Pumpkin Seeds
Outdoor Learning Environments Activity Leaflet

Setting: Work table in the outdoor learning area (with additional access to a stove)

Activity: Roasting Pumpkin Seeds

Focus of Activity: Healthy Eating

Curricular Areas:

- Health and physical development: healthy eating, motor skills

- Language development and communication: new vocabulary, describing

- Cognitive development

- Scientific thinking: observation, inquiry

When roasted and lightly salted, pumpkin seeds have a nutty flavor. They are also nutritious, providing a rich source of protein and vitamins. Roast pumpkin seeds in the fall to celebrate the season–pumpkins can be carved or painted and kept in the outdoor learning environment as part of this activity.

Materials:

One or more medium-size pumpkins, knife (for teacher's use), large spoon, large bowl or bin, baking sheet, salt, olive oil, cold water

Suggestions:

1. Remove the top of the pumpkin with the knife and scoop out the pulp with large spoons. Encourage children to describe how the pulp and seeds feel.

2. Separate the seeds from the pulp. This works best immediately after you've removed the seeds from the pumpkin, before the pulp has a chance to dry. Rinse the seeds in a bowl of cold water and remove most of the strings.

3. Coat the bottom of a baking sheet with olive oil and spread the seeds out over the pan in a single layer. Sprinkle lightly with salt.

4. Bake on the top rack of an oven at 325 degrees until the seeds begin to brown (5-25 minutes, depending on the size of the seeds).

5. When the seeds are nicely browned, remove the pan from the oven and allow seeds to cool. Let the pumpkin seeds cool entirely before eating.

6. Enjoy a pumpkin seed snack–either by themselves or mixed with other seeds and nuts.

7. Store any remaining seeds in an air-tight container for future snack time.

Engaging Parents:

Send the pumpkin seed recipe home with parents and encourage them to roast seeds with their children at home.

Text developed by Ruth Wilson