed Potatoes

Making your own mashed potatoes is a great way to involve many kids in preparing a snack or lunch!

1. Cook potatoes - one easy way is to pierce whole potatoes with a fork, then microwave until soft.

1. Scoop the potato flesh out of the skins, and have children help you add milk, butter, salt and pepper.

1. Let everyone help mash the potatoes!

If possible, it can be fun to mash both potatoes and sweet potatoes to compare.

More Resources

- Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities: www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

- “Sweet Potato Hill” from the “Grow, It, Try It, Like It” curriculum has activities, recipes, and songs for sweet potatoes: www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-homes

Sources of Information
# Potatoes!

## Try It!

Pierce whole potatoes with a fork and microwave, or roast them in the oven.

Try mashing microwaved potatoes or sweet potatoes – it’s fun for kids to help!

## Did you know?

Potatoes are in season from July to December, and 70% of potatoes grown are Russets. One red potato provides 16% of an adult’s daily fiber needs.¹

Visit [www.minnesotagrown.com](http://www.minnesotagrown.com) to find local potatoes near you!

## Fingerplay

One potato, two potatoes,
Three potatoes, four
Five potatoes, six potatoes,
Seven potatoes more!

Eight potatoes, nine potatoes,
Ten potatoes, then...
We dig them up (pretend to dig)
And start again!

## Resources

Find many farm to childcare resources on our website:
[www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece](http://www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece)

Many more sweet potato activities can be found under “Sweet Potato Hill” here:

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¹ [www.minnesotagrown.com](http://www.minnesotagrown.com)

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And start again!

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Many more sweet potato activities can be found under “Sweet Potato Hill” here:

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¹ [www.minnesotagrown.com](http://www.minnesotagrown.com)
Potatoes

Today we learned about potatoes and sweet potatoes.

The peak harvest season for potatoes in Minnesota is from July to December.

Ask your child about the different kinds of potatoes they tasted today! Were they sweet or savory?


www.renewingthecountryside.org
Spinach!

Supplies:

Book: Sylvia’s Spinach
By Katherine Pryor

Tasting:

- Whole wheat English muffins (6 count, cut in half)
- Olive oil
- Garlic powder (+ other herbs your kids might like)
- ½ c. frozen spinach (2 c. fresh)
- 1 c. mozzarella cheese

Activity:

- 8-10 leaves per student
- One sheet of white paper per student (optional: an outline of a tree without leaves)

Coloring Pages:
http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/vegetables/spinach

Tasting:

Cheese & Spinach Pizzas

1. Cook spinach in the microwave with 1 Tablespoon of water for 1 minute. Drain water, if any.
2. Brush both sides of the English muffins with olive oil (kids can help with this!) and toast in an oven or toaster oven for one minute.
3. Involve children in prepping the pizzas: sprinkle garlic powder and herbs, add spinach, and top with cheese.

Watch a video of Sylvia’s Spinach read aloud here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJNOJc-MFeU
Activity: Chlorophyll Paintings

Children work their fine motor skills as they push and press leaves onto paper. Chlorophyll is the green pigment found in the leaves of plants, and a key element of the process of photosynthesis. Explain to children that spinach provides more green chlorophyll than other plant leaves – see how bright green it is! We prefer to avoid using food for projects so we can save them for snacks. Head outside and find some other green leaves to pick – they have chlorophyll too!

Folded paintings:
1. Fold the sheet of paper in half with leaves inside.
2. Use a spoon to press the leaves to create a leaf pattern underneath, or have children roll up leaves and press onto the paper.
3. Open the paper and see how chlorophyll colors the paper.

Discussion questions:
- What do the leaves look like?
- What do the leaves feel like?
- Is the leaf light or heavy? Soft or hard? Thick or thin?

