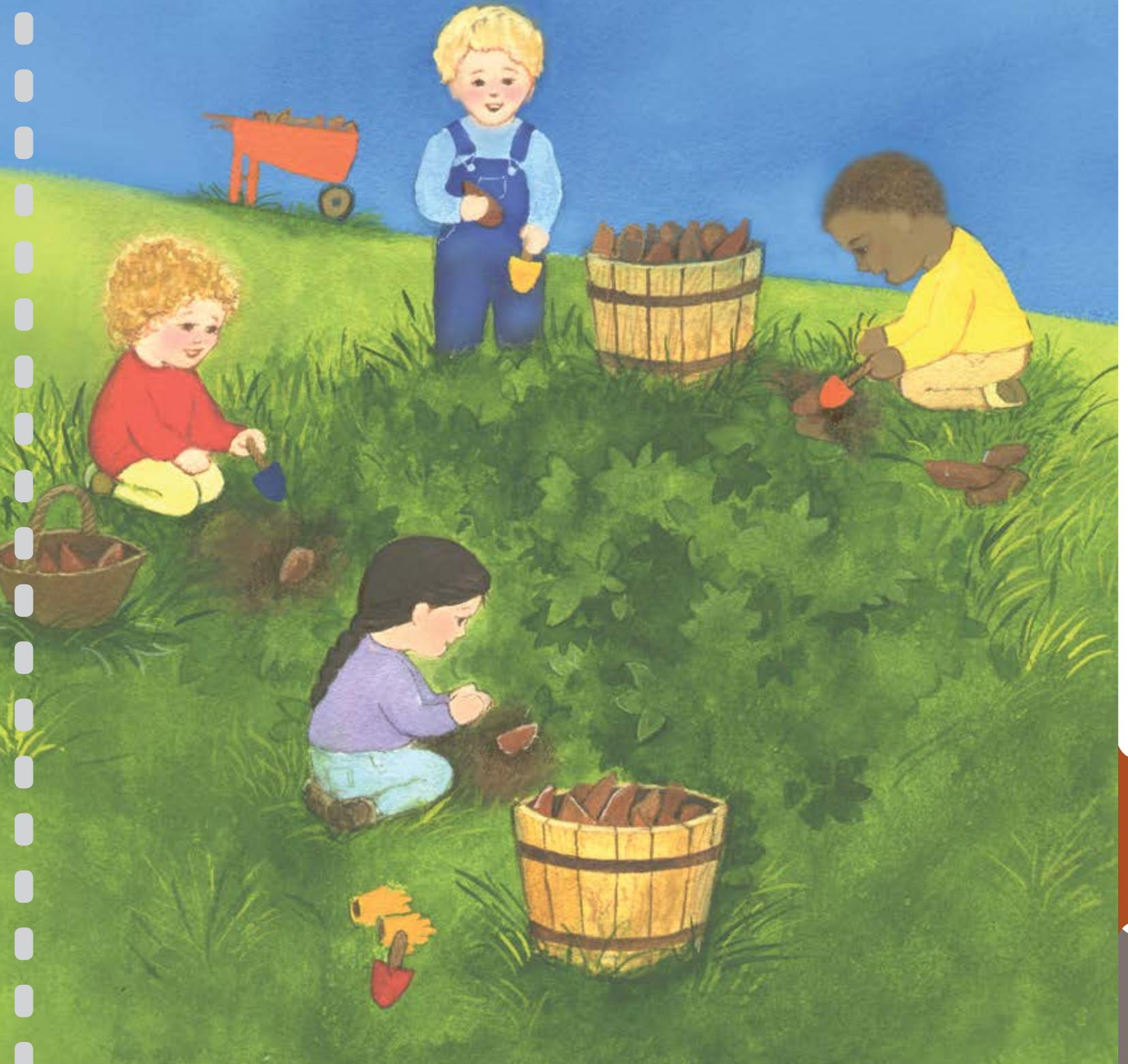


# Sweet Potato Hill



# WELCOME TO Sweet Potato Hill at Tasty Acres Farm!



While the other plants show off their fruits and vegetables during the growing season, potatoes stay hidden in the ground until harvest time. Through the activities in this unit, children will discover how sweet potatoes look, feel, smell, and taste.

The children make a pretend sweet potato hill to learn how this vegetable is grown, harvested, and shipped to farmers markets and stores. Children also have many opportunities to taste sweet potatoes throughout the unit. Growing at Home materials allow families to share in the sweet rewards.

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# Sweet Potato Activity Chart

DAY 1 40 minutes	DAY 2 50-55 minutes	DAY 3 30-40 minutes	DAY 4 55-65 minutes	DAY 5 40-50 minutes
<b>MYSTERY BOX OR BAG</b>	<b>GROWING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>GROWING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>GROWING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY</b>
<p>"Eye" Wonder What This Is?</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Sweet Potatoes Grow From Eyes and Slips</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Start a Sweet Potato Slip</p> <p>10 minutes</p> 	<p>Make a Pretend Sweet Potato Hill</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>You Say Potato, and I Say Potato</p> <p>20-25 minutes</p>
<b>TASTING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>TASTING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>MOVEMENT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>CRAFT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>MOVEMENT ACTIVITY</b>
<p>Sweet Potato—A Look Inside</p> <p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Whipped Sweet Potatoes</p> <p>15 minutes</p> 	<p>Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Sweet Potato Style</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Make a Scarecrow</p> <p>30 minutes</p>	<p>Potato Sack Hop</p> <p>10 minutes</p>
<b>CRAFT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>CRAFT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>TASTING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>READING ACTIVITY</b>	<b>TASTING ACTIVITY</b>
<p>Stamped Wrapping Paper</p> <p>10 minutes</p>	<p>Decorated Produce Placemats</p> <p>15-20 minutes</p>	<p>Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples</p> <p>10-20 minutes</p>	 <p>10-20 minutes</p>	<p>A Rainbow of Potatoes</p> <p>10-15 minutes</p> 
	<b>MOVEMENT ACTIVITY</b>			
	<p>"Sweet Potato Says"</p> <p>10 minutes</p> 			





# Introduction to Sweet Potato Hill Activities

Check with local farms and farmers markets to find out when sweet potatoes are in peak season. Usually sweet potatoes are available year-round, with their peak season falling from late October through December. If sweet potatoes do not grow in your region, substitute other vegetables that grow underground, like carrots, rutabagas, or other types of potatoes, in these activities. Seeing sweet potatoes growing in the field makes a great farm field trip for preschoolers. If a farm is not nearby, visit a produce stand or farmers market to see locally grown sweet potatoes.

The sweet potato lessons in this unit are arranged by day to teach over the course of 5 consecutive days. If possible, do the planting activities and enjoy homegrown sweet potatoes for several weeks. It is an easy vegetable to grow and can be planted in a garden bed or container. Planting and watching a plant grow can be an enjoyable activity for children.

## ACTIVITY LENGTH

Most activities require only 10–15 minutes.

## CREDITING TIPS

Some activities in this unit include children eating sweet potatoes. Check for food allergies before serving. If you plan to serve sweet potatoes as part of a reimbursable meal or snack for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), check the minimum serving sizes for each age group (Appendix G, page 330). There are also Crediting Tips with some of the recipes. If you plan to serve those as part of a reimbursable meal or snack, refer to the Crediting Tips for guidance.

For information on purchasing the correct amount of sweet potatoes, see USDA's Food Buying Guide at <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov>.

## WORDS TO GROW

New Words To Use When Teaching About Sweet Potatoes

**Vegetable**      **Sprout**  
**Slips**            **Oblong**  
**Eyes**             **Vines**  
**Orange**          **Fall**

## LUNCH AND SUPPER MEAL PATTERNS

	Ages 1–2	Ages 3–5
Milk	½ cup	¾ cup
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz eq	1 ½ oz eq
Vegetables	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Fruits	⅛ cup	¼ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

\*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.

## SNACK MEAL PATTERNS

Select 2 of the 5 components for snack

	Ages 1–2	Ages 3–5
Milk	½ cup	½ cup
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz eq	½ oz eq
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup
Grains*	½ oz eq	½ oz eq

\*Starting October 1, 2019, ounce equivalents (oz eq) must be used to determine the amount of credible grains.



