

MELON

ACTIVITY PLAN



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★ INDICATES A FULL LESSON PLAN



Circle Time

Use circle time activities to explore fruits and vegetables through read-aloud books and other activities. Read and discuss books, pass around and talk about the featured fruit or vegetable, show and discuss Harvest for Healthy Kids picture cards, play a paper bag guessing game, and more!

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★ READ ALOUD BOOK AND DISCUSSION

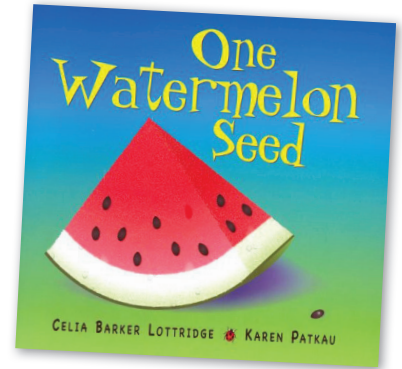
One Watermelon Seed

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children learn that melons grow on vines above the ground.
2. Children learn names of animals and plants you can find in a garden.
3. Children practice counting 1-10 and in 10s through 100.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Book: *One Watermelon Seed* by Celia Barker Lottridge
Different varieties of melons to pass around (honeydew, cantaloupe, watermelon)



WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Tell children that this month we will be learning about melons.
- Pass around melon varieties (honeydew, cantaloupe, watermelon) so that children can touch, smell and feel the melons. Ask children: Have you ever tasted melon before? How did you eat it? What did it taste like? Have the students knock on the different melons and listen for the different sounds.
- Ask if anyone knows how melons grow (on a vine above ground). Ask if anyone has ever seen a melon growing or picked a melon.
- From seed to melon: Talk about what plants need to help them grow. All seeds and plants need sun, water, air, nutrients, and soil in order to grow. After a melon seed is planted, it takes a few weeks before it will sprout. Then, the roots grow down into the soil. The stems grow upwards and toward the light and leaves begin to develop on the stems. The melon plant will grow flowers that then turn into melons!
- Read *One Watermelon Seed*. Introduce Max and Josephine and ask if anyone has ever planted a garden. Have the children practice counting as you explore the book.
- As you read the book, have the children find the black cat that appears on each page.

VOCABULARY
melon
watermelon
cantaloupe
honeydew



BOOK LIST

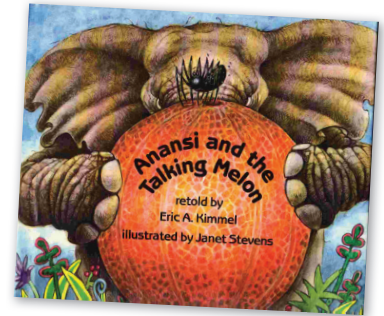
Move beyond the featured book! Here are some ideas for books to read during the melon month:

ANANSI AND THE TALKING MELON

By: Eric Kimmel

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: melons

A clever spider hides in a melon and tricks Elephant and some other animals into thinking the melon can talk. What will he do when they take the talking melon to the king?

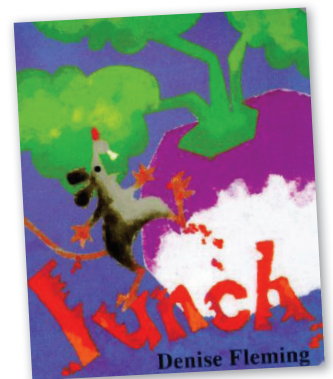


LUNCH

By: Denise Fleming

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: corn, peas, watermelon, blueberry, turnip, carrots, apples, grapes

Practice identifying colors while reading about a very hungry mouse who eats a lot of fruits and vegetables.