More Resources
- To explore the USDA’s Grow it, Try it, Like it! Spinach book, visit: USDA’s Book 3 - Spinach Lane
- A collection of spinach resources for early elementary ages, many of which would also be useful in pre-K classrooms, is located here: https://www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org/pdf/ffv-p-spinach-worksheet.pdf
- Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities: www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece
Did you know?
In Minnesota, spinach is in season from May – June and Sept.-Oct, with peak seasons at the end of June and the end of Sept. to beginning of Oct.¹

Look for local spinach at the grocery store, or visit www.minnesotagrown.com to find local spinach near you!

Try It!
Spinach is versatile! Try:
• Using it in a salad
• Mixing leaves into your pasta:
  - cheesy pasta, chicken & spinach
  - tomato sauce, sausage & spinach
  - garlic & spinach
• Sautéing with oil and garlic
• Adding to a smoothie

Resources
Find many farm to childcare resources on our website:
www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

Explore the USDA’s Book 3 - Spinach Lane for more spinach activities & songs

Song
Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o!
And on his farm he grew some spinach, e-i-e-i-o!
With a seed over here and a seed over there,
Here a seed, there a seed, everywhere spinach seeds!
Old MacDonald had a farm, e-i-e-i-o!
Continue with
...Water spinach here and water spinach there
...Pick spinach here and pick spinach there
...with a bite, bite here and a bite bite there

¹. https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/seasonal-produce-guide/carrots
². www.iatp.org/documents/farm-childcare-curriculum-package
Spinach!

Today we learned about spinach and tasted a new spinach recipe.

Did you know? March 26th is National Spinach Day.¹ In Minnesota, spinach is in season in May and June, and again in September and October (it just doesn’t love the high summer)!²

Ask your child what they learned about spinach and how they tasted it today!


¹ https://mobile-cuisine.com/did-you-know/spinach-fun-facts/
² https://minnesotagrown.com/whats-in-season/
Supplies:

- Book: *Fruit Bowl*
  By Mark Hoffmann

Tasting:

- 1+ varieties of local tomatoes
- Knife
- Cutting board

Activity:

- One tomato

Coloring Pages:

http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/vegetables/tomatoes

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**Tomatoes!**

**Book: Fruit Bowl**

Read the book “Fruit Bowl”.

This book can be used not only to discuss why a tomato is considered a fruit, but also the importance of including others and how it feels to be left out.

Watch a video of *Fruit Bowl* read aloud here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Sf10Ata08

**Tasting: Tomato Slices**

Exploring tomatoes can be done with 1 kind of tomato, or different varieties.

1. Starting with the whole tomato. Have children observe what a tomato looks, feels, and smells like.
2. Have children guess how many seeds are in the tomato.
3. Let children watch as you slice the tomato open and try to count the seeds, or let older children count the seeds in their own slice.
4. Repeat the steps for the different varieties of tomatoes and have children taste small slices of each variety to compare and contrast. How do the tomatoes taste? Are they soft? Sweet? Juicy?
**Activity:**

**Tomato, Tomato, Where Can You Be?**

1. Have children cover their eyes, while the teacher hides the tomato around the room and sings: “Tomato, Tomato, Where can you be? Tomato, Tomato, 1...2...3...”
2. When you get to 3, have the children open their eyes and look for the tomato.
3. The teacher can give height clues, such as: the tomato is chair height, desk height, or as high as a shoe.
4. When a child finds the tomato, they say “Tomato, Tomato, I found the tomato!”
5. This person then gets to hide the tomato next.

**Fingerplay:**

**One Little Tomato**

*(To the tune of “One little, two little, three little fingers”)*

One little, two little three little tomatoes (one, two, three fingers up)
Four little, five little, six little tomatoes
Seven little, eight little, nine little tomatoes
Ten little tomatoes in the garden!

Pick one, pick two, pick three tomatoes
Pick four, pick five, pick six tomatoes
Pick seven, pick eight, pick nine tomatoes
Ten little tomatoes in the basket!

Continue with “Slice one, slice two...ten little tomatoes for our tummies!

**More Resources**

- To learn more about growing, finding, or buying tomatoes, visit the University of Minnesota’s website here:
  https://extension.umn.edu/vegetables/growing-tomatoes

- Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities:
  www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece
Tomatoes!

