

MEALTIME: APPLES

DAILY ROUTINE EXPLORATIONS WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this daily routine. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.



Did you know mealtime is a great opportunity to support STEM learning? You can talk about STEM ideas and use STEM words during mealtimes.

Children can learn about computational thinking concepts, like following a sequence of steps in a particular order, such as an applesauce recipe, and mathematical concepts, like sorting apples and counting apple seeds.

Children learn new things when they practice them in everyday routines. Try one or two of the following activities. With a little bit of practice, mealtime activities or conversations can become a natural place to talk and learn about STEM. Use these ideas to set up the environment and materials to best suit your child's needs.

ACCESS/ENVIRONMENT

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

- If possible, limit background noise and distractions so your child can be more engaged in the cooking activity
- Place materials within reach in a contained space for easier access
- Place an anti-slip/stabilizing mat below the plates/bowls so they do not move
- Using adjustable height table or adjustable chair if your child needs sit down or rest frequently



Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.



Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.



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ADAPTATIONS

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MATERIALS

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

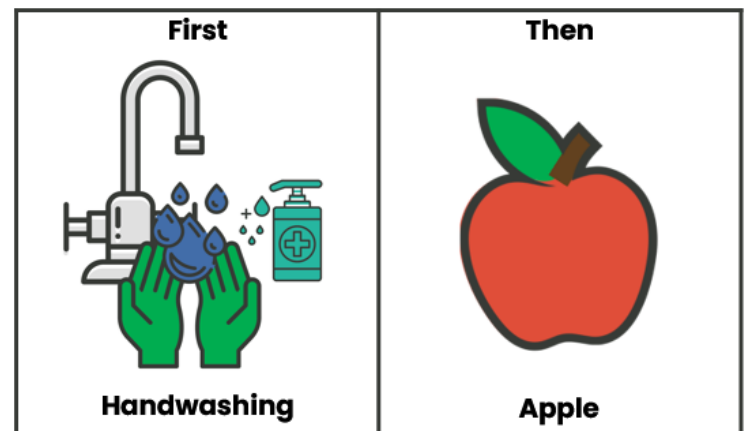
- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device
- For easier grasping, adapt the utensils by building up the handles or creating grip straps using household items (e.g., masking tape, pool noodles)

INTERACTIONS/INSTRUCTION

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

Note: Communication may include the use of words, signs, gestures, and different types of cues (e.g., touch, object, movement, visual, etc.)

- Provide hand-over-hand support to help your child explore ingredients and utensils better
- Narrate/sign your child's actions as they interact and experiment with the utensils and ingredients ("Oh, you're scooping with the tablespoon!")
- Adjust the number of steps as needed.
- Use a variety of methods of communication (e.g., sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage your child
- Use pictures and/or icons to signal next steps and/or each step of the sequence
- Communicate with your child at eye level
- Speak/sign slowly, emphasize keywords, and wait for a response
- Praise your child's efforts (e.g., to try new foods) with words, facial expression, or body language



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VISUAL CUES: FIRST/THEN BOARD

