

# WINTER ROOT VEGETABLES

## ACTIVITY PLAN



Rutabaga • Turnips • Parsnips

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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

## The Gigantic Turnip

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Children learn that many vegetables are planted in the spring.
2. Children learn that rain helps plants grow from seeds into vegetables.
3. Children learn that turnips are roots, and they grow underground.
4. Children name other root vegetables (e.g. beets, parsnips, carrots, rutabagas, celery root, radish).

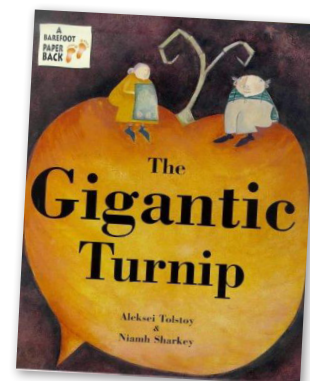
### WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Book: *The Gigantic Turnip* by Aleksai Tolstoy and Niamh Sharkey

An assortment of root vegetables, including turnips (other root vegetables to try: rutabagas, parsnips, radish, beets, carrots, and celery root)

### WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Pass around the root vegetables before reading the story, or while you are reading. Ask the children to feel and smell the vegetables as they pass them along.
- Read *The Gigantic Turnip*. Highlight the part where the old woman and old man plant their garden. Talk about how water (rain) helps plants grow from seeds into vegetables.
- While you are reading, ask children questions, like:
  - Has anyone tasted a turnip? What about other root vegetables (remind children about the previous vegetables they have tasted)? What do they taste like?
  - What root vegetables do their families eat?
  - Ask children to name other root vegetables (carrots, parsnips, beets, rutabagas, celery root, radish).
  - What part of a turnip do we eat? (We can eat the root and the greens)
  - How do turnips grow? (underground)



### LET'S PLAY PRETEND

Get children moving, indoors or outside, to act out the story of the Gigantic Turnip. Children can act out planting a garden, taking care of the garden, and harvesting. Everyone can get involved in helping to harvest the one Gigantic Turnip!

### VOCABULARY

turnip  
gigantic  
sow  
(as in sowing seeds)  
rutabaga  
parsnips



## BOOK LIST

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

### AND THE GOOD BROWN EARTH

By: Kathy Henderson

**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:** strawberries, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, beets, beans, greens, tomatoes, blackberries

Gram and young Joe plant gardens together and as the seasons change, the vegetables grow, until harvest day arrives! All thanks to the good, brown earth.

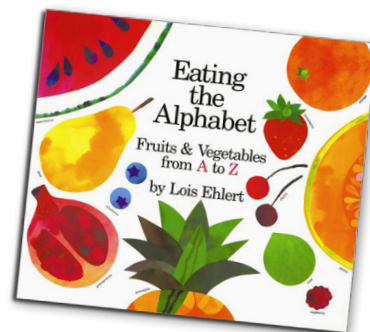


### EATING THE ALPHABET

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.

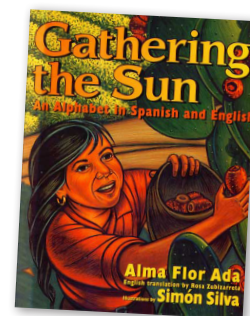


### GATHERING THE SUN

By: Alma Flor Ada, Illustrator: Simon Silva

**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:** carrot, beet

A beautifully illustrated alphabet book in Spanish and English. Each page has a poem in Spanish and English, celebrating fields and orchards, and the people who work them. A great book to teach children about farming and farmworkers.





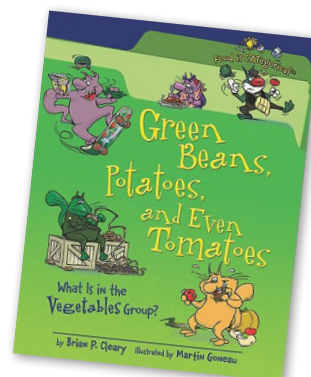
## BOOK LIST

### GREEN BEANS, POTATOES, AND EVEN TOMATOES: WHAT IS IN THE VEGETABLES GROUP?

By: Brian P. Cleary, Illustrated by Martin Goneau

**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:** spinach, sweet potato, carrot, bell peppers, brussel sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, chard, turnip, collard greens, tomatoes, eggplant, beans, corn, potatoes, squash, spinach, bok choy, potatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, celery

A fun, rhyming book about which foods are considered vegetables, and why they are tasty and nutritious to eat.

