

Georgia Early Care and Education

KIDS in THE KITCHEN

HARVEST OF THE MONTH COOKBOOK



QUALITY CARE
for CHILDREN





About QCC

Quality Care for Children (QCC) creates a system that equips families and child care providers with the knowledge and resources to nurture and educate Georgia's infants and young children. We understand that adequate nutrition is critical to children's developing bodies and brains. Therefore, we work diligently with early care and education (ECE) programs to help offer healthy foods in a positive mealtime environment, impacting children's current and future health and well-being. ECE programs also provide an access point to connect families to information and resources that support food resilience and healthy habits at home.

QCC created this resource as part of the Georgia Farm to Early Care and Education Harvest of the Month initiative highlighting seasonal vegetable and fruits grown in Georgia. Visit qualitycareforchildren.org for more Harvest of the Month resources, including classroom activities, additional recipes, booklists, and family newsletters.

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

This cookbook was created to help child care providers, parents and families support healthy eating habits for young children. Children are more likely to try foods they help prepare, and helping in the kitchen builds confidence as they learn a life skill. Cooking also builds skills across nearly every developmental domain, including fine motor skills, social skills, problem solving, math, science, language, literacy and more!

There are many ways young children can help during mealtimes. Always start with hand washing and safety reminders. After reviewing the rules, children can:

- Wash and scrub fruits and vegetables
- Tear lettuce, greens and fresh herbs
- Snap green beans
- Peel oranges and bananas that you've started
- Use kid-safe plastic knives to slice soft fruits and vegetables
- Measure ingredients, pour liquids, and stir items together
- Spread cream cheese, hummus, nut and seed butter, etc.
- Assemble foods, like sandwiches, yogurt parfaits and salads
- Set the table, wipe counters, and clean up after themselves
- With assistance, use appliances like manual choppers and blenders

Cooking is a fun way to help children grow into healthy eating!


When you see a  in the following recipes, children can help with that step.

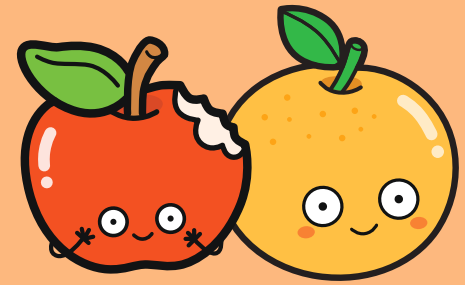
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GARDEN FRIENDS



Ingredients

Ladybug: Red apples, raisins, blackberries and either nut, seed, or soy butter

Butterfly: Oranges and blueberries

Bee: Apples, blackberries and bananas

Pollinators are friends to the garden and help our vegetables and fruits grow. This activity can extend science activities related to plants, animals, their environments, and life cycles.

Directions

Ladybug:

- Slice apples and plate with the red skin facing up.
- 🧑🍳 Use nut, seed or soy butter to “glue” raisins on the apple to make ladybug spots.
- 🧑🍳 Add a blackberry for the head.

Butterfly:

- Slice an orange horizontally, then slice each circle in half.
- 🧑🍳 Line blueberries up as the body and add orange slices as the wings.

Bee:

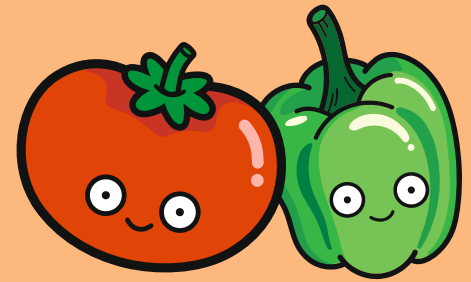
- Peel and thinly slice apples.
- 🧑🍳 Slice bananas, and arrange apple slices, banana slices and blackberries to make a bee.

CACFP Serving Information:

½ cup garden friends snack equals ½ cup fruit



PIZZA PASTA SALAD



Ingredients

3 cups cooked and cooled pasta, like farfalle (bow-tie) or rotini (spiral)

3 cups vegetables, like tomatoes, bell peppers, onions, and mushrooms

Optional: pepperoni, sliced olives, fresh basil, or parsley

About ½ cup Italian dressing

Grated parmesan cheese, to taste

Bright colors and the familiarity of pasta helps children feel comfortable trying new vegetables. This recipe provides a variety of textures, flavors, and shapes for children to explore with all of their senses.