USE TO SIGNAL NEXT STEPS

First	Then



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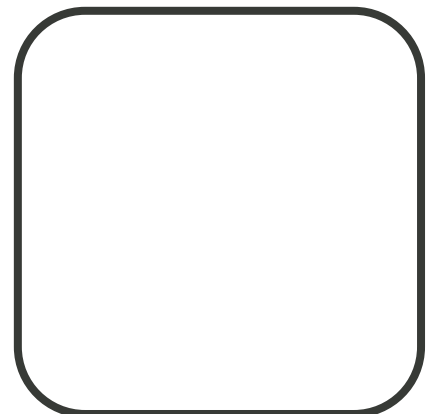
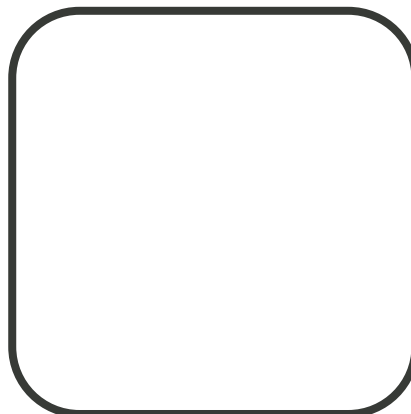
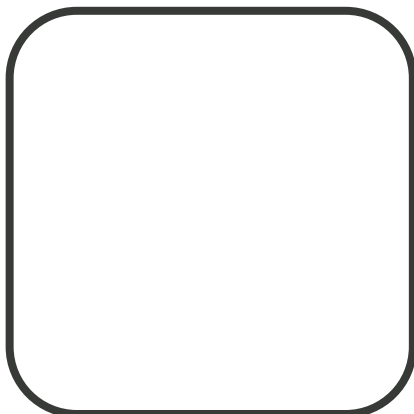
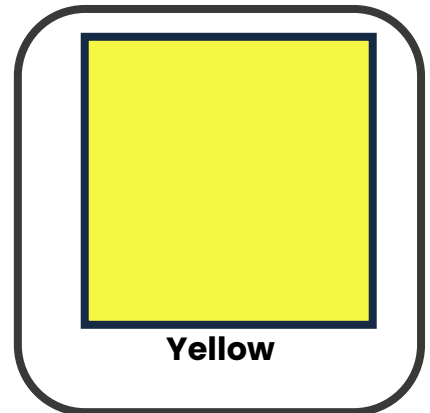
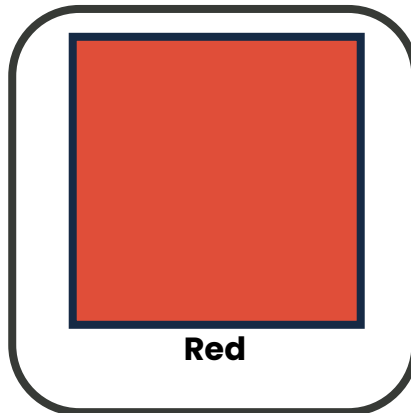
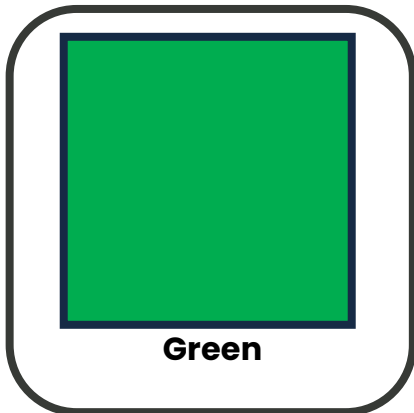
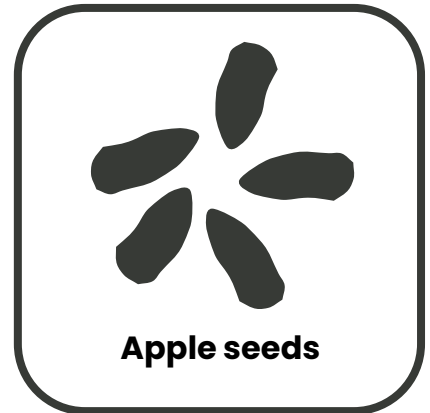
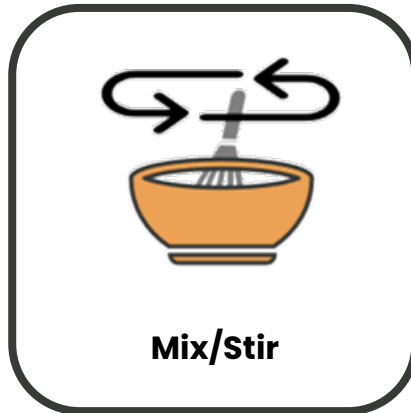
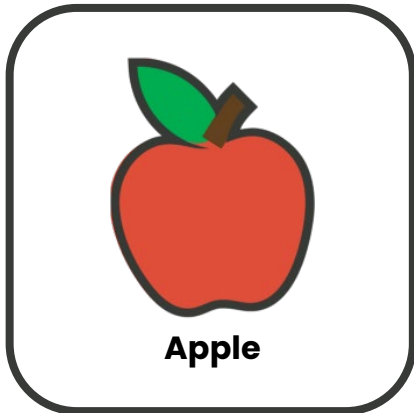
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VISUAL CUES: USE TO PROMPT