# Getting To Know Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are oblong-shaped, orange or tan-colored vegetables that taste sweet. In the garden, the leaves of a sweet potato plant grow above ground. The part of the sweet potato plant that we eat is the root of the plant and grows underground. Other types of root vegetables that grow underground are carrots, beets, radishes, yams, and white potatoes.

Sweet potato roots, called slips, are planted in the ground to grow more sweet potatoes. You can start a sweet potato slip at home by hanging a sweet potato in a jar of water. In a few weeks, leaves and roots will grow from the sweet potato. Sweet potatoes grow best in warm weather.

## GROWING GUIDE

Sweet potatoes grow best in raised rows. In cooler areas, cover the rows with black plastic to keep the soil warm and promote growth. It's best to plant root sprouts, known as slips, which can be purchased or grown at home. In this unit, the children will grow their own sweet potato slips (pages 279–280). After planting the slip, the sweet potatoes will take 90–160 days to mature.

## HOW SHOULD I STORE SWEET POTATOES?

Store uncut sweet potatoes in a cool, dry place, away from heat and light. Do not refrigerate uncooked sweet potatoes. If refrigerated, uncooked sweet potatoes may remain hard in the middle, even after they are cooked.



## SIX SIMPLE WAYS TO SERVE SWEET POTATO

1. Baked, whole sweet potato sprinkled with cinnamon.
2. Grilled sweet potato—slice into ½-inch rounds and grill until lightly browned; drizzle with lime juice.
3. Whipped sweet potato.
4. Cubed and cooked in a soup or stew.
5. Baked sweet potato fries or wedges.
6. Cooked, cooled, and cubed in potato salad.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Yams sold in the United States are actually sweet potatoes. True yams belong to a different plant family and are not usually grown in the United States.
- Sweet potatoes are a great source of nutrients that help your body grow and be healthy. It is important to eat vegetables of different colors in order to get different kinds of nutrients.
- Sweet potatoes come in a variety of colors—not just orange! Look for white-fleshed or purple sweet potatoes at the store.



# Sweet Potatoes

Please provide a print copy (or email a digital copy) of Growing at Home to families before, during, or after completing the sweet potato activities. These handouts and recipes are a great way to keep families informed about what their children are learning during the day.

Content from this handout can also be displayed on a family bulletin board or shared on your website.

**In addition to the ideas above, text, tweet, or share daily sweet potato lesson highlights with the families.**



## MESSAGES FOR FAMILIES

### DAY ONE

- Today your child learned what a sweet potato looks and feels like. #GrowIt
- Today your child learned that the inside of a sweet potato is orange or tan. #GrowIt

### DAY TWO

- Try hidden veggies! Today your child learned that sweet potatoes grow underground. #GrowIt
- Today your child learned about colors. Ask your child to name an orange veggie. #GrowIt
- Today your child helped make whipped sweet potatoes. #GrowIt

### DAY THREE

- Ask your child what he or she learned about sweet potatoes. #GrowIt
- We are growing sweet potatoes! #GrowIt (Include a picture of the sweet potato slips)
- Today your child danced to a fun song about sweet potatoes. Ask him or her to sing and dance it for you. #GrowIt

### DAY FOUR

- Today we read a book that had fruits and vegetables as part of the story. Ask your child to describe his or her favorite part. #GrowIt
- Create your own story about vegetables with your children. #GrowIt

### DAY FIVE

- Today your child learned about MyPlate and the five food groups. Ask your child which food group sweet potatoes are in. #GrowIt



# Grow It, Try It, Like It!

FUN WITH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AT FAMILY CHILD CARE

## Sweet Potato

### Dear Family:

We are learning about sweet potatoes.

Sweet potatoes may also be called yams in some parts of the country. Through hands-on experiences with this vegetable, the children observe how sweet potatoes look, feel, smell, and taste. They also learn how they grow.

### They learn that sweet potatoes:

- Are light brown to red or purple on the outside;
- Are orange or tan-colored on the inside;
- Grow in the ground;
- Are the root part of the plant;
- Have leaves that grow above ground;
- Start from slips or sprouts that grow from the “eyes” or buds of the potato;
- Need soil, water, sun, and time to grow;
- Are dug out of the ground during early fall before the weather turns cold;
- Feel bumpy but smooth and have a thin skin, similar to white potatoes; and
- Taste sweet.

Help your child continue learning about sweet potatoes. You can make a family recipe that includes sweet potato or try the **Whipped Sweet Potato** recipe attached. Include your child in the cooking if possible.

### TIP

If there are farmers markets near you, visit one with your child. Chances are you'll find new varieties of fruits or vegetables to try.

### Six Simple Ways To Serve Sweet Potato

1. Baked, whole sweet potato sprinkled with cinnamon.
2. Grilled sweet potato—slice into ½-inch rounds and grill until lightly browned; drizzle with lime juice.
3. Whipped sweet potato.
4. Cubed and cooked in a soup or stew.
5. Baked sweet potato fries or wedges.
6. Cooked, cooled, and cubed in potato salad.



## PREPARATION TIME

5 minutes

## COOKING TIME

20 minutes

## MAKES

6 servings

## SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and a cutting board to cut sweet potatoes into quarters.

## NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories .....	80
Protein .....	1 g
Carbohydrate .....	15 g
Total Fat .....	2 g
Saturated Fat .....	0 g
Cholesterol .....	0 mg
Iron .....	1 mg
Calcium .....	26 mg
Sodium .....	131 mg
Dietary Fiber .....	2 g

# Whipped Sweet Potatoes



## INGREDIENTS

- 14 ounces sweet potatoes, fresh, peeled, cut into quarters (about 3 ½ cups)
- 1 tablespoon milk, 1% (low-fat)
- 1 tablespoon margarine, trans-fat free
- ¼ teaspoon salt, table
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper, ground
- Forks, plates, and napkins

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place sweet potatoes in a pot of water and bring to a boil. Cook until fork tender, about 20 minutes. Drain well. Heat to 145 °F for at least 15 seconds.
2. In a medium bowl, immediately combine drained sweet potatoes, milk, margarine, salt, and pepper.
3. Using an electric mixer, mix on medium speed until potatoes are smooth and fluffy.
4. Serve ¼ cup.

## COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help scrub the potatoes with a vegetable brush.
- Help put the sweet potatoes in a pot before putting on the stove.



## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



### MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

“Eye” Wonder What This Is

Page 274

15 minutes



### TASTING ACTIVITY

Sweet Potato—A Look Inside

Pages 275–276

15 minutes



### CRAFT ACTIVITY

Stamped Wrapping Paper

Page 277

10 minutes





## ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review Make a Mystery Box or Bag, as needed (Basics, page 11).
- Wash and dry sweet potato.
- Place clean sweet potato in the Mystery Box or Bag.
- Make copies of Sweet Potato Growing at Home handout, one set per child (page 271–272), or draft an email for families.
- Have the children wash their hands before and after activity (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).

### WORDS TO GROW

Vegetable	Orange
Oblong	Hard
Sweet Potato	Heavy
Soil	Bumpy

## MYSTERY BOX OR BAG ACTIVITY

# “Eye” Wonder What This Is

Use the Mystery Box or Bag to create interest and excite their sense of touch. Have the children feel the outside of a sweet potato in the box or bag before revealing the “mystery” item to all.

### OBJECTIVES

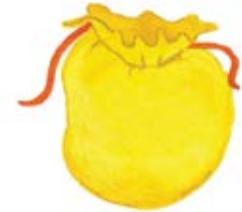
The children will be able to:

- Identify sweet potato as a heavy, oblong-shaped, orange-brown vegetable; and
- Describe the outward appearance and smell of a sweet potato.