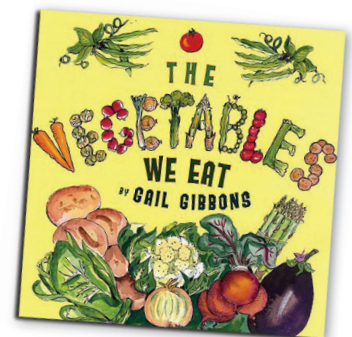


THE VEGETABLES WE EAT

By: Gail Gibbons

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: Lettuce, cabbage, spinach, brussel sprouts, onion, scallions, leeks, cauliflower, artichoke, broccoli, beets, parsnips, carrots, radishes, rutabaga, turnip, potatoes, celery, asparagus, rhubarb, tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, hot peppers, yellow squash, winter squash, sweet peppers, zucchini, green beans, peas, corn, soybeans

A fun and informative book all about vegetables, how they are grown, and which parts we eat. A great book to show kids the difference between “leaf” vegetables, “bulbs,” “flower buds” and more. Different sections of the book could be read to highlight different themes: how vegetables grow, which parts of vegetables we eat, how to grow your own vegetable garden, etc.





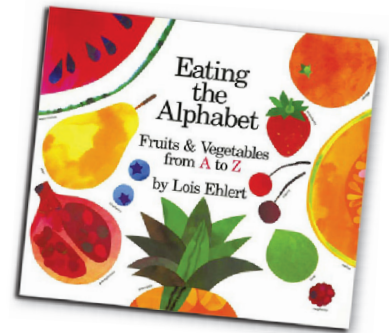
BOOK LIST

EATING THE ALPHABET

By: Lois Ehlert

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES: apricot, artichoke, avocado, apple, asparagus, blueberry, brussel sprouts, bean, beet, broccoli, banana, currant, cucumber, corn, celery, cabbage, cherry, carrot, cauliflower, date, endive, eggplant, fig, gooseberry, grapefruit, grapes, huckleberry, Indian corn, jalapeno, jicama, kumquat, kiwi, kohlrabi, lemon, leek, lettuce, lime, melon, mango, nectarine, okra, orange, onion, pineapple, peach, pear, papaya, persimmon, pomegranate, plum, parsnip, potato, pea, pepper, pumpkin, quince, raspberry, radish, rutabaga, rhubarb, radicchio, swiss chard, spinach, star fruit, strawberry, tangerine, turnip, tomato, ugly fruit, vegetable marrow, watermelon, watercress, xigua, yam, zucchini

An alphabet board book full of fruits and vegetables from A to Z.





MORE IDEAS

“M” IS FOR MELON

Talk with children about how “melon” starts with the letter “M.” Practice making the ‘M’ sound. Ask the children to come up with other words that start with that sound/letter and record their ideas on a large piece of paper. You could also have children sort picture cards into ‘words that start with the M sound’ and ‘words that start with other sounds’. Hang the chart in the classroom for the month.

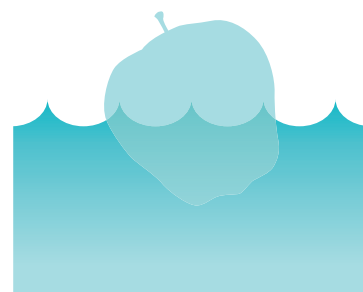


TASTE AND TELL

Gather children in circle time and offer tastes of different kinds of melon, like watermelon, honeydew, or cantaloupe. Ask questions like: What do melons taste like? How do different kinds of melon taste the same or different? How do different kinds of melon feel the same or different in your mouth (e.g. crisp or soft)? Ask children if they like the taste and record their responses on a chart.

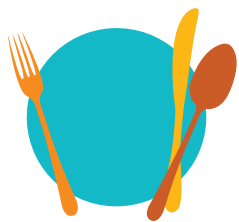
SINK OR FLOAT?

Introduce the sink/float activity by asking children whether or not they think a melon will float or sink. Review the concepts of float (rise to the top) and sink (fall to the bottom). Show the children different objects (rock, feather, etc.) and ask if they think they will sink or float. Record their responses on a large piece of paper. Test the objects and the melon in the water and see what happens! Explain that melons sink because they are heavy and full of water.



PICTURE CARDS

The Harvest for Healthy Kids picture cards can be used any time during the month in which the fruit/vegetable is featured. Picture cards come in three categories: Fruit and Veggie Photo Cards, How does it Grow? (botanical illustrations of fruit and vegetables), and Same but Different (vegetables/fruits in different colors, or different varieties of a vegetable/fruit). Find ideas for how to use these cards in the Harvest for Healthy Kids Teacher Bites, and on the back of each picture card.



