**Cooking in the Early Childhood Classroom**

**Why is cooking beneficial?**

Cooking in the classroom is an engaging and fun activity that allows for creativity. Children explore measurement concepts, sequencing, and problem-solving when following a recipe. Cooking a recipe that corresponds with a read-aloud story is a great way to create text to self connections. In addition, cooking in the classroom is a perfect time to explore new vocabulary and support language development. It is recommended that teachers write out the recipe and ingredients alongside visuals for students and teachers to reference throughout the lesson. Adding visuals to the recipe will help students associate words with their corresponding visual cues. Cooking can help students with fine motor and sensory development. It is important to follow safety procedures like wearing gloves, washing hands, and using kitchen tools safely and appropriately. Allowing students to cut, stir, pour, and roll helps fine motor muscle development. Cooking in the classroom is a great way to have students practice working together towards a common goal and foster pride and independence.

**I don’t have a kitchen in my classroom. How can I include cooking?**

While it would be ideal for every early childhood classroom to have a working kitchen, it is not the case. Most early childhood classrooms do not have access to a working kitchen. Electric griddles, convection ovens, and hot plates are all great alternative appliances to having a working stove or oven. If you are able to use a kitchen or cafeteria in your building, you could mix ingredients and assemble food in the classroom and have a teacher take it to the oven on a tray. In addition to recipes that require ovens and stovetops, there are many recipes that do not require baking at all. It is recommended that classrooms keep measuring cups, mixing bowls, spoons, and knives stored safely for various cooking projects.

**How can I use this document?**

This document is a great start to incorporating cooking in the early childhood class. Below you will find an assortment of recipes and ideas books to be read alongside the cooking lesson. Many more classroom appropriate recipes can be found throughout the internet, but these recipes are a great place to start!

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| **Primary Colors Fruit Parfait** | |
| Ingredients:  red strawberries  blue blueberries  yellow pineapple  whipped cream | Directions:   1. Put a layer of strawberry slices in your cup. 2. Add a layer of blueberries. 3. Add a layer of pineapple pieces. 4. Squirt a swirl of whipped cream on top. 5. EAT! |
| **Corresponding books:** | |
| *Little Blue and Little Yellow* by Leo Lionni  *Mix it Up!* by Herve Tullet  *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey  *The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear* by Don Wood and Audrey Wood  *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle  *Edible Numbers* by Jennifer Vogel Bass  *Eating the Alphabet* by Lois Ehlert | |

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| **Energy Bites** | |
| Ingredients:  6 Tablespoons oats  2 tablespoons peanut butter  1 tablespoon honey  1 tablespoon mini chocolate chips | Directions:   1. Mix ingredients well and chill for 15 minutes (you can read a book or do a dance while you wait!). 2. Roll into balls. 3. Eat some and share some! |
| **Corresponding books:** | |
| *Peeny Butter Fudge* by Toni Morrison, Slade Morrison, and Joe Cepeda | |

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| **Guacamole** | |
| **Ingredients:**  ½ avocado  1 spoonful chopped tomato  squirt of lemon juice  1 spoonful cilantro  chili lime seasoning | **Directions:**   1. Chop avocado into small pieces. 2. Add tomato and cilantro. 3. Put a squirt of lemon juice and a sprinkle of chili lime seasoning on top. 4. Stir. Eat with chips or vegetables. |
| **Corresponding books:** | |
| *Holy Squawkamole!: Little Red Hen Makes Guacamole* by Susan Wood | |

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| **Crazy Pizza** | |
| Ingredients:  English Muffins  Tomato Sauce  Cheese  Pepperoni  “Crazy” ingredients   * Gummy bugs * Cereal * Chocolate * Fruit * Be creative with this part! | Directions:   1. Each student gets a half of an English muffin as their pizza “crust” 2. Allow students to choose their toppings to create their crazy pizza. Students may be as creative as possible, as long as they will actually eat the pizza and not be wasteful. Refer to the text for ideas. 3. Allow students to eat their pizza cold or bake the pizza in a microwave or toaster oven. |
| **Corresponding books:** | |
| *Crazy Pizza Day* by Bonnie Dobkin | |

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| **Easy Peeny Butter Fudge** | |
| Ingredients:  1 jar of peanut butter (a different nut butter could be used in the case of a peanut allergy)  1 jar vanilla cake icing | Directions:   1. Melt the peanut butter and cake icing in the microwave for one minute each. Add both to a bowl and stir. Heat again in 30 second increments until well mixed. 2. Place the mixture into a container covered with wax or parchment paper. 3. Let cool in a refrigerator or freezer until set. 4. Cut into pieces and enjoy! |
| **Corresponding books:** | |
| *Peeny Butter Fudge* by Toni Morrison, Slade Morrison, and Joe Cepeda | |