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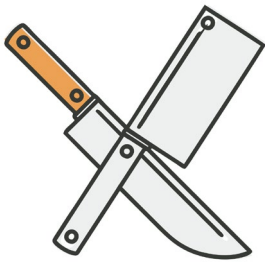
KITCHEN SAFETY

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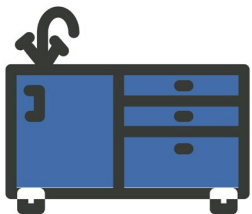
- Wash your hands before preparing and eating meals



- Sharp knives, peelers, tools that slice are only for adult and much older family members to use



- Sometimes the oven/stove is hot even when turned off, do not touch the oven/stove or it's knobs/buttons



- Clean up after meal prep, cooking, and mealtimes



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VISUAL CUE USE TO SIGNAL NEXT STEPS



MATERIALS

- 8-10 apples
- ½ cup of brown sugar
- ½ cup of water *OR* apple juice
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- Extras: 1 tablespoon of honey, other fruits, 1 teaspoon of vanilla, 1 teaspoon of lemon juice
- Heavy duty Ziplock bag(s) *OR* a deep cooking pan
- Rubber mallet *OR* potato masher

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Adult Prep: Decide together with your child if you want peels in the applesauce. While you are peeling (if applicable), removing the apple core, and dicing (1-inch squares) the apples, talk about kitchen safety with your child**
2. Place sliced apples into a heavy duty Ziplock bag for your child to smash with a rubber mallet under your supervision *OR* place into a deep cooking pan for your child to smash with a potato masher
3. Measure out water/juice, sugar, cinnamon, and any extras and add to a large pot
4. Stir, then add the apples and stir again
- 5. Adult Step: Set the pot on the stove and turn heat to high and bring to a boil. Once boiling, set to a simmer for 15-20 minutes or until apples are soft**
6. Wait for applesauce to cool, then stir until desired smoothness is reached
7. Enjoy!



Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.



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EXPLORATION I

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Hand Washer

Description: Help your child recognize that there are **steps in daily routines**. Encourage your child to **follow the steps**. *"First, handwashing, then apples."* Use cues to help your child **follow the steps** if needed.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to recognize patterns in their daily routines. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Talk about the importance of following steps, a type of **sequence**. *"By washing our hands **first**, we will know the food we make is safe to eat."* Ask, *"What do you think will happen if we miss a step?"*

Ask **"What should we do first? Next? Then what? Last?"** It might be fun to do one step out of order (e.g., dry your hands before you turn on the water) and see if your child notices. Having pictures to show each step (turn on water, run hands under water, get soap, lather soap, rinse hands, turn off water, get towel and dry hands) can also be really helpful.





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EXPLORATION II

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Recipe Follower

Description: Help your child recognize that there are **steps in daily routines**. Encourage your child to **follow the steps of the recipe**. Use the recipe cues to help your child **follow the steps**.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to explore various ingredients. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Talk about the importance of following a recipe, a type of sequence. "By following this applesauce recipe and completing each **step in order**, we can make sure are successful in making applesauce." Ask, "What do you think will happen if we miss a step?" "What do you think the applesauce will taste like?"