### MATERIALS NEEDED

- 1 uncooked sweet potato
- Mystery Box or Bag
- Paper and pencil or pen
- Baseball (*optional*)



### INSTRUCTIONS

- Introduce the Mystery Box or Bag, or reintroduce it if you have used it before (see Basics, page 11).
- One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box or bag with the child.
- Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he or she feels.
- Allow children to share words with the group that describe how the object feels.
- After everyone has guessed, show the sweet potato to the children. Let the children hold the sweet potato, if desired.
- Note the children’s guesses that were close (a plant, food) or correct (sweet potato).
- Talk about the sweet potato. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.
  - Is sweet potato a fruit or a vegetable? (Vegetable)
  - What shape is it? (Oblong, like a squished ball)
  - What color is the outside of the sweet potato? (Cream, red, purple or brown)
  - How does the outside of it feel? (Bumpy)
  - Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell earthy like soil)
  - Is it light or heavy? (Heavy like a baseball—let the children feel the baseball if available)
  - Is it soft or hard? (Hard)
  - Has anyone ever tasted a sweet potato? (Yes or no)



## TASTING ACTIVITY

# Sweet Potato—A Look Inside



**ACTIVITY LENGTH**

15 minutes



**Engage all the senses! The children see and feel the inside of a sweet potato, then smell and taste it.**

### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the appearance, smell, and taste of a sweet potato; and
- Understand that all of the sweet potato can be eaten including the skin.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- 2 sweet potatoes
- Sharp knife
- Cutting board or surface
- Container for cooked potato pieces
- Forks, napkins, and plates

### BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Scrub the outside of the sweet potatoes with a vegetable brush under cool running water.
- Cook one sweet potato. Cool and cut into small bite-size cubes, at least one cube per child. May need more than one depending on size of the group.
- Assemble materials; keep the knife in a safe place until ready to use.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.



## OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the sweet potatoes with the children.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children gather around the area with the uncooked sweet potato and cutting board. Review with children how to be safe around sharp knives: only adults use knives, children keep hands away, and don't touch a sharp knife.
- Review what was learned about sweet potatoes already. If this is your first activity, tell the children you have a sweet potato to share today.
- Tell the children that because sweet potatoes grow in the ground, we have to scrub the outside with a brush very well to remove soil (dirt) and germs before we cut it open. Tell the children you have already washed the sweet potato.
- Cut the sweet potato in half to reveal the inside. Pass the sweet potato around for the children to examine. Talk with the children about the inside of the sweet potato. Ask the questions below and ask additional questions if you like.
  - What colors are on the inside of the sweet potato? (Orange or tan, skin may be brown)
  - What part of the sweet potato can be eaten? (All of the sweet potato, including the orange inside part and the outside skin can be eaten)
  - How does the inside flesh feel? (Smooth and hard)
  - How does the sweet potato smell? (Earthy)
- Tell the children that you are all going to taste some sweet potato.

## TIME TO TASTE!

- Once the children have explored the piece of sweet potato, invite them to taste a small bite-size cube of cooked sweet potato.
- Be a healthy role model! Enjoy a piece of sweet potato with the children.
- Continue the activity asking:
  - How does the sweet potato feel in their mouth? (Smooth)
  - How does the sweet potato taste? (Sweet)



## CRAFT ACTIVITY

# Stamped Wrapping Paper



**ACTIVITY LENGTH**

10 minutes



### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.

**The children make stamped wrapping paper with vegetable designs.**

### OBJECTIVE

The children will be able to:

- Assert individuality (designing wrapping paper that differs in color and design from other children); and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Sweet potatoes cut crosswise into halves or thirds (not the long way) with smooth flat surfaces
- *Optional:* Cut a design in one surface using a sharp knife or cut the pieces into shapes
- Acrylic craft paint (various colors)
- Paper plates for paint
- Large sheets of light-colored paper, at least one per child
- Smocks or bibs, if desired
- Table coverings, if desired

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Give each child a piece of paper.
- Show the children how to dip a potato piece in the paint. Press coated potato to paper; repeat until desired pattern is created.
- Repeat stamping with different colors and shapes if desired. Use a new potato for each new color or rinse and dry the potato stamp before switching colors.
- Set the papers on a flat surface to dry.
- Have the children wash their hands.

### SUGGESTION

- Use the potato stamps to create greeting cards instead of wrapping paper.



# Sweet Potato: Where Do You Come From and How Do We Eat You?

## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



### GROWING ACTIVITY

Sweet Potatoes Grow From Eyes and Slips

Pages 279-280

10 minutes



### TASTING ACTIVITY

Whipped Sweet Potatoes

Pages 281-283

15 minutes



### CRAFTING ACTIVITY

Decorated Produce Placemats

Page 284

15-20 minutes



### MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

"Sweet Potato Says"

Page 285

10 minutes



## GROWING ACTIVITY

# Sweet Potatoes Grow From Eyes and Slips



The children see and touch the eyes of sweet potato and learn how slips grow from the eyes of the sweet potato.

### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe how a sweet potato grows from a slip into a plant that produces more sweet potatoes.
- Describe how sweet potatoes are harvested; and
- Describe the resources needed to grow sweet potatoes.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Fresh sweet potatoes with eyes
- Sweet potato *Grow It!* Cards

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Tell the children that today they will learn about how sweet potatoes grow. Show the children a fresh sweet potato with eyes on it. Eyes or buds are small bumps on the sweet potato's peel that can be rubbed off. Let the children hold and touch the sweet potato.
- Explain that sweet potatoes grow from slips (sprouts) that grow from the "eyes" or buds of the sweet potato.
- Explain that the sweet potato slips are planted in long narrow rows and covered by the soil.



### ACTIVITY LENGTH

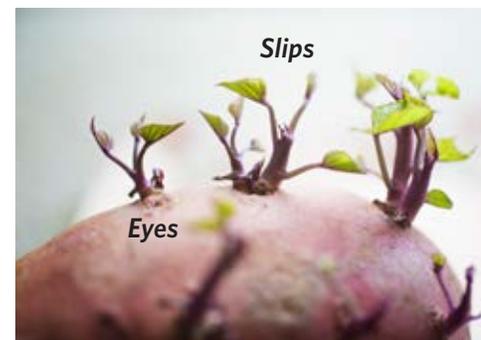
10 minutes

### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

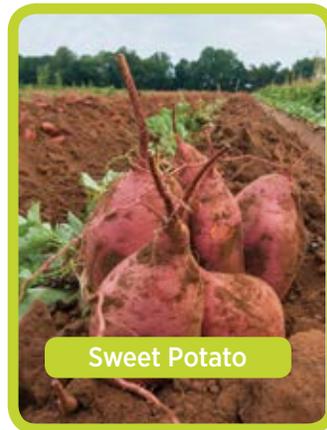
- Organize materials.

### WORDS TO GROW

Seeds	Soil
Sun	Water
Space	Plants
Eyes	Slips



- Explain that the sweet potato slips grow in the soil; the sun, air, soil, and rain help them grow.
- Explain that sweet potatoes grow under the soil while their leaves grow above the ground.
- Explain to the children that sweet potatoes are gently removed from the soil before the weather turns cold.
- Explain that sweet potatoes are grown in gardens or on farms.
- Use the *Grow It! Card* to show sweet potatoes pulled out of the ground.
- Explain to the children that after the sweet potatoes are gently pulled up out of the ground, they are carefully placed in baskets or boxes so the tender peel (skin) is not hurt.
- Explain that the sweet potatoes are taken to a store or a farmers market where people buy them and take them home to eat. Show the card of sweet potato on a plate from the *Grow It! Cards*.



*Sweet Potato Grow It! Cards.*



## TASTING ACTIVITY

# Whipped Sweet Potatoes

The children taste whipped sweet potatoes. They explore the feel, smell, and taste of sweet potatoes.

### OBJECTIVE

The children will be able to:

- Taste a new food featuring sweet potatoes; and
- Describe the appearance, smell, and taste of sweet potatoes.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Whipped Sweet Potatoes ingredients (recipe, page 283)
- Plates, spoons, and napkins

### BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



### INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Explain that we should always wash and scrub potatoes under cool running water before they are eaten. Let the children know you have already washed the potatoes.
- Describe how you have prepared the potatoes. Explain that you have to remove the skin before mashing the potatoes. You can scoop out the flesh of the cooked potatoes in front of the children or do this step before depending on time.
- Ask the children if they have had sweet potatoes at Thanksgiving or other holiday or family meal.
- Make sure potatoes are not too hot.
- Let each child take a turn mashing the potatoes.
- Tell the children they will taste the sweet potatoes.



### ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Prepare whipped sweet potatoes—see Whipped Sweet Potato Recipe on page 283, Steps 1–6.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.



## WORDS TO GROW

Sweet Potato Mash

Scoop

### TIME TO TASTE!

- Give each child a small serving of whipped sweet potatoes. Make sure the potatoes are warm but not too hot.
- As the children are eating, ask them to describe how the whipped sweet potatoes:
  - smell (sweet);
  - feel in the mouth (smooth, warm); and
  - taste (sweet).



