

Mealtime Memo

for Child Care

Fall Picnic Celebration

The month of October brings a change of season. Leaves fall from the trees, and vibrant fall colors of gold, orange, yellow, purple, green, deep red, and magenta display mother nature's fine work of art. Looking at the beautiful and different colors of leaves, think about bringing some into the classroom and teaching how colors of certain foods, like pumpkin and squash, can connect to a change in season. Other foods that represent fall colors are carrots, apricots, sweet potatoes; and in season foods like beets, pears, and Brussels sprouts. In this memo, you will be able to teach children how colors of the fall season can contribute to certain foods and nutrients.



Nutrients and Vitamins

Nutrients are substances that provide nourishment that is essential for growth and the maintenance of life. Nutrients provided by foods, like apples and Brussels sprouts are sources of vitamins A and C. Vitamin A contributes to healthy skin, vision, bone, and tooth growth. Vitamin C aids in iron absorption, protein breakdown, and immune system health. Talk to the children about how their body needs different vitamins in order to grow and develop properly. Sources of vitamin A include sweet potatoes and winter squash. Sources of vitamin C include citrus fruits, tomatoes and 100% tomato juice, and potatoes.

Connecting Children's Learning

If you have a garden, show children the food in its raw, natural form. Once the food is cooked, let them see the difference. Ask them to tell you the difference in how it looks and feels in its raw and cooked form. You may also use pictures of raw food and have children match them with a picture of cooked food. Young children can be very creative when using their imagination. This activity will help children see the difference between raw and cooked food, become more familiar with foods that have vitamin A and vitamin C, and be able to



associate fall colors with different fruits and vegetables. It will also help them use their senses and imagination. Hands-on experience provides a great opportunity for children to learn more.

Fun Time Activity

Celebrate the season by having a fall picnic at your facility or home. Have chairs, mats, blankets, or other safe items for children to sit on indoors or outdoors. Use pictures of the foods mentioned earlier to place throughout the center, home, and outdoors. You may also take pictures of fall foods that you have made at mealtime, and place the pictures in obvious places. Include an activity on making binoculars. Plan to have children make binoculars the day before the fall celebration. For fun, have them look through the binoculars and find the pictures of some of the foods we have just mentioned. You can put pictures of the foods inside or outside, whatever works best for your child care facility. They will love looking through binoculars to find different foods. Information is included in this memo to show how to make the binoculars.

During the fall celebration, you can add physical activity to the school day by planning a scavenger hunt. Use the binoculars that you have already made to find food in the garden or in your child care room. You may also use pictures of food you are serving. Place pictures in plain view and call the names of the foods on the pictures for the children to find. Say the names of the different foods in your garden, that you have served, or foods with which they are familiar. Ask the children to describe the way the food looks, and how it feels.

Children will have fun and be excited to learn about taste, compare raw and cooked foods, and make and use their binoculars. They may learn the names of foods they did not previously know and taste foods they have not previously tasted.

Information on how to make Binoculars can be found at:

<https://www.thesprucecrafts.com/toilet-paper-roll-binoculars-4164742>

Fall Vegetables



Pumpkin



Beets



Sweet Potatoes



Carrots



Apricots



Apples

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