MATERIALS

- 8-10 apples
- ½ cup of brown sugar
- ½ cup of water OR apple juice
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- Extras: 1 tablespoon of honey, other fruits, 1 teaspoon of vanilla, 1 teaspoon of lemon juice
- Heavy duty Ziplock bag(s) OR a deep cooking pan
- Rubber mallet OR potato masher

DIRECTIONS

1. **Adult Prep: Decide together with your child if you want peels in the applesauce. While you are peeling (if applicable), removing the apple core, and dicing (1-inch squares) the apples, talk about kitchen safety with your child**
2. Place sliced apples into a heavy duty Ziplock bag for your child to smash with a rubber mallet OR place into a deep cooking pan for your child to smash with a potato masher
3. Measure out water/juice, sugar, cinnamon, and any extras and add to a large pot
4. Stir, then add the apples and stir again
5. **Adult Step: Set the pot on the stove and turn heat to high and bring to a boil. Once boiling, set to a simmer for 15-20 minutes or until apples are soft**
6. Wait for applesauce to cool, then stir until desired smoothness is reached.
7. Enjoy!





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Apple Sorter

Description: Help your child recognize that apples come in **different colors and sizes**, but all have the **same parts**. Encourage your child to **classify** various apples according to their **color, size, and/or taste**.

What My Child Is Learning!

Children learn best by interacting with people and objects. Introduce STEM words, ask questions, and encourage them to recognize patterns in their daily routines. Help your child make a connection between words and real-life experiences and develop fundamental critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as math skills.

Talk about the variety of apples. Ask, "What do you think these apples will taste like? Sweet? Grainy? Juicy?"

If your child does not **classify** independently, encourage them to put all the apples of one color or size together. If your child still does not sort, model sorting by one attribute (e.g. color) and encourage children to keep sorting the remaining apples.

If your child sorted the apples by the color, encourage your child to think about how else they could sort the apples. "Hmmm, I noticed you sorted the apples by the color. The red apples over here and the green apples over here. I wonder how else we could sort our apples? Maybe we could **classify them by size**."





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EXPLORATION IV

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Apple Recognizer

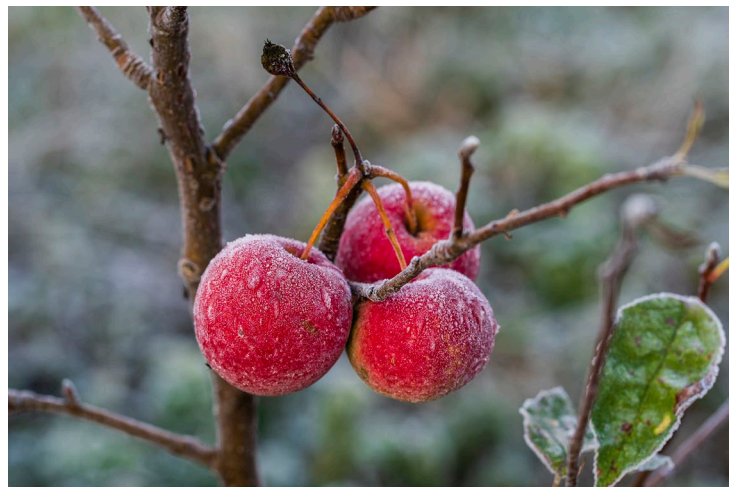
Description: While enjoying apples as a healthy snack, talk about what apples are and where they come from.

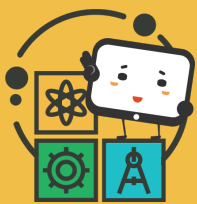
What My Child Is Learning!

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Talk about apples. Say, "Apples are a nutritious **food source** and are often eaten by **animals, including humans.**"

While exploring various apples, ask, "Where do you think apples come from? Where do trees come from? What do you think will happen will these **seeds**?" "**How many** apple seeds do you notice (see, feel)?"





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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

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- Visit a grocery store and look at the variety of apples
- Visit an apple orchard
- Check out our Storybook Conversations resource for *Ten Apples Up On Top*, it includes **CROWD** prompts and more STEM building activities related to apples. Bon Appétit!
- Check out these books about apples:
 - *Apples* by Gail Gibbons
 - *An Apple's Life* by Nancy Dickman
 - *Applesauce Day* by Lisa Amstutz