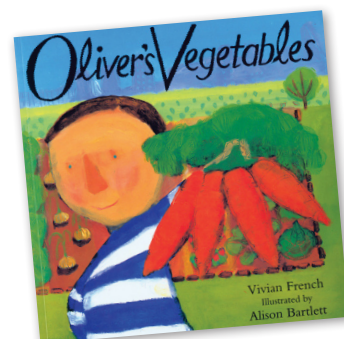


### OLIVER'S VEGETABLES

By: Vivian French, Illustrator: Alison Bartlett

**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:** carrots, spinach, rhubarb, cabbage, beats, peas, potatoes

Oliver is a little British boy who loves eating chips. When he visits his Grandfather, who has a large garden, Oliver is told he can look in the garden for potatoes, but he must eat whatever he finds! Throughout the week, Oliver tries new foods, from carrots to rhubarb to beets, and loves everything he tastes.

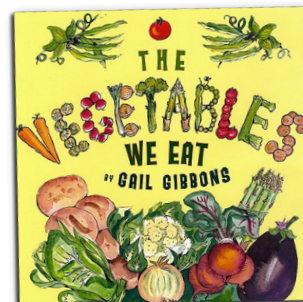


### THE VEGETABLES WE EAT

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, what parts of vegetables we eat, how to grow your own vegetable garden, etc.





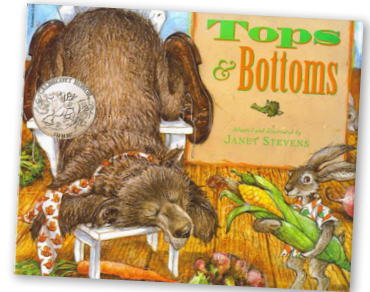
## BOOK LIST

### TOPS & BOTTOMS

By: Janet Stevens

**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:** carrots, radishes, beets, lettuce, broccoli, celery, corn

A story about how a lazy bear and a clever hare join together as business partners in farming. Each year, Bear chooses “tops” or “bottoms” while Hare does all the work – but Hare makes sure to plant the best vegetables on his side of the dirt!

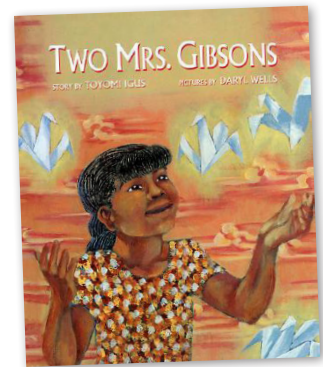


### TWO MRS. GIBSONS

By: Toyomi Igus, Illustrator: Daryl Wells

**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:** greens

A little girl describes growing up with an African American grandmother and Japanese mother. She tells of their personalities and habits – including what they cook! The kitchen scenes are a fun way to talk about food and culture.





## MORE IDEAS

### “R” IS FOR ROOT VEGETABLES

Talk with children about how “root vegetables” start with the letter “R.” Root vegetables include parsnips, rutabaga, turnips, radishes, celery root, carrots, beets, and other vegetables. This month, we are focusing on parsnips, rutabaga, and turnips. Root vegetables grow underground. Ask children to come up with other words that start with “R,” and record their ideas on a large piece of butcher paper or construction paper. Hang the chart in the classroom for the month.



### TASTE AND TELL

Gather children in circle time and offer tastes of cooked root vegetables, like parsnips, rutabaga, and turnips. Ask questions like: What do root vegetables taste like? How do the vegetables taste the same or different? Do the children like the taste? Record children’s responses on a chart, and hang it in the classroom.

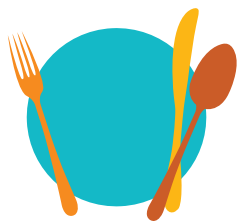
### PAPER BAG GUESSING GAME OR SURPRISE BOX

Place an assortment of root vegetables in a paper bag. Try to find root vegetables of different sizes and lengths. Invite children to reach their hands in the bag and describe the feel and shape of the root vegetables. Pull out the vegetables and have children describe how they are the same and different. Alternatively, use a cardboard box or a small shoebox for this activity. Cut out a hole large enough to fit small and big arms through.



