
POD Wake Co Newsletter- February 2018

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Natural Learning Initiative



Getting the Garden Ready for the Growing Season



It's time to whip the garden into shape! Invite children to participate in these hands-on learning activities. Before starting the garden, have children grow

seeds in small plastic or homemade newspaper pots using recycled newspaper. What can they do? Encourage children to create garden markers with craft sticks or weed the beds. Mulching is also a great activity for children to do in the garden as it helps to raise soil temperature, thus helping to start the growing season.



Here's What You Can Grow:

Carrots, kale, mustard greens, spring onions, sugar/snow snap peas, radishes, spinach.



Here's What You Can Prepare:

Kale chips, roasted broccoli and red peppers, braised collards greens, sautéed spinach.

Want more recipe ideas?

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Register for the Spring Early Childhood Outdoor Environments Online Certificate Courses!

NC STATE Design



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Registration closes **March 1, 2018**

February Activity

Make a Nature Mandala*

All you need to make a mandala is some creativity and nature items. Have children start a circle with items they have found. First have them choose a center piece. Then, form a ring around the piece, continue to make new expanding circles until children either run out of items or feel that their structure is complete. Teachers can also take a photo to document children's creative mandalas. As an alternative, have children form a heart-shaped ring in celebration of Valentine's Day holiday!



Musical Hearts

This fun take on musical chairs is just in time for Valentine's day. This activity just needs cut out hearts and music. Forming a circle, place one heart for each child on the ground. Invite children to stand on a heart. Have children to move along to the music (make sure to remove one heart while the children are moving). Randomly choose when to stop the music. Whoever doesn't have a heart to step on is out. Remove a heart every time someone is eliminated to keep the fun going for more than one round. At the end everybody get a heart!

*What is a mandala? The word mandala is a Sanskrit term which means "circle" or "discoid object". Used as a spiritual and ritual symbol in Hinduism and Buddhism, mandala represents the universe.

Plant of the Month

Cacao Tree (*Theobroma cocoa*)

Did you know that one of the world's most recognizable ingredient in desserts is a seed? Yes, it's true! The chocolate that we know and love comes from the cacao tree found in present-day Mexico and most tropical climate countries. First produced by pre-Olmec Mesoamericans the cacao bean has been fermented, roasted, and ground to a paste creating a bitter frothy chocolate drink as early as 1900 B.C. (yes, almost 4,000 years ago). Today, chocolate is used in many sweet and savory

dishes all around the world. Chocolate is also used for celebrating many occasions or holidays. One notable holiday is Valentine's Day.

Would you like to learn more?

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Recipe

Chocolate Pretzel Bites

Prep time: 5 mins **Cook time:** 2-3 mins **Total time:** 13 mins

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 bag Hershey's Kiss (or other small chocolate candy)
- 1 bag Pretzels (heart-shaped)
- 1 bag M&Ms (or other small candy)



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 275 F
2. On a baking tray, place a Hershey's Kiss on the center of each pretzel
3. Bake for 2-3 minutes at 275 F, or until Kisses are softened.
4. Press an M&M onto the Kisses until the chocolate fills the pretzel.
5. Refrigerate for 5-10 minutes until chocolate is firm.

*M&Ms may contain peanuts. Substitute M&M's with a nut-free alternative as neccessary.

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