Makes 6 servings

Directions

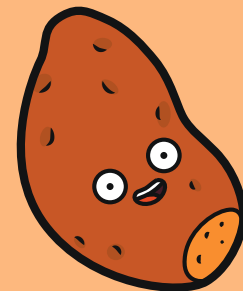
1. Slice onions and hard vegetables into bite-sized pieces. Children can help slice vegetables like tomatoes and mushrooms.
2. 🧑🍳 Combine cold pasta, vegetables, optional ingredients, and salad dressing. Stir well.
3. 🧑🍳 Sprinkle parmesan cheese on top.

CACFP Serving Information:

One serving (¼ cup pasta with sauce) equals ½ oz eq grains



SWEET POTATO PANCAKES



Ingredients

- 2 cups whole wheat flour
 - 2 tsp baking powder
 - ½ tsp salt
 - 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon
 - 2 cups milk
 - 2 medium sweet potatoes, baked or microwaved and cooled to room temperature
 - 2 eggs
 - 10 cups applesauce
-

Making pancakes provides children with an opportunity to observe changes in states of matter as the liquid batter becomes a solid pancake. Children can also compare and describe how the physical properties of the ingredients change as they are whisked, blended, and combined.

Directions

1. 🧑🍳 Whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, and pumpkin pie spice. Set aside.
2. 🧑🍳 Peel and mash sweet potatoes. Combine 1 cup mashed sweet potatoes with milk and eggs in blender. Blend well.
3. 🧑🍳 Add sweet potato mixture to flour mixture. Stir until combined, but do not overmix.
4. Heat nonstick skillet over medium heat and grease the pan. Cook pancakes until slightly browned on both sides.
5. Serve with applesauce.

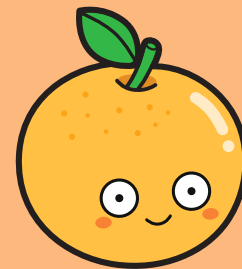
Makes 20 pancakes

CACFP Serving Information:

1 pancake and ½ cup applesauce equals 1 oz eq grains and ½ cup fruit



MATH SALAD



Ingredients

6 cups lettuce, spinach, or mixed salad greens

Boiled eggs, chickpeas, and/or diced chicken

Salad toppings, like oranges, cucumbers, shredded carrots, peppers, etc.

Salad dressing

A salad bar allows children to build a salad based on their own preferences. Incorporate math talk by asking questions like “Let’s count orange segments as you put them on your salad,” “Which is longer, the piece of carrot or avocado?” and “Can you find something shaped like an oval?”

Makes 12 servings

Directions

1. Cook and chop protein foods, like chicken, boiled eggs, and chickpeas.
2. 🧑🍳 Wash, prep and chop salad toppings, and place each in their own bowl (oranges in one bowl, cucumbers in another bowl, etc.). Add a child-sized serving utensil to each bowl.
3. 🧑🍳 Wash, tear or shred, and dry lettuce or salad greens, and place $\frac{1}{2}$ cup onto each child’s plate.
4. 🧑🍳 Invite the children to build their own salad while incorporating math talk.

CACFP Serving Information:

1 serving equals at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetables. Meat/meat alternate requirements may also be met.



PRESTO PESTO!



Ingredients

4 cups fresh baby spinach, kale, collard greens, Swiss chard, or a combination of greens

1/3 cup olive oil

1 lemon, juiced

1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese

Salt and pepper, to taste

This recipe can help children practice following multi-step directions. Toddlers can follow a two-step prompt, like “tear the spinach leaf into two pieces, then place the spinach in the blender.” Preschoolers can understand more complex directions and can complete most of this recipe with your verbal prompts.

Makes about 1/2 cup of sauce

Directions

1. 👨‍🍳 If using spinach, add fresh leaves straight to the food processor or blender. If using other greens, wash and remove stems, and tear into bite sized pieces.
2. Steam, sauté or blanch greens to soften them. Add to food processor or blender.
3. 👨‍🍳 Add the olive oil, lemon juice, parmesan cheese, salt and pepper to the blender or food processor. Place the lid on the blender.
4. Blend until smooth, scraping down the sides as needed.

CACFP Serving Information:

Serve as a sauce on pasta, pizza, or chicken, or use as a dip for bread or crackers



EGG MUFFINS



Ingredients

1 cup vegetables, like chopped steamed broccoli, fresh bell peppers, or spinach

1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

12 eggs

Adding ingredients to the muffin pan provides an opportunity to practice math skills, like counting and one to one correspondence. Count together as you add a spoonful of vegetables and cheese into each muffin pan cup.