### 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 something the children learned (e.g. that root vegetables grow underground). You can also use hand stamps during meal time to congratulate children who “tried something new today!”

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## MEAL TIME IDEAS

### PLEASE PASS THE VEGGIES!

Children may be more likely to try new fruits and vegetables if they can touch and see the fruit or vegetable before it is cooked. When root vegetables (e.g. parsnips, rutabaga, turnip) are served, try to have a few raw, whole root vegetables on hand to pass around the tables. Talk with children about how whole vegetables like these were cut up and cooked by the cooks, so that children and teachers can have delicious, healthy food to eat!



### TABLE TALK

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

- What do they taste like? Are they soft? Crunchy? Sweet? Salty?
- Does anyone have a garden? What do you grow in your garden?
- Has anyone tried to grow root vegetables, like parsnips, rutabaga, or turnips?
- How do root vegetables grow? (the roots grow underground, the leaves grow above ground)
- What part of a parsnip, rutabaga, or turnip do we eat? (the root)

### “R” IS FOR ROOT VEGETABLES

Talk with children about how Root Vegetables start with the letter “R.” Root vegetables include parsnips, rutabaga, turnips, radishes, celery root, carrots, beets, and other vegetables. Root vegetables grow underground. Ask children to come up with other words that start with “R,” as you eat together.





# Activity Time

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

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## SENSORY EXPLORATION

### Big Roots, Little Roots, Skinny Roots, Round Roots

#### OBJECTIVES:

1. Children describe the feel, smell, taste, color of assorted root vegetables.
2. Children compare the size, shape and weight of different root vegetables.

#### WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

An assortment of root vegetables of different sizes and shapes, including parsnips, rutabagas, and turnips. You could also include beets, carrots, celery root, radishes, and other root vegetables.

Chart paper, Markers, Scale

#### WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Leave many of the root vegetables whole, so that children can explore and compare the different sizes and shapes.
  - Ask children to describe how the root vegetables are the same or different. Are they big? Small? Round? Skinny? Record their answers on chart paper.
- Have children line up the root vegetables according to their size, from smallest to largest.
- Cut a few root vegetables open so that children can explore the inside of the root vegetables.
- If you have a scale, have children predict which root vegetables will be the heaviest and the lightest. Help children weigh the different root vegetables to find out.
- Offer tastes of the raw vegetables, for those children who would like to try. Remind children that they will need to wash their hands after tasting and before continuing to explore the vegetables.
- Given children a hand stamp for exploring a new vegetable!



#### CLAP IT OUT

Clap out the syllables of each root vegetable you explore.

PAR-SNIP

TUR-NIP

RUT-A-BA-GA





# ★ COOKING ACTIVITY AND TASTING

## Root Vegetable Pancakes

### OBJECTIVES:

1. Children participate in cooking activity and learn how to make root vegetable pancakes.
2. Children review the different ways that root vegetables are eaten (raw in salads, roasted, boiled, steamed, in soups, mashed).
3. Children taste root vegetable pancakes.

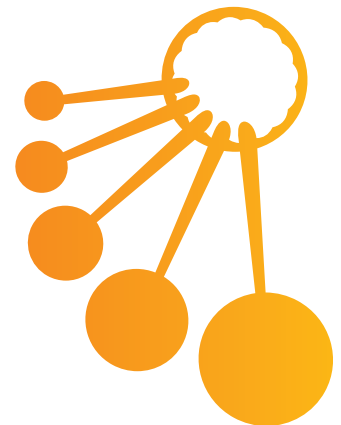
### WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Ingredients for recipe **(next page)**

One or more box graters, medium bowl, medium frying pan or griddle, spatula, wooden spoon or other mixing utensil, chef's knife, cutting board, measuring spoons and cups

### WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Children wash their hands and sit or stand around the activity table. Announce, "Today we are going to make a recipe called root vegetable pancakes." Ask if anyone has tasted pancakes before. What about vegetable pancakes (like potatoes)? To make root vegetable pancakes, we grate root vegetables and fry them in the shape of pancakes. Yum!
- Introduce each ingredient as you place it on the activity table.
- Children can help whisk eggs and add spices and flour.
- Children can stir in root vegetables.
- Children can help form patties.
- Children can help make dipping sauce, if using.
- Children can taste root vegetable pancakes plain, with yogurt, or dipping sauce!
- Give children a hand stamp for trying something new!
- As always, remember to keep children away from all sharp cutting utensils, electrical devices, and hot food and surfaces at all times.