Meal Time

Meal time is a great time to talk about fruits and vegetables, especially when a Harvest for Healthy Kids fruit or vegetable is being served! Use meal time to review a concept the children have learned (e.g. that melons grow on a vine). You can also use hand stamps or stickers during meal time to congratulate children who “tried something new today!”

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MEAL TIME IDEAS

PLEASE PASS THE FRUIT!

Children may be more likely to try new fruits and vegetables if they can touch and see the fruit or vegetable before it is prepared. When meals with melons are served, try to have a few melons on hand to pass around the tables. Talk with children about how whole fruit is cut up and prepared by the cooks, so that children and teachers can have delicious, healthy food to eat!

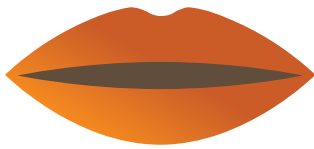


TABLE TALK

When children are trying melon during meal time, ask them questions, like:

- What does it taste like? Is it soft? Crunchy? Sweet? Sour?
- Does anyone have a garden? What do you grow in your garden?
- Has anyone tried to grow melons before?
- How do melons grow? (above ground)
- What part of melons do we eat? (we don't eat the skin)

“M” IS FOR MELON

Talk with children about how “melon” starts with the letter/sound “M.” We can eat green and pink watermelons, orange cantaloupe and green honeydew melons. Melons grow on vines above the ground. Ask children to come up with other words that start with the “M” sound as you eat together.





Activity Time

Activity Time (e.g. “free choice” in Head Start centers, or small group activities) is a perfect time to introduce cooking projects and sensory explorations of fruits and vegetables.

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★ SENSORY EXPLORATION

Investigating Seeds

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children explore seeds from different kinds of melon and learn that seeds come in different shapes and sizes.
2. Children describe the texture, smell and color of melons and melon seeds.
3. Children use scientific inquiry skills to predict, observe, describe and compare.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Watermelon and cantaloupe
Spoons
Bowls for seeds

WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- In a large group, introduce the melon activity: “Today we will be exploring melons!”
- Take out the watermelon and cantaloupe and name them for the children.
- Have the children describe the differences between the two melons. Which is larger? Smoother? Heavier?
- Invite the children to try knocking on the melons. How does it sound?
- Ask the children what they think is inside of the melons. Explain that melons have seeds inside because they are fruits, and all fruits have seeds!
- Have the children guess what the cantaloupe will look like on the inside. (Color, seeds, etc.).
- Wash and cut the melon in half (teachers cut melon in half, being careful to stabilize the melon so it doesn’t roll).
- Show children the inside of the melon and encourage them to describe what they see (How many seeds, color of fruit and seeds, etc.).
- Now ask if the children can guess what color seeds and fruit are inside of the green watermelon.
- Wash and cut the watermelon in half (teachers cut melon in half, being careful to stabilize the melon so it doesn’t roll).
- Show the children the difference in the melons. The cantaloupe seeds are all together and the watermelon seeds are spread throughout!





SENSORY ACTIVITY Melon Tasting

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children explore different types of melons.
2. Children describe the texture, smell, taste, color of melons.
3. Children learn that different melons have different characteristics.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Watermelon, cantaloupe, and honeydew
Knives
Bowls

WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Prepare the melons before circle time. Wash and cut each melon into enough small pieces for each child to taste. Place them in separate bowls. Leave a whole melon or a large piece of melon for comparison. Make sure you mark each bowl so you know which melon variety it is.
- In a large group, introduce the activity: "Today we will be tasting melons!"
- Take out the whole melons and name them for the children.
- Pass around the whole melons and have the children describe the colors, textures and size of the melons.
- Have the children sample melon from the different bowls and ask what each melon tastes like. Remind them not to eat the seeds! Record children's answers on a sheet of paper. Are they the same? Very different?
- Have children vote for their favorite melon. You could do this using a graph.



GET CHILDREN MOVING WITH A WATERMELON ACTION RHYME!