Try It!
Juicy tomatoes make great snacks. Try these easy tricks to introduce tomatoes to your child:

• Top toasted english muffins with cheese & tomato slices
• Toss halved cherry tomatoes with fresh corn, mozzarella, & vinaigrette
• Serve pasta with tomatoes, basil & mozzarella

Did you know?
There are more than 7,500 different types of tomatoes that grow around the world. In Minnesota, tomatoes are in season from July to the end of September. Look for local tomatoes at the grocery store, or visit www.minnesotagrown.com to find local tomatoes near you!

Fingerplay
One little, two little three little tomatoes (one, two, three fingers up)
Four little, five little, six little tomatoes
Seven little, eight little, nine little tomatoes
Ten little tomatoes in the garden!

Continue with:
Pick one...ten little tomatoes in the basket!
Slice one...ten little tomatoes for our tummies!”

Resources
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www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

Many more tomato activities can be found here:

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Ask your child what their favorite thing was about tomatoes!


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Turnips!

**Story: The Gigantic Turnip**

Tell the story of the Giant Turnip – use the book, or make your own storyboard - kids could help decorate the characters!

A simple version of the story is here: [https://www.storiestogrowby.org/story/the-giant-turnip-folktale/](https://www.storiestogrowby.org/story/the-giant-turnip-folktale/)


Consider having students repeat and act out with you as “they pulled, and they pulled, and they pulled, but the turnip WOULDN’T COME UP!”

**Tasting: Turnips**

Roasted turnips are delicious! Peel and roast at 350 degrees until soft, approximately 30 minutes.

You can also peel and steam turnips in the microwave. Add a little water to a dish with the turnip(s) and microwave approximately 3 minutes or until turnips are soft. Add butter, salt, and pepper, and eat!
Activity: Turnip Fingerplay

Dig a little hole, plant a turnip seed.
Pour a little water, pull a little weed.

Give a little sunshine, and what do you know?
Your seed will be a little plant and grow, grow, grow.

Turnips, turnips, turnips, grow so slow.
Hurry, hurry, hurry and grow, grow, grow!

Activity: Turnip Cutouts

This activity can help younger children practice fine motor skills, and provide an opportunity to talk about colors and turnips!

Turnip Cutouts:

1. Cut a turnip shape out of a piece of construction paper.
2. Affix double sided tape to cover the cutout.
3. Cut small squares of purple, green, and white tissue paper.
4. Have toddlers place pieces of tissue paper over the cutout.

Talk about the colors of the turnip, and where the turnip grows (under the ground).

More Resources

• Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities: https://www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

• One curriculum to check out – with high quality photos: https://www.harvestforhealthykids.org/

Sources of Information

Try It!

Turnips can be eaten lots of ways. Try:
• Steaming in the microwave
• Boiling and mashing
• Roasting in the oven

See which one is your favorite!

Did you know?

In Minnesota, Turnips are in season from September to December. They are a root vegetable, and the greens can also be eaten.

Turnips are high in vitamin C.

Look for local turnips at the grocery store, or visit www.minnesotagrown.com to find local turnips near you!

Fingerplay:

Dig a little hole, plant a turnip seed.
Pour a little water, pull a little weed.
Give a little sunshine, and what do you know?
Your seed will be a little plant and grow, grow, grow.

Turnips, turnips, grow so slow.
Hurry, hurry, and grow, grow, grow!

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Hurry, hurry, and grow, grow, grow!

Resources

Find many farm to childcare resources on our website:
www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

More turnip activities can be found here:
https://teachingwithchildrensbooks.com/the-enormous-turnip-activities/

Try It!

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Turnips!
Did you know? Turnips are part of the same family as bok choy. They can be eaten raw, pickled, or cooked.¹

Ask your child about turnips – did they try them? Were they warm or cold? Soft or hard?