# COOKING ACTIVITY AND TASTING

## Root Vegetable Pancakes Recipe

### ROOT VEGETABLE PANCAKES

makes about 6 pancakes, cut in quarters for 24 tastes

*Adapted from Not Eating Out in New York: <http://noteatingoutinny.com/2009/11/28/parsnip-pancakes/>*

#### INGREDIENTS

- ½ lb. parsnips, or a mix of root vegetables (rutabaga & carrot, beet & parsnip, carrot & parsnip, rutabaga, turnip, & parsnip, or your own combination)
- 2 scallions or green onions, green parts chopped
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup of flour
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper, or to taste
- 2-4 Tbs. vegetable oil

*Optional, to serve:*

- 1 Tbs. soy sauce and 1 tsp. rice vinegar (dipping sauce) OR plain, low-fat yogurt

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Grate root vegetables using the box grater(s) or other grating tool.
2. Chop scallions/green onions.
3. Whisk the eggs in a medium bowl with the salt and pepper. Whisk in flour.
4. Stir in shredded root vegetables.
5. Heat oil in a medium pan or skillet.
6. Working in batches, form the mixture into patties roughly three inches in size and place on the pan, at least two inches apart.\*
7. Cook for 2-3 minutes on the first side, then flip and cook for another 2-3 minutes until browned on both sides.
8. Continue cooking pancakes in batches, adding oil as needed.
9. Serve warm with plain yogurt or dipping sauce. If desired, cut each pancake in four pieces to create tastes for children.

*Note: Patties may not hold together completely when they are raw, but will come together as they cook.*



## ★ **PLANTING ACTIVITY**

### **Sprouting Root Vegetables**

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Children are able to describe how root vegetables grow.  
(the roots grow underground, and the leaves grow aboveground)
2. Children participate in an experiment to sprout root vegetables.

#### **WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:**

Fresh parsnips, rutabagas or both\*

Sharp knife

Wooden craft sticks or toothpicks (if using rutabaga)

For rutabaga: Clear glasses or narrow-mouthed or wide mouthed quart size jars  
(make sure the jars are large enough for the rutabaga to be suspended inside)

For parsnips: saucer or bowl, and marbles or pebbles



#### **TO SPROUT LEAVES FROM A PARSNIP:**

1. Explain to children that the class will be doing an experiment to see if leaves will grow from a parsnip.
2. Teachers prepare the parsnips by cutting off the tops (leaving about two inches of the parsnip below the tops). You can save the rest of the parsnips for a cooking or tasting activity!
3. Children help fill the saucer or bowl with a layer of marbles or pebbles
4. Children help place the parsnip tops on top of the marbles/pebbles in the bowls or saucers.
5. Children help fill the bowls or saucers with a little water (fill to the top of the marbles/pebbles)
6. Place the bowls/saucers in a sunny window, and add water to keep the level at the top of the marbles/pebbles.
7. Watch as green leaves grow from the parsnips!  
Measure the leaves as they grow.

#### **TO SPROUT LEAVES FROM A RUTABAGA**

1. Explain to children that the class will be doing an experiment to see if leaves will grow from a rutabaga.
2. If using wooden craft sticks, teachers should make three ½ inch horizontal slits evenly spaced around the middle of the rutabaga.
3. Help the children push the wooden craft sticks into each slit (at least ½ inch apart), or, help the children push three to four toothpicks into the rutabaga, forming a circle around the middle of the root vegetable.
4. With children, put rutabagas in jars. Toothpicks or wooden sticks should hold the top half of the rutabaga out of the jar.
5. Help the children fill the glass or jar with enough water to almost cover the bottom half of the rutabaga.
6. Place the jars in a warm location. A sunny windowsill is a good spot.
7. Watch over the next two to three weeks as the rutabaga begins to grow leaves at the top. Refill the glasses/jars with water every few days.