## RECIPE

# Whipped Sweet Potatoes

*This is a USDA standardized recipe.*

### INGREDIENTS

- 14 ounces sweet potatoes, fresh, peeled, cut into quarters (about 3 ½ cups)
- 1 tablespoon milk, 1% (low-fat)
- 1 tablespoon margarine, trans-fat free
- ¼ teaspoon salt, table
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper, ground
- Forks, plates, and napkins (one per child)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place sweet potatoes in a pot of water and bring to a boil. Cook until fork tender, about 20 minutes. Drain well. Heat to 145 °F for at least 15 seconds.
2. In a medium bowl, immediately combine drained sweet potatoes, milk, margarine, salt, and pepper.
3. Using an electric mixer, mix on medium speed until potatoes are smooth and fluffy.
4. Serve ¼ cup to each child.

### COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help scrub the potatoes with a vegetable brush.
- Help put the sweet potatoes in a pot before putting on the stove.

### PREPARATION TIME

5 minutes

### COOKING TIME

20 minutes

### MAKES

6 servings

### CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving (¼ cup) provides ¼ cup vegetable. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

### SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and a cutting board to cut sweet potatoes into quarters.

### NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories .....	80
Protein .....	1 g
Carbohydrate .....	15 g
Total Fat .....	2 g
Saturated Fat .....	0 g
Cholesterol .....	0 mg
Iron .....	1 mg
Calcium .....	26 mg
Sodium .....	131 mg
Dietary Fiber .....	2 g





## ACTIVITY LENGTH

15-20 minutes

### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Arrange to laminate the finished placemats, if desired.

## CRAFT ACTIVITY

# Decorated Produce Placemats

The children draw and color sweet potatoes or other root vegetables on a placemat.

### OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to:

- Engage with sweet potatoes in a fun and creative way; and
- Develop and strengthen their fine motor skills.



### MATERIALS NEEDED

- White poster board or construction-weight paper (8 x 12 inches), one per child
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils
- Sweet potato *Grow It! Cards* or a real sweet potato
- *Optional:* Laminating material for each placemat

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Show a sweet potato to the children.
  - Talk with the children about how a sweet potato looks different on the outside from the inside.
  - Review the shape (oblong) and colors of a sweet potato (outside—white to yellow, red, purple or brown, inside—orange to tan) and how the sweet potato grows (leaves above ground, root below ground).
- Give each child paper. Explain that they are going to decorate a placemat with drawings of sweet potatoes.
- Some children may choose to color the outside of the sweet potato; some may depict the inside. Children may also choose to draw mashed sweet potatoes or a sweet potato growing underground.
- Have each child write his or her name on the placemat.
- *Optional:* Collect the finished placemats and laminate.
- Have the children think of uses for the placemats they just created. Some ideas include:
  - Use it at the family child care home;
  - Give it to a family member;
  - Use it at home; and
  - Other ideas the children suggest.



## MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

# "Sweet Potato Says"



"Sweet Potato Says" is the Tasty Acres Farm version of a popular children's game.

### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move and stretch during a group game;
- Follow instructions from a peer or adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Optional:* Shirt, badge, or other accessory for the leader to wear that lets everyone know he or she is the Farmer.

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit in a circle or stand in a group.
- Choose one person to be the Farmer (leader).
- The Farmer orders the other children to do all sorts of different and fun things, the funnier the better.
- But the Farmer's orders are only to be followed when they start with "Sweet Potato says."
- When someone follows an order that doesn't begin with "Sweet Potato says," he or she is out of the game. However, make sure to keep the children moving even if they are "out." Ask them to stand off to the side and do different movements to find and dig for sweet potatoes. For example, children can march through the fields, pretend to dig in the dirt and squat to pick up the sweet potato, skip home from the farm, etc.
- Repeat until only one person is left. That person is the winner and can be Farmer in the next round.



### ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize materials.
- Clear or designate an open space for children to move about during the activity.



## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

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### GROWING ACTIVITY

Start a Sweet Potato Slip

Pages 287-288

10 minutes

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### MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Sweet Potato Style

Pages 289-290

10 minutes

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### TASTING ACTIVITY

Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples

Pages 291-292

10-20 minutes

---



## GROWING ACTIVITY

# Start a Sweet Potato Slip

The children start a sweet potato slip from sweet potatoes and learn what slips need to grow into plants.

### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the resources needed to grow sweet potatoes; and
- Experience starting a sweet potato slip.

*Optional:* Start a sweet potato slip one month before doing the activity to have a slip to show the children.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Unwashed sweet potatoes with eyes, one per child
- Sharp knife
- Permanent marker
- Wooden craft sticks, three per sweet potato
- Narrow-mouth quart-size jar (an empty mason jar works well), one per child
- Distilled or spring water

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Explain to the children that sweet potatoes are different from plants that start from seeds. Sweet potatoes start from slips that grow from the eyes on the sweet potato. Show the children a slip, if one was started in advance, or show them a picture of a sweet potato slip.
- Tell the children that after the sweet potato slip grows, it is planted in the soil. Tell the children that today they are going to start a sweet potato slip.
- Help the children fill their jars with water, leaving ½ inch of space between the water and top of the jar.
- Give each child a sweet potato and three wooden craft sticks. Write each child's name on one of the wooden sticks with permanent marker. Help each child push a wooden craft stick into each slit, at least ½ inch into the sweet potato flesh. The wooden craft sticks create a tripod that supports the sweet potato on the rim of the jar. This allows half of the potato to be below the water level and half above.
- Explain to the children that the sweet potato grows in the jar like plants outside grow in the soil. Explain that when planted in the ground, the tops of the sweet potatoes grow as vines that cover the ground.
- Take the children to the window. Point to the sun. Ask them to think about how the sun feels on their skin (warm). Explain that the light and warmth of the sun helps plants to grow.



### ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Make three ½-inch horizontal slits evenly spaced around the middle of each sweet potato.
- Organize materials.



## Green Thumb Guide

Sweet potatoes require a warm, long growing season. Sweet potato slips started at the end of April can be planted at the end of May.



The plants will produce sweet potatoes ready to gently pull from the soil and eat in the fall. For best results in growing sweet potatoes that produce more sweet potatoes, purchase sweet potato slips from a nursery or mail order catalog; follow instructions provided. Sweet potatoes from the grocery store will sprout in a jar, but will not produce more sweet potatoes.

- Place the jars in a warm location at or above 65 degrees Fahrenheit.
- In about a month, the slip sprouts will grow 8-10 inches, which is the best length for transplanting to the garden.
- Have the children check the jars weekly to see the progress of their slip sprouts.
- Explain to the children that once the sweet potato slips are big enough they will then be planted in the soil outside. The slips need soil, water, sun, and time to grow into sweet potato plants.





## MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

# Old MacDonald Had a Farm

### SWEET POTATO STYLE

The children sing about growing and eating sweet potatoes and act out motions to this familiar tune.

#### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Sing and act out motions to familiar tune; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Sweet potato lyrics to “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” (page 290)
- Large space for the children to move about

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- Lead the children in singing these new words to the tune “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” and demonstrate the suggested motions or make up new ones.
- Encourage the children to move about as they are singing.
- Explain that skipping, wiggling, stretching, running, jumping, and playing actively every day helps us to feel good and stay healthy.



#### ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 minutes

#### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Become familiar with the words and motions of the song.

#### MIXED-AGES TIP

*Grow It! Buddies* can take turns leading the song.





# Old MacDonald Had a Farm, Sweet Potato Style

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## 1ST VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*  
On this farm he grew some sweet potatoes, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry a basket of sweet potatoes)*  
With plant slips here and plant slips there,  
Here a slip, there a slip, everywhere plant slips! *(Pretend to hoe ground and plant slips using large, vigorous motions)*  
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

---

## 2ND VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*  
On this farm he grew some sweet potatoes, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry basket of sweet potatoes)*  
With a tater vine here and a tater vine there,  
Here a vine, there a vine, everywhere a tater vine! *(Squat, wiggle arms and hands like vines, jump forward in squat and repeat motions)*  
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

---

## 3RD VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*  
On this farm he grew some sweet potatoes, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry basket of sweet potatoes)*  
Sweet tater here, and sweet tater there, *(Pretend to dig a sweet potato)*  
Here a tater, there a tater, everywhere sweet tater. *(Pretend to dig a sweet potato)*  
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*

---

## 4TH VERSE

Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*  
On this farm he grew some sweet potatoes, EIEIO! *(Pretend to carry basket of sweet potatoes)*  
With a bite, bite here, and a bite, bite there, *(Pretend to eat a sweet potato)*  
Here a bite, there a bite, everywhere a sweet bite. *(Pretend to eat a sweet potato)*  
Old MacDonald had a farm, EIEIO! *(Skip in place)*



## TASTING ACTIVITY

# Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples

The children taste a new sweet potato recipe and talk about different ways to eat sweet potatoes.

### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Taste baked sweet potatoes;
- Describe many different ways to eat sweet potatoes;
- Describe the smell, taste, and feel of sweet potatoes; and
- *Optional*: Help prepare the recipe.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples ingredients (recipe, page 292)
- Forks, plates, and napkins

### BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



### INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about a sweet potato.
- Encourage responses such as how and where a sweet potato grows; how it looks, feels, smells, and tastes; and other material covered in the unit.
- Serve the children the Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples.
- As the children are eating, ask:
  - What sweet potato recipes have they made with their families?
  - What different ways have they eaten sweet potatoes?
  - What new ways do they think sweet potatoes could be eaten? (Give suggestions such as sweet potato pancakes, in potato salads, cooked with apples, or mashed)



### ACTIVITY LENGTH

10 20 minutes

### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Make the Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples  
OR
- Organize recipe ingredients and let the children help make the Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

### OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the sweet potatoes with the children.



## PREPARATION TIME

7 minutes

## COOKING TIME

40 minutes

## MAKES

6 servings

## CACFP CREDITING INFORMATION

One serving ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) provides  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup vegetable and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fruit. For more information on the CACFP meal patterns, see Appendix G, page 330.

## SAFETY NOTE

Adults should use a sharp knife and a cutting board to cut sweet potatoes and apples into pieces.

## NUTRIENTS PER SERVING

Calories	102
Protein	1 g
Carbohydrate	21 g
Total Fat	3 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Iron	0 mg
Calcium	19 mg
Sodium	104 mg
Dietary Fiber	2 g

## RECIPE

# Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples

*This is a USDA standardized recipe.*



## INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons brown sugar, packed
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cinnamon, ground
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt, table
- 2 cups sweet potatoes fresh, peeled,  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubed
- 3 cups apples, fresh, peeled, cored,  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubed
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup orange juice
- Nonstick cooking spray
- Forks, plates, and napkins (one per child)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Lightly coat a medium baking dish (about 8" x 8") with nonstick cooking spray.
3. In a medium bowl, combine brown sugar, cinnamon, and salt.
4. Toss sweet potatoes, apples, oil, and orange juice in the cinnamon-sugar mixture.
5. Place the sweet potato and apple mixture in the baking dish.
6. Cover with foil and bake for 40 minutes, or until sweet potatoes are tender. Heat to 140 °F for at least 15 seconds.
7. Serve  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup to each child.

## COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Young children can:

- Help scrub the potatoes with a vegetable brush.
- Help put the sweet potatoes on the baking sheet.



# Sweet Potato: How Do You Grow?

## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

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### GROWING ACTIVITY

Make a Pretend Sweet Potato Hill

Pages 294-295

15 minutes

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### CRAFT ACTIVITY

Make a Scarecrow

Pages 296-297

30 minutes

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### READING ACTIVITY

Page 298

10-20 minutes

---





## ACTIVITY LENGTH

15 minutes

### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Attach the papers to the wall with the brown (the soil) below and the blue (the sky) above to represent ground and sky.
- Copy Sweet Potato Blackline Master (Fun Extras, page 310) on white paper, one per child.
- Organize materials.

### WORDS TO GROW

**Sweet Potato**  
**Underground**  
**Leaves**

**Slip**  
**Roots**

## GROWING ACTIVITY

# Make a Pretend Sweet Potato Hill



The children make a pretend sweet potato hill and learn about the growing stages of sweet potatoes.

### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the resources needed to grow sweet potatoes; and
- Experience making a pretend sweet potato hill.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Large pieces of brown and blue paper, each 3–6 feet long and 18 inches wide
- Sweet Potato Blackline Master (Fun Extras, page 310)
- Sweet potato *Grow It! Cards*
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils (green, cream, red, purple and brown)
- White yarn cut into sets of 3-, 5-, and 7-inch lengths, one set per child
- Blunt-tip scissors
- Hole punch
- Double-sided tape



## INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Review with the children how sweet potatoes grow from slips planted in the ground. The slips need soil, water, sun, and time to grow into a sweet potato plant. While the plant leaves grow above the ground, the sweet potatoes grow below the ground. The sweet potatoes are grown and ready to be dug up from the ground when the weather turns cool in the fall. The farmer gently pulls the sweet potatoes from the soil, removes the tops, and sends them to stores or farmers markets. That is where we buy sweet potatoes to take home to eat. Tell the children they are going to make a pretend sweet potato hill.
- Show the children photographs of sweet potatoes using the *Grow It! Cards*. Give each child a copy of the Sweet Potato Blackline Master (Fun Extras, page 310). Ask the children to color the parts of the sweet potato plant on their sheet just like the *Grow It! Cards*. The leaves are green and outside of the potato is cream, red, purple or brown.
- Help the children cut out, or cut for them, the colored sweet potato parts.
- Take the sweet potato and make a hole with a paper punch through each of the three eyes.
- Give each child a set of cut yarn lengths. Help each child thread yarn through the three holes and tape the tip of the yarn to the backside of the potato to represent the roots of a slip.
- Position the sweet potato on the brown paper so that the end of the potato without the yarn touches where the brown and blue papers meet. Use a piece or two of additional double-sided tape to secure the potato to the paper.
- Position the green leaves on the blue section directly touching the top of the potato.
- When finished, the assembled pieces should look like a sweet potato with slips growing underneath the ground and green plant leaves growing above the ground.
- Talk about how the plant grows sweet potatoes while attaching each part of the sweet potato plant to the paper.



## VARIATION

### MAKE INDIVIDUAL PRETEND SWEET POTATO PLANTS

If wall space is limited, have children create their own pretend sweet potato plant instead of creating a sweet potato hill as a class.

- Overlap 8 ½ x 11-inch sheets of brown and blue paper ½ inch along the 11-inch edge and tape together to create a surface approximately 16 x 11 inches. Make one set per child.
- After the drawing is colored, cut, and the yarn is attached, tape the plant to the colored paper. Position the green leaves on the blue section and the potato in the brown section to resemble a sweet potato with slips growing underneath the ground and green plant leaves growing above the ground.
- Write each child's name on the sheet of paper.





## ACTIVITY LENGTH

30 minutes

### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Organize the materials.
- Create a cross from the two pieces of wood using nails or a staple gun. The longer piece (5 feet) should be vertical and the shorter piece (3 feet) should be horizontal.

## CRAFT ACTIVITY

# Make a Scarecrow



### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Experience making a scarecrow; and
- Discuss how fruits and vegetables grow

### MATERIALS

- Two pieces of lightweight wood, approximately 5 feet and 3 feet in length
- Hammer and nails, or heavy duty staple gun and staples
- Old clothing such as plain t-shirt, long-sleeved shirt, pants, socks, shoes, hats, gloves
- Straw, old rags, or plastic grocery bags
- Rope, at least 30 inches long
- Large, sturdy rubber bands

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Take the children and supplies outside or into a large space.
- Ask the children “What is a garden?” If they do not know, explain that a garden is an area of soil where vegetables and fruits grow. For example, sweet potatoes grow in gardens.
- Tell the children they are going to make a very special garden friend, a scarecrow.



- Explain that birds, rabbits, and squirrels will eat the fruits and vegetables in a garden. A scarecrow in a garden “scares the crows” or other animals away. The animals think the scarecrow is a real person in the garden. They are afraid to come and eat the fruits and vegetables. Then the fruits and vegetables can be harvested for people to eat. Scarecrows also make a friendly decoration for the fall holidays.
- Make the head from an old t-shirt stuffed with straw, old rags, or plastic bags. Rubber-band the head onto the top of the cross (longer, vertical piece of wood). Help each child place a clothing item on the scarecrow in the appropriate place. See steps below for clothing ideas.
- Place the shirt on the horizontal stick and stuff with straw, old rags, or plastic bags. Use rubber bands to gather sleeves closed so the stuffing does not fall out.
- Place a pair of pants on the vertical stick, below the arms. Tuck the shirt into the pants and secure the waist with a piece of rope. Stuff the pants.
- Do the same with socks and shoes, gloves, and hat.
- Post the scarecrow in a garden or use as a decoration.