¹ - https://extension.umn.edu/vegetables/growing-turnips-and-rutabagas
² - https://minnesotagrown.com/whats-in-season
Zucchinis!

**Book:** Zora’s Zucchini
By Katherine Pryor

**Supplies:**
- Book: Zora’s Zucchini by Katherine Pryor
- Tasting:
  - Zucchini
  - Knife
- Activity:
  - Dried zucchini seeds
  - One or more small recyclable container(s)

**Coloring Pages:**
http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/vegetables/squash

**Tasting:** Exploring Zucchini
Allowing children to explore zucchini with their senses helps to expand their learning and excitement about trying something that might be new!

1. Allow the children time to observe the outside of the zucchini. Does it have a smell to it? What does it look like? How does it feel?
2. Children can help peel the zucchini. If they are supervised, preschoolers can even use a child-friendly knife to cut their own slice.
3. To help develop fine-motor skills, have the children remove the seeds from their zucchini slice. Save these for later to make a zucchini maraca!
4. Enjoy the zucchini slices together, reveling in the fresh taste!

Watch a video of Zora’s Zucchini here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvAVcpb_Lm0&t=322s
Activity:

Zucchini Maraca

Some zucchini recipes encourage you to remove the seeds. Don’t let the seeds go to waste: make a maraca with a small container and dried zucchini seeds. Place the seeds and any pulp in a colander, rinse until all the pulp is removed, and lay the seeds out to dry on a piece of wax paper. When dry, add to a small container and shake shake shake!

Bonus: you can also try to plant these seeds next growing season, and grow some new instruments...errr...zucchini.

Fingerplay:

Green Zucchini

(To the tune of the popular French nursery rhyme “Alouette”)

Green zucchini, I like green zucchini
Green zucchini, that’s what I like best!
Do you like it on the grill? Yes, I like it on the grill!
On the grill? On the grill. Oooooh!

Green zucchini, I like green zucchini...
Continue with:
...Do you like it in the soup?
...Do you like it raw with dip?
...Do you like it baked in bread?
...Do you like it just like fries?

Find an example at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNoTMo5gMHM

More Resources

- Find other squash and zucchini classroom activities here:
  https://www.educatall.com/page/746/Squash.html
- Check out our website for links to many other curricula and activities:
  www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

Sources of Information

Photo: www.thriftbooks.com
Activity: https://www.educatall.com/page/746/Squash.html
Fingerplay: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNoTMo5gMHM

Renewing the Countryside, 2637 27th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55406 · www.renewingthecountryside.org
**Fingerplay (Tune of “Alouette”)**

Green zucchini, I like green zucchini
Green zucchini, that’s what I like best!
Do you like it on the grill? Yes, I like it on the grill!
On the grill? On the grill. Oooooh!
Continue with:
...Do you like it in the soup?
...Do you like it just like noodles?
...Do you like it raw with dip?
...Do you like it baked in bread?
...Do you like it just like fries?

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**Try It!**

Zucchini can be eaten fresh, baked, fried, you name it! Try:
- Cut into pieces, toss with oil. Bake at 425° until soft, ~15 minutes.
- Toss chopped zucchini with onion, oil, and paprika. Bake at 425° for 30-40 minutes, until brown. Blend to make a delicious soup!

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**Did you know?**

In Minnesota, zucchini are in season from July through September. Zucchini are a summer squash – summer squash can also be yellow or striated in color.

Look for local zucchini at the grocery store, or visit www.minnesotagrown.com to find local zucchini near you!

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**Resources**

Find many farm to childcare resources on our website:
www.renewingthecountryside.org/f2ece

To find more zucchini recipes for your little one(s), check out:
https://www.momjunction.com/articles/zucchini-recipes-for-your-toddler_00361122/
Zucchini!

Today we learned all about zucchini, and even tasted them raw!

Did you know? Zucchini gets its name from the Italian word for squash, “zucca”. If you grow your own zucchini, you can also try frying the blossoms!

Ask your child what they liked most about the zucchini and how it tasted!


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