

## OCTOBER & NOVEMBER THEME: FOOD!



In the month of October and November, food is prominent! Halloween and Thanksgiving lend itself to treats and cooking. So take the time to explore food, glorious food! Have your kids' cook, create and indulge in sticky, salty, spicy, soft and crunchy treats. As you can see, this theme lends itself to a lot of language learning and sensory experiences. Vocabulary will expand as you and your child name the foods you need for recipes. Talk about the actions needed to cook/bake; stir, mix, pour, cut, measure, clean, wipe, rinse and dry. Use adjectives to describe your incredible edibles; sweet, sour, mushy, crunchy, hot, warm, etc. It's a great time to work on fine motor skills like stirring, spreading and using utensils.

Do low tech recipes like making pizza bagels in the toaster oven, mixing lemonade, build an ice cream sundae, yogurt dish with granola and different cut up fruit or instant pudding. Use the computer to search for kid friendly recipes.

Have a picnic in your living room! Your picnic can include Dixie cups filled with different treats. Lick sprinkles off a banana, peanut butter off an apple. Enjoy chips and salsa. You will be surprised how our kids love hot and spicy foods. For low sensory oral awareness, it wakes up the mouth! Practice cup drinking with your child. If there is lots of spillage, practice in the bathtub.



Oral motor strengthening activities will include sustaining chewing for tough and chewy textures like dried fruit, starbursts, and chicken nuggets. Practice licking to increase separation of the tongue and jaw as well as increasing the range of motion for tongue elevation and extension. Children with weak tongues often use their lips and jaw to help stabilize the tongue and lick. When eating practice moving food from side to side without moving their little bodies or using their fingers. Repetition of activities help newly learned skills be transferred and maintained across settings. Cooking and playing food is a sneaky way to introduce kids to new foods that they may end up liking and adding to their diet.