**OPTION:** Ask each parent or caregiver to bring an item of clothing such as a t-shirt or long-sleeve shirt, pants, socks, shoes, hats, gloves. Consider making two scarecrows so each child can contribute an item.





## ACTIVITY LENGTH

10-20 minutes  
depending on the  
length of the book

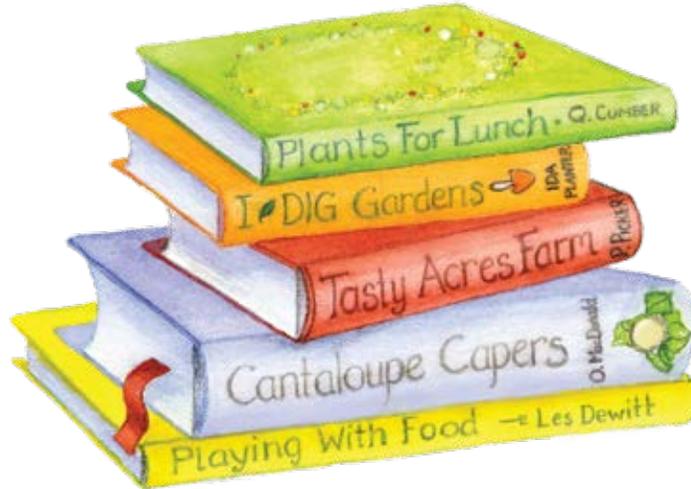
## WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Clear a space for the children to sit around you.
- Choose a book from the Harvest of Books list (Basics, page 15).
- Borrow the book you select from a library or purchase it.
- You can also use other books related to fruits and vegetables that may already be available to you.

## MIXED-AGES TIP

- Hold the baby on your lap while reading to other children.
- Give the baby a fruit or vegetable board book.
- Have *Grow It! Buddies* read to younger children.

# Reading Activity



**Read story books to the children that are about growing and/or eating fruits and vegetables. Listening to such stories can encourage children to adopt positive behaviors that can last a lifetime, like trying new fruits and vegetables.**

## OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to:

- Describe the fun and interesting stories about fruits and vegetables that were read to them.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Books from a library or purchased books
- Space for the children to sit

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Have the children sit around you as you read the book.
- Ask the children to listen for the names of vegetables and fruits as the story is read. If possible, have the children act out parts of the book to encourage movement during story time.
- Ask the children which fruits and vegetables were named in the story and what happened to them. For example,
  - Where were the fruits and vegetables grown?
  - What happened to the fruits and vegetables after they were picked?
  - Who ate the fruits and vegetables?
- Add other questions that relate to the story.



## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW



### FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

You Say Potato, and I Say Potato

Pages 300-302

20-25 minutes



### MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

Potato Sack Hop

Pages 303-304

10 minutes



### TASTING ACTIVITY

Rainbow of Potatoes

Pages 305-306

10-15 minutes





### ACTIVITY LENGTH

20 minutes;  
25 minutes if optional  
coloring activity  
conducted

### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Review the foods and activities shown on the *MyPlate Poster*.
- Display the *MyPlate Poster*.
- *Optional*: Make copies of MyPlate coloring sheet, one per child.

## FOOD GROUP ACTIVITY

# You Say Potato, and I Say Potato



**Introduce the children to the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. The children will learn that sweet potatoes are part of the **Vegetable Group**.**

### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Say that sweet potatoes are found in the Vegetable Group;
- Say that eating vegetables like sweet potatoes helps keep us healthy;
- Say that being physically active every day helps us feel good and is fun;
- Say that eating foods from the different food groups each day helps us grow and be healthy; and
- Identify a food from each of the 5 food groups.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

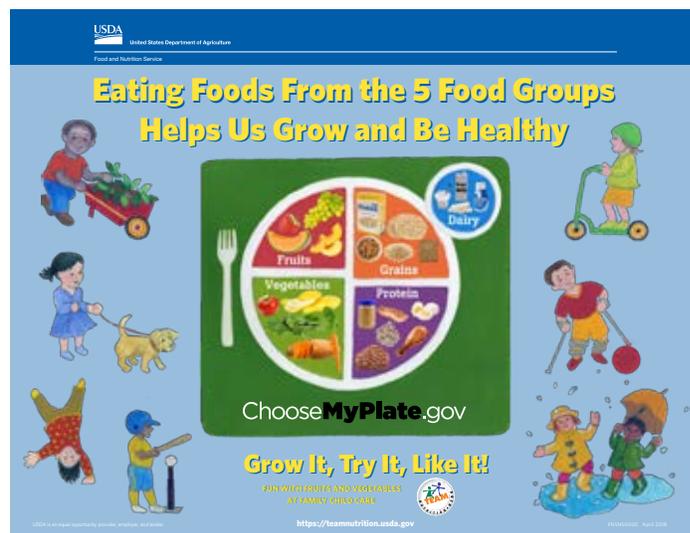
- *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*
- *Optional*: Make copies of the MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333), one per child.



## INSTRUCTIONS

### Learning the Food Groups

- Seat the children in a semicircle on the floor in view of the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*.
- Tell the children that today they are going to learn about ways to be healthy and have fun every day. Tell the children that the best part is they already like to do what helps them be healthy: they like to eat a variety of foods and they like to play.
- Show the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster* to the children. Ask the children to tell you what they see on the poster. Accept all correct answers, such as food, specific foods by name, children playing, specific activities by name, etc.
- Explain that MyPlate shows the five food groups a person should eat from each day. Each food group has its own color. Point to the different sections as you discuss. The Fruit Group is red, the Vegetable Group is green, the Grains Group is orange, the Dairy Group is blue, and the Protein Foods Group is purple. Eating foods from each food group helps us to grow and be healthy. Explain that sweet potatoes are part of the Vegetable Group.



*The Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster shows foods from the five food groups.*



### GRAINS

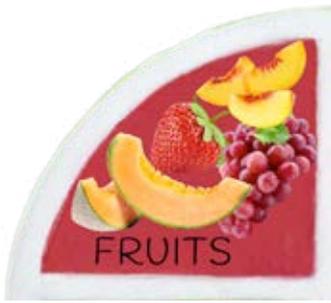
- Tell the children that foods made from grains are in the Grains Group represented by the orange-colored section on MyPlate. Point to the food group on the poster and state that grain foods like bread, cereal, rice, and pasta give us energy to play.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a food in the orange section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Grains Group also give us energy to play.
- Children this age may not know what a grain is. Tell them grains come from plants such as wheat, oats, rice, and corn. Grains are used to make foods like cereal, bread, tortillas, and pasta.



### VEGETABLES

- Tell the children that many foods from plants are in the Vegetable Group and are represented by the green section of MyPlate. Point out the sweet potato on the poster. Ask the children to name this vegetable (sweet potato). Ask the children to name the color of sweet potatoes (orange). Explain that eating orange vegetables, like sweet potatoes, can help them to be healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a vegetable in the green section, and name the vegetable. After each child names a vegetable, repeat the name of the vegetable and state that (the vegetable named) and other foods from the Vegetable Group also help keep us healthy.





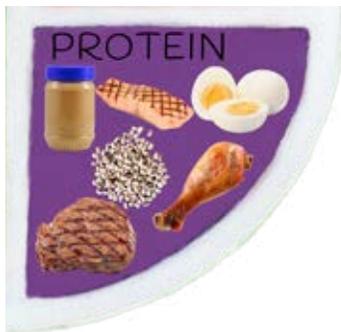
## FRUITS

- Tell the children that some foods from plants are in the Fruit Group represented by the red section. Point to the strawberry shown on the poster and state that strawberries help keep us healthy.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point to a fruit in the red section, and name the fruit. After each child names a fruit, repeat the name of the fruit and state that (the fruit named) and other foods from the Fruit Group help keep us healthy.