Makes 12 muffins

Directions

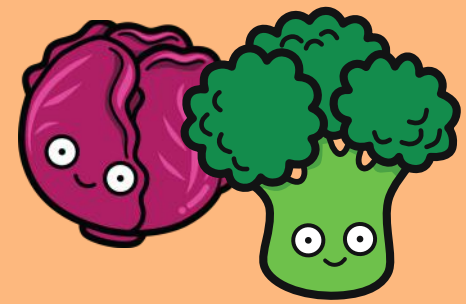
1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. 🧑🍳 Spray 12 cup muffin pan with cooking spray.
3. 🧑🍳 Add a heaping Tablespoon of vegetables into each muffin pan cup, counting as you go. Then, add a heaping Tablespoon of cheese into each muffin pan cup, counting as you go.
4. 🧑🍳 Crack and beat eggs in a large bowl.
5. Pour eggs over veggies and cheese until muffin cups are about $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
6. Bake for about 25 minutes.

CACFP Serving Information:

1 muffin cup equals 2 oz eq meat alternate



RAINBOW BAGEL



Ingredients

2 bagels

Cream cheese

4 or more cups of different colored vegetables, like red tomatoes, orange carrots, yellow peppers, green broccoli, and purple cabbage

During this activity, children can practice identifying colors. It also provides an opportunity for them to develop artistic expression as they create their own work of edible art.

Makes 8 servings

Directions

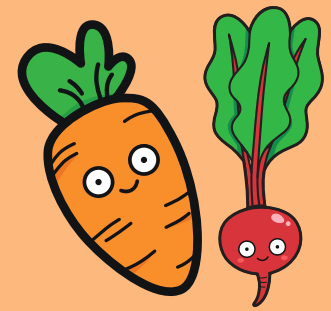
1. Slice bagels in half, then cut in half again to create rainbow shapes
2. 🧑🍳 Wash and slice, chop or shred vegetables with kid-safe knives or a food chopper.
3. 🧑🍳 Spread cream cheese and top with a rainbow of vegetables.

CACFP Serving Information:

1 serving equals ½ oz equivalent grains



VEGGIE FACES WITH COTTAGE CHEESE DIP



Ingredients

8 cups of a variety of vegetables, raw or steamed as developmentally-appropriate

16 oz cottage cheese

2 Tbsp fresh herbs, like dill, chives, oregano, basil and/or thyme

Optional ingredients: garlic or onion powder, lemon juice, black pepper

This activity helps teach and reinforce the name and function of body parts and provides an opportunity to name emotions expressed in their veggie faces.

Makes 16 servings

Directions

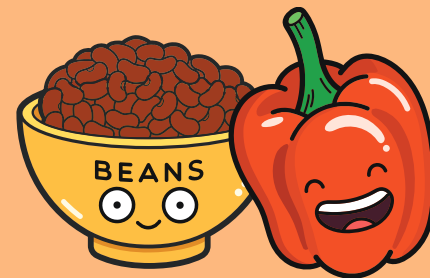
1. Slice, grate or chop vegetables into different shapes. For example, round radish or cucumber slices can become eyes, leafy greens or lettuce become hair, shredded beets or carrots are often used as eyebrows or hair, bell pepper pieces can be shaped as a nose, etc.
2. 🧑🍳 Combine cottage cheese, herbs, and any optional ingredients. For a smooth texture, blend everything together in a food processor or blender.
3. 🧑🍳 Arrange vegetables on the plate to make faces. Enjoy veggies with dip.

CACFP Serving Information:

1 serving equals ½ cup vegetables and ½ oz meat alternate



GEORGIA CAVIAR



Ingredients

4 cups cooked black-eyed peas or black beans (or 2-15 oz cans, drained and rinsed)

2 cups cooked corn (or 1-15 oz can, drained and rinsed)

1 red bell pepper, chopped

1 green bell pepper, chopped

1 small, sweet onion, chopped

Optional: fresh cilantro or parsley, torn into small pieces

½ cup sugar, ¼ cup white vinegar, and ¼ cup vegetable oil (or substitute Italian dressing)

While baking activities often require precise measurement, this recipe is flexible and a great opportunity for children to take the lead on measuring to develop their math skills.