Watermelon,
Watermelon,
*(make a circle with
your arms)*
On the vine,
On the vine,
*(curve hands and arms
beside body)*
Sweet and red
and juicy,
Sweet and red
and juicy,
(rub your tummy)
Please be mine!
Please be mine!
*(palms together as
though pleading)*

Watermelon,
Watermelon,
*(make a circle with
your arms)*
Thump, thump, thump,
Thump, thump, thump,
*(make a thumping
movement with thumb
and middle finger)*
I think you are ready-
I think you are ready-
*(point, resting finger
on your temple)*
Big and plump!
Big and plump!
*(make a circle with
your arms)*



★ COOKING ACTIVITY AND TASTING

Strawberry-Melon Summer Salad

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children participate in cooking activity and learn how to prepare melons.
2. Children learn some different ways that melon are eaten (e.g. in salads).
3. Children explore and describe the taste of melons in a salad.
4. Children practice fine motor strength and coordination when combining ingredients.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Ingredients for recipe **(next page)**

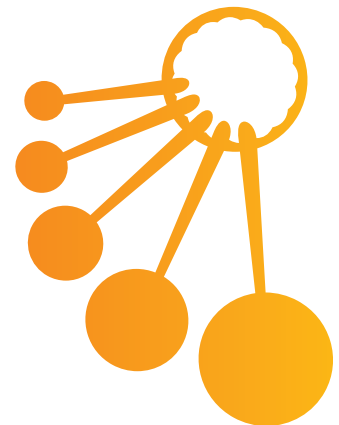
Melon ballers, any size or kitchen knife

Large bowl and salad tossers

Small bowls or cups for tasting and spoons

WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Have children wash their hands and come to small group. Ask if anyone has tasted fruit salad before, and tell them “Today we will make a Strawberry-Melon salad!”
- Introduce each ingredient as you place it on the activity table.
- Give children strawberries or melon to wash.
- Children can help cut the melon and strawberries (with plastic or table knife)
- Children can take turns helping to toss the salad.
- As always, remember to keep all sharp cutting utensils away from children at all times.





COOKING ACTIVITY AND TASTING

Strawberry-Melon Summer Salad

STRAWBERRY-MELON SUMMER SALAD

15 – 20 ¼ cup servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plain or flavored yogurt (strawberry, lemon or vanilla work well)
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 cups watermelon balls or chunks
- 2 cups cantaloupe balls or chunks
- 2 cups quartered fresh strawberries

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash strawberries and remove tops. Cut them into quarters.
2. Wash and slice open the melons. Scoop out seeds and place in a separate bowl.
3. Cut melons into cubes or use a melon baller to scoop out balls of melon.
4. Combine the melons and strawberries in large bowl.
5. Pour yogurt and lemon juice over the strawberry melon mixture, allowing children to measure out the ingredients.
6. Gently, fold the yogurt into the strawberry-melon mixture.
7. Let children take turns folding the salad, being careful not to mash the fruit.
8. Serve directly after folding. The fruit salad can get a little watery if it sits out too long.

Adapted from <http://www.allrecipes.com>



★ HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS RECIPE BOOK

Have children decorate and put together a recipe book throughout the year, including each month's cooking activity recipe!

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children create a drawing to accompany the Strawberry-Melon Summer Salad recipe, and use crayons, markers or paint to create art
2. Children tell the class about their artwork.
3. Children will remember and connect experiences with melons, and recall what they have learned during the month.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Printed copies of family versions of recipes for each child; recipe on ½ of page (8 ½ x 11)

Crayons, markers, paint, magazines with fruits and vegetables, crayons, scissors, glue

melon, for display

Family Recipe: Strawberry-Melon Summer Salad (**page 14**)

ANOTHER IDEA FOR THIS ACTIVITY:

Have children dictate the recipe to you as you write their words. "Tell me the story of how we made the fruit salad." Encourage them to draw a picture of their favorite step or of the finished product. Include their recipe alongside the real recipe to add to their cookbooks!



HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS COOKBOOK:

Start this activity in the beginning of the year. Have each child decorate a cover for his or her fruit & veggie cookbook. Bind each child's book with enough pages for a recipe and picture for each month (8 months). Have children take the recipe book home with the welcome newsletter. Then, each month, use the recipe decorating activity to add recipes to the cookbooks! Children can take home their decorated recipe with a monthly newsletter, or just pinned to their bags or clothing!