## DAIRY

- Tell the children that milk and foods made from milk are in the Dairy Group represented by the blue section. Point to the milk and yogurt on the poster and state that milk and yogurt help us build strong bones.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the blue section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Dairy Group also help us build strong bones.

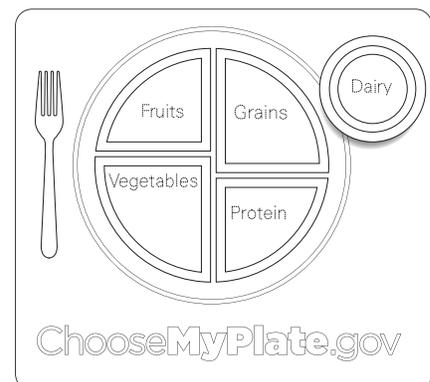


## PROTEIN FOODS GROUP

- Tell the children that foods from animals and some plants are in the Protein Foods Group represented by the purple section. Point to the meat, fish, egg, and peanut butter on the poster and state that these foods help our muscles grow.
- Ask two children to come to the poster, point out a food in the purple section, and name the food. After each child names a food, repeat the name of the food and state that (the food named) and other foods from the Protein Foods Group also help our muscles grow. (Note: if only foods that come from animals are selected, point out a food from plants and name it. If only foods from plants are selected, point out a food that comes from animals and name it.)

## OPTIONAL COLORING ACTIVITY

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Distribute a copy of the MyPlate coloring sheet (Appendix I, page 333) to each child.
- Ask the children to color the Vegetable Group section of MyPlate green and draw and color a sweet potato near it. Help the younger children who may not know their colors yet.
- With older children, have them copy the dot-to-dot outline of the word "Vegetables."



# MOVEMENT ACTIVITY

## Potato Sack Hop



**ACTIVITY LENGTH**  
10 minutes



### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Display the *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster.

Potato sack hop is a fun and interactive game for children.

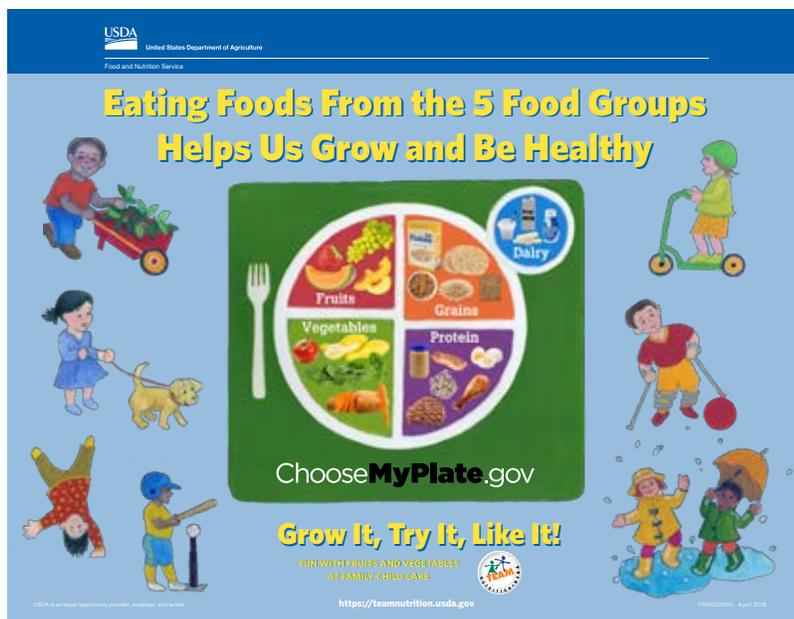
### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Move during a group activity;
- Follow instructions from an adult; and
- Say that being physically active helps us feel good.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster



*Grow It, Try It, Like It!* MyPlate Poster



## INSTRUCTIONS

- Point to the various activities depicted on the *Grow It, Try It, Like It! MyPlate Poster*. Ask the children to tell you why it is important to be physically active and play every day (it helps you be strong and healthy, and it is fun). Tell the children that today they will learn to be active in a way that reminds them of sweet potatoes.
- Take the children to a large open space or outdoors. Ask the children to stand in a straight line across one end of the open space. Explain to the children that farmers sometimes ship potatoes in large, sturdy fabric bags. Tell the class that children who grew up on farms created a fun game using those empty bags.
- Tell the children they are going to play with imaginary potato sacks today and pretend to give each child a sack. Tell the children the sack is large enough for each child to step into the sack and pull it up to his or her waist. Explain that since both legs are in the sack, the children can only hop to move—they cannot run, walk, or skip. Show the children how to step into their imaginary sack and pull it up to the waist.
- Tell the children that when you count to three, each child should hop in his or her imaginary potato sack toward the other end of the open space. Tell the children that when they reach the end of the space, they should hop around and hop back to where they started.
- Ask the children to pull their imaginary potato sacks securely around their waists, and say, “1, 2, 3, Hop!”
- Conclude the activity by telling the children it is fun to be physically active by doing a Potato Sack Hop.

### NOTE TO CAREGIVER

Active play and movement are important for every child’s growth and development. Although they may seem to be active and energetic, most children do not get the amount of physical activity they need for good health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children get 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.



## TASTING ACTIVITY

# Rainbow of Potatoes



**ACTIVITY LENGTH**

10 15 minutes



### WHAT TO DO AHEAD OF TIME

- Wash potatoes, leave one of each type whole, and cut one of each type in half.
- Prepare bite-size pieces of baked or cooked sweet, red, and white skinned potatoes, one per child.
- Review allergen information (Appendix E: Food Allergies, page 326) and check with families about food allergies.

**The children will discuss sweet potato facts and taste the difference between sweet potatoes and other potatoes.**

### OBJECTIVES

The children will be able to:

- Describe the smell, feel, and taste of different varieties of potato;
- Compare sweet potatoes to other potatoes;
- Describe many different ways to eat potatoes; and
- Describe how sweet potatoes are grown, harvested, and eaten.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Sweet potatoes, white potatoes, and red skinned potatoes, three of each (two to show and at least one of each to cook)
- Plates, forks, and napkins (one per child)

### BEFORE THE ACTIVITY—HAND WASHING AND POLITE TASTING

- Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands (Appendix D: Hand Washing, page 325).
- Remind the children about polite food-tasting habits (Appendix C: Polite Food Tasting—Be Kind, page 324).



## OFFER BITES, NOT BUSHELS

A child can be overwhelmed by a large portion and may even refuse to try a food, fearing it must be finished. Offer small tastes and be willing to offer more if a child desires to taste again. A child should be encouraged, but not pressured, to taste the new food. Caregivers are strongly encouraged to be a role model and enjoy the potatoes with the children.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Seat each child at a table with supplies.
- Ask the children to share what they remember learning about sweet potato.
- Encourage answers such as how and where sweet potatoes grow; how they look, feel, smell, and taste; and other information covered in the unit.
- Ask the children:
  - Is sweet potato a fruit or a vegetable? (Vegetable)
  - What shape is a sweet potato? (Oblong like a squished ball)
  - What color is a sweet potato? (Orange)
  - How does the outside feel? (Bumpy, yet smooth)
  - Do sweet potatoes grow above or below the ground? (Below the ground on a farm)
  - Where can our families buy sweet potatoes once they are shipped from the farm? (Grocery stores and farmers markets)
- Have the children name some of the ways that sweet potato can be eaten. (As roasted wedges/fries, baked whole and sprinkled with cinnamon, cooked with apples, or mashed)

## TIME TO TASTE!

- Show the children the sweet potato and red and white skinned potatoes.
- Tell the children that the red and white skinned potatoes are similar to the sweet potato, but different in color and taste.
- Give the children small bites of each potato to taste and compare to the sweet potato. Modify the size and texture of the potatoes for younger children as needed (see Appendix F: Choking Prevention).
- Invite the children to feel and smell the different whole and cut potatoes.
- Continue the activity asking the children to describe the smell, look, feel, and taste of the potatoes. How are they the same and how are they different?

