

- Cleanup should be an ongoing activity.
- Follow through on projects so everyone has a chance to taste what has been made.

Tips and Ideas for Nutrition Related Activities

Nutrition related education activities in the preschool and child care settings can help shape the eating habits of young children. The concept of eating a variety of foods from each of the five food groups of the *MyPyramid for Kids* can be taught to preschoolers through nutritional activities.

Nutrition related activities are fascinating, hands-on tools for learning about healthy eating, and it is fun! Cooking provides children with a sense of personal achievement as they meet their own food needs. Children can only pretend to drive a car or be a fireman, but they really can cook and produce real food that other people will eat.

Tips for Presenting Nutrition Related Activities for Children

- Prepare each lesson at least one week in advance.
- Make the lesson a special occasion.
- Children should be supervised at all times when around potentially dangerous equipment such as knives or appliances.
- Make certain that all children are involved.
- Provide enough praise and reinforcement to make the experience rewarding for children.
- Let children experience things for themselves as much as possible.
- Help children observe and talk about color, texture, size, and shape.

Getting Families Involved in Nutrition Related Activities

Partner with the children's families to achieve the nutrition objectives of the activity. The effort made to involve families helps ensure that children practice at home what they learn at the child care center or preschool. Good eating habits learned in the preschool and child care center must carry over to the home if they are to last! Here are some suggestions for involving parents.

- Send Activity Plan home with the children.
- Encourage families to observe the activities whenever possible and to share ideas, and accompany children on field trips to where food is grown, purchased, or prepared.
- Encourage parents to teach their children how to pick a variety of colors in the produce department.
- Have nutrition information available at family meetings.
- Sponsor international family pot-luck dinners to introduce various cultural and ethnic foods.



Nutrition Related Activity Ideas

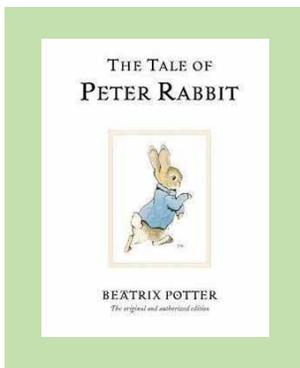
Celery Canoes

Things you'll need: plastic serrated knives, plates for each child

Ingredients: Celery, Hummus or Low-fat cheese spread (at room temperature)

Directions:

- Sanitize work surface.
- Wash hands thoroughly.
- Tear off celery leaves, separate individual stalks (ribs), and wash.
- Cut or break celery into 3 pieces.
- Spread hummus or cheese on celery.



Peter Rabbit Tasting Party

Things you'll need: assortment of raw fresh vegetables and fruits, large head of cabbage, dips, trays, plastic serrated edge knives, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter

Directions:

- Sanitize work surface.
- Wash hands thoroughly.
- Help children prepare the vegetables and fruits for tasting.
- Cut a flat surface on the bottom of the cabbage and scoop out the inside to create a bowl for the dip (teacher task).
- Decorate the front of the cabbage to look like a rabbit with small pieces of vegetables or fruits. Be sure to give Peter



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some whiskers and floppy ears.

- Read *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and talk about the importance of vegetables and fruits. If someone has a rabbit costume, this is a fun way to have Peter tell his own story to the children.

Play Dough Food Centerpieces

Things you'll need: waxed paper, large bowl, liquid measuring cups, dry measuring cups, measuring spoons, mixing spoon



Ingredients: 1 cup Salt, ½ cup Water, 1 ½ cups Flour, 2 Tbsp Oil, Food Coloring

Directions:

- Make play dough, mixing all ingredients except food coloring.
- Give each child enough play dough to shape into a favorite food. Add a few drops of food coloring to the dough. Have children work on a piece of waxed paper, mixing in the color and shaping their play dough food.
- Tape children's names to the bottom of their "food" and display in a bowl as a centerpiece.

Sources

National Food Service Management Institute. (2009). *More than mud pies: A Nutrition curriculum guide for preschool children* (5th ed). University, MS: Author.