*\*If you sprout rutabagas and parsnips, compare the growth, the color of the leaves, and other similarities and differences between the two.*



# ★ 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 Root Vegetable Pancakes recipe, and use crayons, markers or paint to create art.
2. Children tell the class about their artwork.
3. Children remember and connect experiences with root vegetables, 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

A few root vegetables for display

Family Recipe: Root Vegetable Pancakes **(page 17)**



## HARVEST FOR HEALTHY KIDS RECIPE BOOK:

Start this activity in the beginning of the year. Have each child decorate a cover for his or her fruit & veggie recipe book. 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, using the recipe decorating activity to add recipes to the books! Children can take home their decorated recipe with a monthly newsletter, or just pinned to their bags or clothing!



## Family Recipe

### ROOT VEGETABLE PANCAKES

makes about 6 pancakes, cut in quarters for 24 tastes

#### INGREDIENTS

½ lb. parsnips, or a mix of root vegetables (rutabaga & carrot, beet & parsnip, carrot & parsnip, rutabaga, turnip, & parsnip, or your own combination)

2 scallions or green onions, green parts chopped

2 eggs

¼ cup of flour

½ tsp. salt

¼ tsp. pepper, or to taste

2-4 Tbs. vegetable oil

*Optional, to serve:*

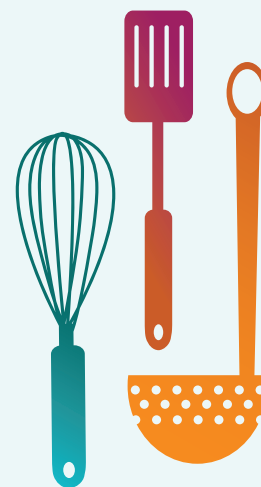
1 Tbs. soy sauce and 1 tsp. rice vinegar (dipping sauce) OR plain, low-fat yogurt

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Grate root vegetables using the box grater(s) or other grating tool.
2. Chop scallions/green onions.
3. Whisk the eggs in a medium bowl with the salt and pepper. Whisk in flour.
4. Stir in shredded root vegetables.
5. Heat oil in a medium pan or skillet.
6. Working in batches, form the mixture into patties roughly three inches in size and place on the pan, at least two inches apart.\*
7. Cook for 2-3 minutes on the first side, then flip and cook for another 2-3 minutes until browned on both sides.
8. Continue cooking pancakes in batches, adding oil as needed.
9. Serve warm with plain yogurt or dipping sauce. If desired, cut each pancake in four pieces to create tastes for children.

*Note: Patties may not hold together completely when they are raw, but will come together as they cook.*

*\* Adapted from Not Eating Out in New York: <http://noteatingoutinny.com/2009/11/28/parsnip-pancakes/>*





## ★ CREATIVE ARTS

### Watch our Garden Grow

#### OBJECTIVES:

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

#### WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED:

Small paper plates  
Colored paper, yarn, paint, or other art supplies  
Scissors  
Glue



#### WHAT YOU MIGHT DO:

- Make a rutabaga using a paper plate and colored paper. Create the rutabaga root on the paper plate, and paste green strips to the plate as the rutabaga. Use this plate as an example to show the class.
- Tell children: we can grow rutabagas in a garden. Ask children if anyone has ever grown rutabagas in a garden.
- Ask children to remember how rutabagas grow (the roots grow underground; the leaves grow above the ground).
- Show children example plate and tell children, today we will be making rutabagas for our “class garden.”
- Provide children with plates, colored paper, scissors, and glue.
- Invite children to make their own rutabaga for the “class garden.”
- 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**

If you have puppets in the classroom, bring them into your Harvest for Healthy Kids activities! 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, or during other activities.

### **HAND STAMPS**

Use your favorite 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**

Use the "discovery table" or another area of the classroom to explore different activities on a farm. Put out soil and various garden tools, such as rakes, hoes, and small shovels and spades. Include seeds and a small watering can. Allow children to explore the soil and use the tools, while practicing different jobs on a farm. This can be a great activity for children if you plan to have (or already have) a school garden at your center.

### **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.



## 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.