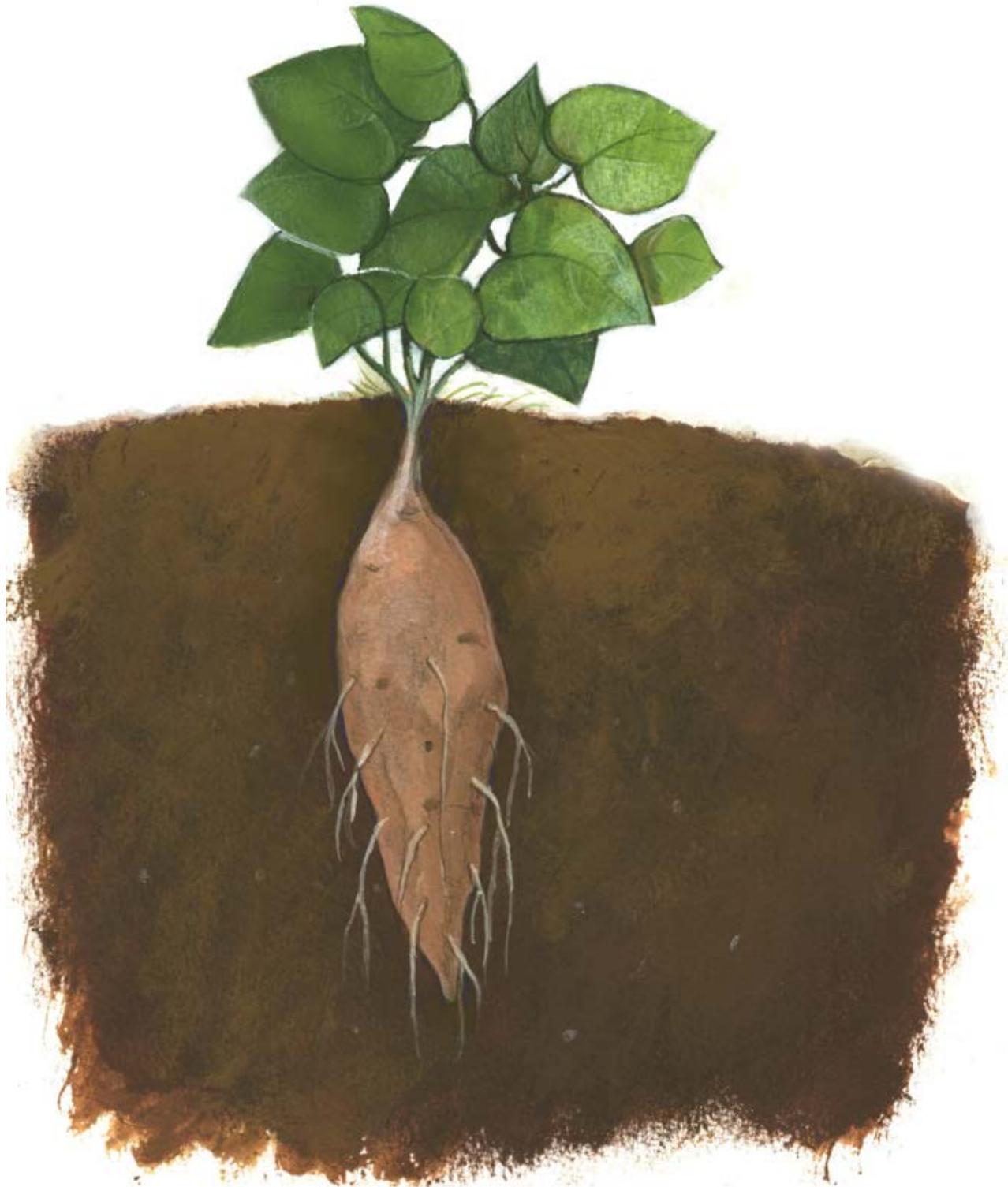


# Fun Extras



# Sweet Potato

Sweet Potato in the Ground



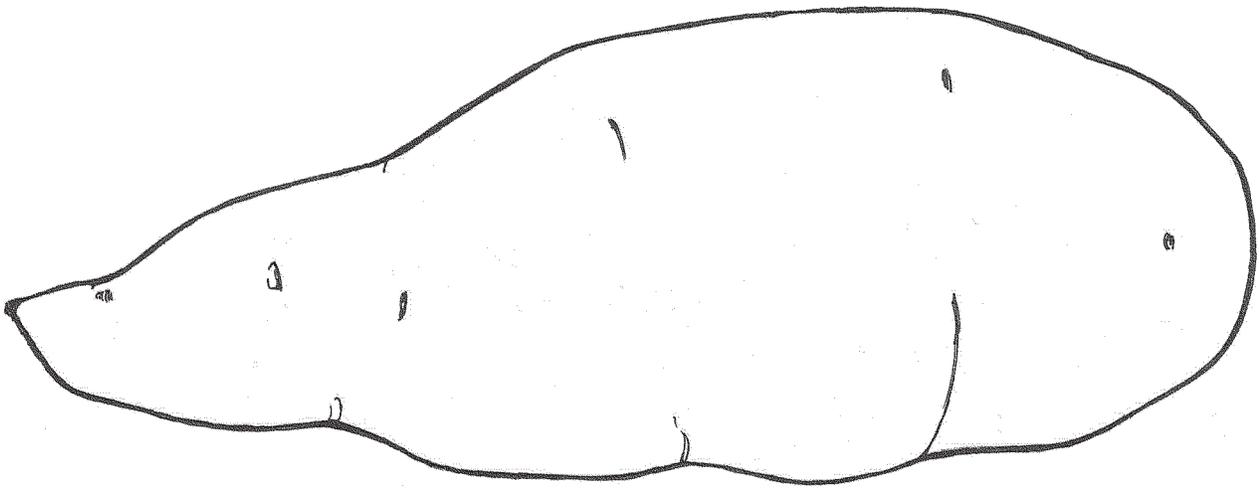
# Sweet Potato

Sweet Potatoes at the Farmers Market



# Sweet Potato

Blackline Master

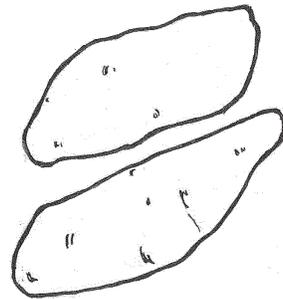
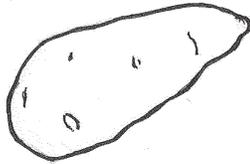


# Sweet Potato Number Match

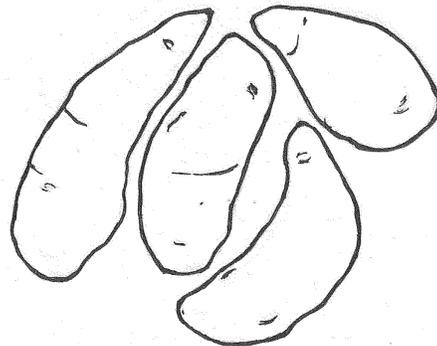
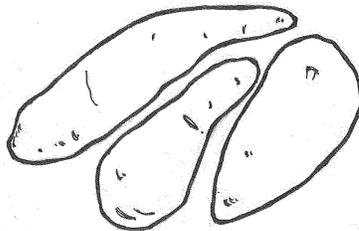
**Dear Family:**

Your child has been learning about sweet potatoes. A sweet potato is an oblong-shaped, orange or flesh-colored vegetable that tastes sweet. Help your child count the sweet potatoes and draw a line between each sweet potato group to the correct matching number. See if your child can tell you five facts about sweet potatoes.

1

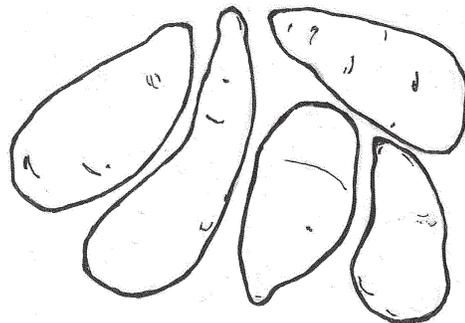


2



3

4



5



# Make a Sweet Potato Windsock

## Dear Family:

Have your child color the drawing with crayons, paint, or markers. Help your child cut along the dashed lines of the windsock. Make sure to cut each individual vine banner separately so they can move freely. Help tape or staple together the edges of the paper to form a tube with the sweet potato at the top and the vine banners hanging down. Punch the two holes in the top of the windsock at the dark circles. Thread ribbon, yarn, or string through the holes and tie together. Hang the windsock up and watch the sweet potato and vines dance in the breeze.

