



# **Farm to Early Care & Education Activities**

PDM2.4b

From the Farm to Store

Add tractors, play vegetables, farm equipment and animals to the block center and encourage the children to play farm. Talk with them about harvesting the vegetables and driving them in tractors and trucks to the store.

PDM2.3a

Home Grown

In a prepared garden bed, have the children plant lettuce, tomatoes and cucumber plants. When crops are ripe, have the children assist in harvesting, washing and preparing the food for a class salad.

PDM2.4a

Vegetable Faces

Place precut vegetables, such as peppers, cucumbers, celery and carrots, along with raisins and paper plates in the science center and encourage children to make a face from the vegetables!

PDM2.4a

Books about Healthy Foods

Include books about healthy foods in your reading center, such as *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z* by Lois Ehlert or *I Eat Fruit, I Eat Vegetables* by Hannah Tofts. You can also include recipe books in dramatic play and math.

PDM2.4b

Eating the Alphabet

Read the book *Eating the Alphabet* by Lois Ehlert. You should call attention to those foods that may be less known to children. Ask, "What new food would you try from the book?" There is a glossary at the end of the book that provides interesting facts about each food. Read this book during outdoor time and take about gardens and how food grows.

#### PDM2.4b

##### A Trip to the Grocery Store

Inside of the dramatic play area create a grocery store. Give the children a list that requires them to buy certain categories of food, such as five vegetables, five fruits, two grains, three carbohydrates and one junk food. Provide lots of choices of food boxes, containers and pretend food. Give the children baskets to hold their orders. The cashier can check them out when they are done to determine if they filled the order.

##### Bright Idea

Provide a shopping buddy for the children who need help making the choices from the grocery list.

#### PDM2.4a

##### Fruit and Vegetable Tasting

Bring in a variety of fruits and/or vegetables for the children to taste such as papaya, kiwi, melons, strawberries, cucumbers, zucchini and carrot sticks. It's fun to have unusual varieties they might not have seen before. Give them plastic knives and plates. In advance, create a large chart with three columns. In the first column, draw or glue pictures of the foods you will be tasting. Label the second column "LIKE" with a smiley face. Label the third column "DON'T LIKE" with a sad face. Have the children help you peel and cut the foods. Discuss the importance of eating fruits and vegetables and how healthy they are for their bodies. Ask each child if they like each food as they try it and to write their name in the matching column. This can be done in small group.

#### PDM2.4b

##### Fruit Dissection

Bring in actual fruits, such as oranges, apples and blueberries, and discuss the vitamins in each. During small group, cut the fruits open and discuss the parts inside. Consider planting the seeds and tracking the growth process.

APL2.3a

Growing Vegetable Soup

Read the book *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Elhert. Ask the children questions such as, "How do vegetables grow?" Place pictures on the table to represent digging the hole, planting the seeds and watering. Have the children put the pictures in order. The children will now grow their own vegetable using a small cup, a bean, soil and water. Show photos of different types of vegetable seeds and how they become plants. Show photos of gardening tools such as a watering can, rake, shovel, wheelbarrow, hoe and gloves. Reinforce new vocabulary words such as vegetable, soil, protect and prepare.

APL2.3a

Growing a Garden

Turn the sensory table into a "garden" by adding clean mulch, small garden tools, gloves, shovel, rake, trowel, aprons, small cups and plastic beads to represent seeds.

APL5.4a

Outdoor Seasonal Activities

Have the children work together to rake leaves and then jump in the piles in the fall. Use teamwork to plant and care for an outdoor spring garden. Fill a small pool and gather toys for water play in the summer.

APL5.4a

Wild Flowers

Mix five parts red clay, three parts clean mulch and one part wildflower seeds with 16 ounces of water. Have the children work together to mix the ingredients in a dishpan using their hands. Roll the mixture into meatball-sized balls and let them dry for a few days. Then drop each ball outside on the ground, on top of the soil. Have the children check, periodically, to see when the wildflowers grow.

APL1.4c

Plan and Plant

Read *From Seed to Plant* by Gail Gibbons. Talk to the children about how a plant grows. Give them the opportunity to select and plant seeds to watch them grow.

