



Pumpkin Exploration: Preschool Lesson

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Objectives

- Children become comfortable with tasting new foods in the supportive, positive environment of their preschool.
- Through a hands-on activity, children explore and taste a local pumpkin.
- Children learn that many vegetables come in lots of different varieties that all look and taste different.
- Children use a pumpkin seed activity to practice counting.

NC Foundations for Early Learning and Development

Goals Addressed:

APL-2, APL-5, APL-8

HPD-1

LDC-1, LDC-8, LDC-9

CD-1, CD-7, CD-11, CD-14, CD-15

Materials

Pumpkin Exploration Supplies

- A small to medium local pumpkin for every 4-5 children (if you can, get multiple varieties)
- Bowls
- Knife (*for adult use only*)
- Cutting board
- Newspaper

Tasting Supplies

- Several different foods made with pumpkins. (We recommend roasted pumpkin seeds and/or roasted pumpkin.)
- Small paper plates

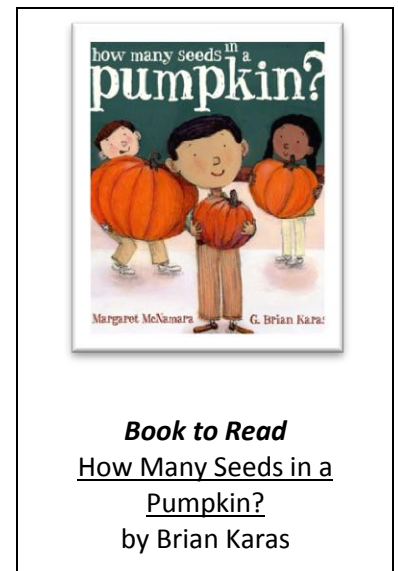
Activities

Pumpkin Exploration

If you have different varieties of pumpkins, have the children compare their sizes (longer/taller/larger) and weights (heavier/lighter). Read [How Many Seeds in a Pumpkin?](#) by Brian Karas. Ask the children if they learned anything new about pumpkins? What did they learn?

Digging In and Counting Seeds!

Hold up the pumpkins for the children to see and ask them to predict what the inside of a pumpkin looks like. What color will the inside be? Will it be wet or dry? Which part of the pumpkin do they think we can eat? Put newspaper or a table covering down on tables and organize your children into groups of 4 or 5. Cut a circle around the tops of each pumpkin and pass one out to each group. Have the children explore the inside of the pumpkin. What do they see, feel, and smell? Have them practice counting to ten with the seeds from inside their pumpkins.



Book to Read
How Many Seeds in a
Pumpkin?
by Brian Karas



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Pumpkin Tasting

Give each child a paper plate. Pass out samples of roasted pumpkin seeds. If you would like to include a second pumpkin dish also give children a small taste of such as roasted pumpkin or mashed pumpkin. Have them compare pumpkin dishes. Can they think of other ways to eat pumpkins? When the children have finished their snack, prompt them to help clean up by putting their paper products in the trash and/or wipe the table.

Class Follow Up

Send home a recipe for roasted pumpkin seeds with each child.

Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Ingredients

1 ½ cups raw whole pumpkin seeds
2 teaspoons butter
pinch of salt

Directions

Cut open a pumpkin and take out all of the seeds. Rinse pumpkin seeds under cold water and separate the pulp/strings from the seeds. (This is easiest just after you've removed the seeds from the pumpkin, before the pulp has dried.)



Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Toss seeds in a bowl with melted butter and salt. Spread the seeds in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake for about 30-45 minutes or until golden brown; stir occasionally.

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