Family Recipe

STRAWBERRY-MELON SUMMER SALAD

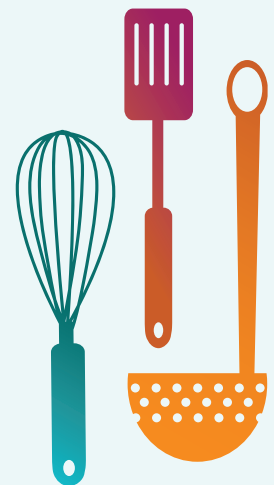
Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plain or flavored yogurt (strawberry, lemon and vanilla work well)
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 cups watermelon balls
- 2 cups cantaloupe balls
- 2 cups halved fresh strawberries

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash strawberries and remove tops. Cut them into quarters.
2. Wash and slice open the melons. Scoop out seeds and place in a separate bowl.
3. Cut melons into cubes or use a melon baller to scoop out balls of melon.
4. Combine the melons and strawberries in large bowl.
5. Pour yogurt and lemon juice over the strawberry melon mixture, allowing children to measure out the ingredients.
6. Gently, fold the yogurt into the strawberry-melon mixture.
7. Let children take turns folding the salad, being careful not to mash the fruit.
8. Serve directly after folding. The fruit salad can get a little watery if it sits out too long.





★ CREATIVE ARTS

Watch our Garden Grow

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children learn that we can grow melons in a garden.
2. Children review how melons grows.
3. Children make their own melon to display in the classroom “garden.”

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Melons for display and/or melon picture cards
Paper plates
Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
Glue



WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Remind children that we can grow melons in a garden. Ask them: “Have you ever grown a melon or seen one in a garden? Do you remember how they grow?”
- Ask the children to list the types of melons that they have learned about (watermelon, honeydew, cantaloupe).
- Use the melon picture cards (or real melons) to remind children about the different kinds of melons they have learned about.
- Show children displayed melons or picture cards and tell children, today we will be making melons for our “class garden.”
- Provide children with plates and markers.
- Invite children to make their own melon for the “class garden.” Tell them they can choose to make a watermelon, honeydew, or cantaloupe.
- Designate a space on a wall in the classroom for the “class garden.” Add to the wall each month with children’s colorful creations of the featured fruits and vegetables in the Harvest for Healthy Kids program.



Fast and Fun

Beyond circle time, meal time, and activity time, there are other simple ways to highlight the Harvest for Healthy Kids program and teach children about fruits and vegetables. Take a look at the ideas below for easy ways to have fun with Harvest for Healthy Kids throughout the day.

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FAST AND FUN

PUPPETS

Try having a puppet introduce the featured fruit or vegetable at the beginning of the month. Puppets might also be used to introduce ingredients for a cooking activity.

HAND STAMPS

Use hand stamps or stickers to acknowledge children's participation in Harvest for Healthy Kids activities (e.g. cooking, sensory exploration, planting, reading) throughout the month.

DISCOVERY TABLE

Cut an assortment of melon in halves or quarters, and leave some whole. Place fruit on the discovery or sensory table so children can explore by looking, smelling and touching. Melons store well, especially when kept in a cold, dry place. Cut melon should be covered with plastic and refrigerated when not being used for class activities.

TASTING CHART

Create a chart with children's names on the left side in rows and the featured fruit and vegetable names on the top in columns. Each month, give children a stamp or sticker in the fruit/vegetable box next to their name if they tasted the fruit or vegetable anytime during the month. Hang the tasting chart in the classroom.

CHANT-ALONG

Melon Rhyme

*Eat a melon,
Pickle the rind,
Save and plant the seeds,
And grow the same kind!*



ABOUT HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Harvest for Healthy Kids is a nutrition program designed to introduce children in early care and education settings to a wide variety of locally grown fruits and vegetables through their meals and snacks and classroom activities. Monthly family engagement activities support parents in promoting healthy eating habits at home. Harvest for Healthy Kids is a partnership between Mt. Hood Community College Head Start and Early Head Start and the School of Community Health at Portland State University.