



LET'S COOK.. PUMPKIN SOUP

Materials you need:

- 1 large whole pumpkin or 2 smaller pumpkins (Kent or Butternut varieties work well in a soup) if you can pick one from your own garden with the children even better!!
- 1 carton vegetable stock
- Large saucepan, sharp knife, spoon for scooping seeds.
- Blender or stick mixer
- Magnifying glasses (optional)

Setup for play:

- Sit down together with the pumpkin and go through all the parts on the outside pointing to the stem, shell and skin. Say the parts out loud together, to help with retention of new words.
- Carefully slice your pumpkin in half and show the children what it looks like inside. Name the inside parts of the pumpkin – skin, flesh, seeds, fibrous strands (the parts surrounding the seeds). If using 2 different varieties of pumpkin you could ask the children to identify any differences.
- Show the children how to use the spoons to help you scoop out the seeds. Collect the seeds in a bowl and set aside.
- Chop your pumpkin into rough chunks – remove skin and encourage children to put all the pieces into the soup pot. Discuss how the pumpkin pieces feel at the moment – hard, slippery. How do they smell?
- Pour the carton of stock into saucepan with the soup then simmer gently on the stove for around 40 minutes or until pumpkin has turned mushy. Cool
- When the soup has cooled let the children take turns using the stick mixer to puree the soup.
- Add a little bread and enjoy your soup together for lunch! Talk about the difference in the pumpkin texture and smell.

What are they learning with this activity?

As the children investigate the pumpkin up close then help to make and taste soup they are learning to:

- Explore the parts of a pumpkin.
- Use observational skills to slow down, look closely at an object, and notice small details.
- Understand lifecycles and how food gets to our plates
- Explore simple scientific concepts through play and observation
- Compare textures, smells, and colours using their five senses.
- Develop new vocabulary and build on current language skills
- Negotiate roles, responsibilities and relationships
- Strengthen fine motor muscles, visual motor integration and control
- Uses one-to-one correspondence to match one object to another object
- Demonstrates fine motor strength, eye-hand coordination and dexterity by using fingers to scoop and transfer seeds.

Extending the play:

- Wash the seeds the children collected then bake in a slow oven to create a crunchy snack for morning or afternoon tea.
- Ask the children to count out loud 10 seeds to add to their own bowl.
- Add washed and dried seeds to your collage materials or loose parts collection.