APL1.4c

Plan and Plant 2

Talk about how to create a garden. Plan whether to have an indoor or outdoor garden and what the children would like to grow. Discuss and plan about each child's role to help create the garden, such as choosing a spot for the garden, digging holes and planting seeds. Use the calendar as an opportunity to set goals for this project.

APL2.2a

Peeling Corn

Provide ears of corn with the husks on. During small group, have the children peel off the husks and strip off the silk. Model this activity for the children. Encourage them to ask questions about the parts of the ear of corn. If the children are still developing the fine motor skills needed to peel the husk, assist them and encourage them to touch and feel the husk and corn.

CLL1.4c

Our Garden (and Vocabulary) Grows

Engage the children in growing a vegetable or flower garden. Taking care of and maintaining the plants in the garden will provide many opportunities for rich, meaningful conversations throughout the year.

CLL5.3c

What Do You See?

While reading Peter Brown's *The Curious Garden*, pause to talk about the pictures. Encourage the children to describe what they see in the pictures.

CLL4.4d

Math Talk

Bring a pumpkin into the classroom and encourage the children to think of the many ways that it can be measured such as height, weight, circumference or number of seeds. Introduce appropriate vocabulary.

CLL4.4c

Fun Fruits

Bring in a variety of fruits that may be unfamiliar to the children for them to taste. Examples may include star fruit, mango, kiwi and pomegranate. Encourage the children to use language to describe the look, smell, feel and taste of each fruit.

CD-MA1.0a

Round and Round the Garden

*Ten Little Fingers: 100 Number Rhymes for Young Children* by Louise Binder Scott is a good book for all sorts of rhymes. Here's one to try.

*Round and round the garden, Like a teddy bear,  
One step, two steps, (Walk fingers up infant's arm)  
And tickle you under there!  
(Tickle gently under arm.)*

CD-MA4.4c

Sticky Patterns

Give the children lots of interesting objects to encourage patterning, such as plastic insects, small fruits or sports erasers. While in the math center the children can glue patterns to sentence strips or you can place masking tape sticky side up for the children to place objects on and then take off when finished.

CD-MA1.3c

Math Card Match

Create math cards using farm animals and the numerals zero to five. For example, create one cow in a barn, two ducks in a pond and so on. Then provide farm animal counters. The children will place the matching number of counters on the corresponding card. Create additional number match cards to use with other manipulatives.

CD-MA1.3c

Peas in a Pod

You will need some clean, empty egg cartons, cut in half lengthwise, and some green play dough. Write a numeral zero to five in each section of the egg carton. Show the children how to roll the play dough to make "peas." Then encourage them to put a corresponding number of peas in each section of the egg carton. Talk about the numeral "zero" and that it means that no peas go in that section of the pod. For the children who are ready for larger amounts, make another set of pea pods with the numerals five through ten. For the children who need additional practice with zero through five, place dots in the bottom of the egg cups so they can match 1:1.

CD-SS5.2a

#### A Butterfly Garden

Read the *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle and talk about how caterpillars become butterflies. Purchase chrysalises from a science store for the children to observe how caterpillars become butterflies. Once the butterflies have hatched, encourage the children to watch them for a few days before they set them free outside.

CD-SS5.4a

#### Plant Life Cycle

Make seeds, soils and containers available in the science center. Encourage the children to plant the seeds and record the sequence of events. Have the children continue to record their observations of the plant life cycle.



CD-SC1.4b

### Earth Exploration

During outdoor time, fill tubs with different types of surface materials found on the earth. Examples include sand, black garden soil, gravel and water. Add cups, scoops, sieves, funnels, cars and a sand wheel to inspire exploration of the earth in different ways.

CD-SC3.4a

### Different Seed Environments

Plant several containers of the same seed, and place them in different environments. Place one in soil with water in full sun. Place the second in soil with water and no sun and the third in soil with no water and no sun. This is a great way to demonstrate how to take care of plants and how different plants may have different needs. Encourage the children to observe and record their findings in the science center. Do this several times with different seeds.

CD-SC5.4a

### Container Gardener

Bring in old tires or old plastic containers to create an outside vegetable or herb garden, during outdoor time. Fill the tires or containers with soil and let the children plant vegetable or herb seeds. Include small watering cans for the children to tend the garden.