Makes about 16 servings

Directions

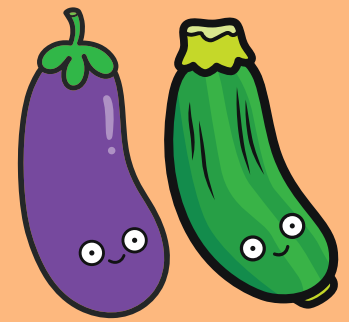
1. Chop peppers and onion. Kids can be involved in this step if using a chopper under supervision, but it's best to keep their hands away from raw onion. Add to a large bowl.
2. 👨‍🍳 Measure beans and corn and add to bowl. Tear fresh herbs into small pieces and add to bowl.
3. 👨‍🍳 Measure sugar and vinegar and pour into a room temperature saucepan.
4. Heat the sugar and vinegar in a saucepan over medium heat and stir until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and whisk in oil. Pour into a separate, kid-safe container or bowl.
5. 👨‍🍳 Pour the dressing over the bean mixture and stir to combine.
6. Refrigerate for about an hour before serving. Drain off any excess dressing and serve with crackers or tortilla chips.

CACFP Serving Information:

½ cup provides ½ cup vegetable



VEGGIE PIZZA BITES



Ingredients

A vegetable base: mini sweet peppers, bell peppers, eggplant or zucchini

Pizza sauce

Mozzarella cheese

Optional: mini pepperoni pieces, fresh basil, or other pizza toppings

This activity is a fun way to expose children to new vegetables through a familiar food - pizza! For this recipe, an adult should prepare the vegetables so they cook uniformly, and children can help add the sauce, cheese, and other toppings.

Directions

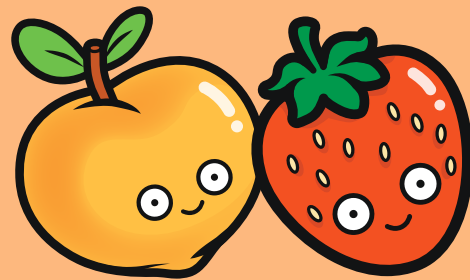
1. Pepper pizza bites: cut into bite sized pieces and arrange on a baking sheet. Top with pizza sauce, a sprinkle of cheese, and other toppings. Bake at 400°F for about 10 minutes.
2. Eggplant pizza bites: cut into ½ inch slices and arrange on a baking sheet. Brush with olive oil. Roast at 450°F for about 15 minutes, until fork tender and golden. Top with pizza sauce, a sprinkle of cheese and other toppings. Broil for about 5 minutes.
3. Zucchini pizza bites: cut into ¼ inch slices and arrange on a baking sheet. Top with pizza sauce, a sprinkle of cheese, and other toppings. Bake at 450°F for 5 minutes, then broil for about 5 more minutes.

CACFP Serving Information:

½ cup vegetable pizza bites equals ½ cup vegetables



FRUIT TACO



Ingredients

6 cups of soft, easy to cut fruits like ripe peaches, watermelon, cantaloupe, kiwi, strawberries, and blueberries

12 pancakes or waffles

Optional: yogurt or nut, seed or soy butter

Cutting up soft fruit with kid-safe plastic knives helps children develop their fine motor skills. Cut larger fruits, like melons, into big chunks for the children to chop up further.

Makes 12 servings

Directions

1. 🧑🍳 Wash and chop fruit into small pieces.
2. 🧑🍳 If using, spread yogurt or nut, seed or soy butter onto the pancake or waffle.
3. 🧑🍳 Top with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit and fold into a taco.

CACFP Serving Information:

1 pancake or waffle with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit salsa equals 1 oz eq grains and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit



INFUSED WATER



Ingredients

Water

Fresh or frozen fruits, fresh vegetables and/or herbs

Try one of these flavor combinations, or create your own:

- Cucumbers and fresh mint leaves
- Fresh or frozen strawberries, lemon, and fresh basil
- Watermelon and blueberries
- Orange slices, cranberries, and fresh rosemary

In addition to keeping children hydrated, this activity provides an opportunity for them to practice deep breathing. Children can hold an aromatic herb, like mint or rosemary, and slowly inhale the scent before adding it to their own cup.

Directions

1. 🧑🍳 Wash and add fruits, vegetables and/or herbs to a pitcher or cups. Use a spoon or straw to squish them a little to release the natural juices.
2. Add water and ice. Enjoy right away, or for a stronger flavor, leave infused water in the refrigerator for about an hour before drinking.
3. To reduce the risk of choking, serve infused water in a cup with a straw, or make it in a pitcher and pour the strained water into cups for the children.

CACFP Serving Information:

Water should be offered throughout the day, but is not considered a creditable meal component for CACFP.

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