CD-SC3.4a

### We Like Veggies!

Create a veggie graph by listing a variety of vegetables. Encourage the children to taste different vegetable and decide whether they liked the taste. Fill in the graph blocks using the color of the vegetable that's eaten. This will ensure a distinction of how many children in the class liked a particular vegetable. Talk about the nutritional values of each vegetable and talk About other animals that eat the same types of food and why. For children who do not want to taste the vegetables, encourage them to touch or smell instead. Include their preferences in the class graph. This could be done in large group.

CD-SC1.4a

Plant Growth Observations

Provide small cups, soil and seeds for the children to independently plant in the science center. Lima beans or pumpkin seeds grow very quickly. Place in windows for observation. Provide paper with a picture of an empty flower pot. Encourage the children to observe the plants as they grow and to draw what they see.

CD-SC5.4a

Invite the Professionals

Plan to invite people that help protect the environment to come to your class to talk to the children about the outdoor environment. Some ideas include professional gardeners to take the children outdoors to discuss what plants need. Plan to plant seeds together. Take pictures to create a class book. A wildlife specialist can talk about how we can help keep our animals from becoming extinct. A marine biologist can talk about how to keep our oceans safe and clean for all water creatures. A local environmentalist can walk with the children during outdoor time to discuss how they work to protect the environment.

CD-SC4.4c

Making Butter

Begin with heavy whipping cream at room temperature and discuss whether the cream is a liquid or a solid. Put the cream in a small, clear food jar and pass it around for the children to shake. Play upbeat songs for the children to listen to as they shake the jar. It will take 5 to 10 minutes of shaking before the cream turns into a solid. In between each song, ask the children to share what is happening to the liquid (cream). Once it has solidified into butter, ask, "What will happen if we put the butter in a pan on the stove?" This can be done in small group.

CD-CR4.2d

Garden Center

Provide the children with small aprons, garden gloves, sun visors, small plastic flowerpots, play dough, silk flowers and greenery. Put balls of play dough in the pots to hold the plants in place. Encourage the children to make different flower arrangements. You can have the children decorate a small rectangular box to look like a window box and place the pots in it. They can also display and "sell" their floral creations in the dramatic play area.

CD-CR4.4d

Farmers Market

During outdoor time, set up an outdoor farmers' market with shopping carts, play fruit and vegetables, purses, bags, cash registers and play money. The children can act out the roles of cashier and customer in their outdoor market.

CD-CR1.4a

Garden Dance

For a spring theme, encourage children to dance making a garden: dig the holes, plant the seeds, water and weed, watch plants grow and harvest the vegetables or flowers. This can be done in small group.

CD-CP2.2e

### Indoor Garden

Use clear plastic cups, soil and safe, nontoxic seeds. Encourage the children to plant the seeds in the soil and pour a little water on them. Observe the plants as they grow. Describe the steps in the process. Talk about what the plants need. With this activity you are building prior knowledge that children can access later.

CD-CP2.4d

### Coloring Flowers

After learning about parts of a flower and their functions, try this prediction activity. You will need four or five white flowers, such as carnations, a clear cup to hold each flower, and four or five colors of food coloring. Color the water in each cup a different color and place one flower in each cup. The children can draw the colored water and say what they think will happen to the flowers. The next day have the children check to see if their prediction was correct. Did the blue water turn the flower blue? This can be done in small group.

CD-CP2.2e

### Lunchtime Talk

During lunch or snack time, ask the children questions designed to help them use prior knowledge about the foods they are eating and how they were prepared. For example, you might say, "These are yummy mashed potatoes. Remember the potatoes we looked at in the science center? They were brown on the outside and hard inside. How did these get to be white, soft and mushy? What do you think happened?"

CD-CP3.4b

### The Enormous Potato

During large group, read *The Enormous Potato* by Aubrey Davis. Talk to the children about the farmer's problem – the potato is so big that the farmer can't pull it up. Ask the children for some ways that they may solve the problem. For example he can call for help, first to his wife, then to their daughter, then to the dog, and so on. Talk to the children about times when they needed help and what they did to solve their problem.