HARVEST OF THE MONTH

A Farm to Early Care and Education Activity Toolkit for Georgia Early Care Providers

CRAVIN’ CARROTS

Prepared by Diana Myers, MS, RD
INTRODUCTION

Research tells us that a young child's food preferences develop within the first few years of life as an infant transitions from eating one food to a multitude of foods with varying flavor profiles. Many young children spend significant time in early care centers and family homes. These providers have the ability to influence the dietary preferences of young children in a healthy, engaging, and positive way. These four Harvest of the Month (HOTM) Kits were created to be used in early care and education settings with three to five-year olds.

Each Kit focuses on a locally grown Georgia fruit or vegetable and includes:

- Fun facts and information about the fruit or vegetable.
- A kid friendly recipe
- Nutrition activity linked to the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS)
- Children's literature connections

The kits are aligned with the Georgia Department of Education’s K-12 Harvest of the Month calendar and Quality Care for Children’s Harvest of the Month calendar for early care providers. The purpose of these kits is to provide a GELDS aligned, hands-on learning experience that enhances children’s knowledge of fruits and vegetables through activities, literature connections, taste testing, and recipe creation.

These HOTM kits were created by Diana Myers, MS, RD as part of a Master's capstone project. Each kit was tested at Atlanta area early care and education centers under the guidance of Georgia Organics and Quality Care for Children.

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**Cravin' Carrots**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- Carrots were first grown in Afghanistan in 900 AD.

  **Fun tip:**
  Show children where Afghanistan is on a map.

- Carrots are one of the best sources of Vitamin A which keeps our eyes, skin, teeth, and bones happy and healthy.
- Baby carrots are cut small from large carrots that grow in the ground.
- You can eat all parts of a carrot including the carrot itself and the greens! The actual carrot is the root that grows underground.
- Carrots come in a variety of colors including orange, yellow, white, and purple.

  **Fun tip:**
  Show each of these colors to the children so they can visualize them.

- Raw carrots contain 88% water and help you stay hydrated.
- Americans eat an average of 10.6 pounds of fresh carrots per a year.\(^2\)

  **Fun tip:**
  Have children stand up and practice the motion of harvesting carrots by reaching down to the ground, grabbing the greens, and pulling the carrot out of the ground.

**References:**
Cravin' Carrots

CARROT-THEMED CHILDREN’S BOOKS

Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards:

**CLL2** – The child will acquire vocabulary introduced in conversations, activities, stories, and/or books.

**CLL5** – The child will acquire meaning from a variety of materials read to him/her.

*The Giant Carrot* by Jan Peck

*The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss

*Carrots Grow Underground* by Mari Schuh

*Too Many Carrots* by Katy Hudson

*The Very Big Carrot* by Satoe Tone

*Going for Carrots* by Sherri Cook

*Carrot Soup* by John Segal

*Curious George: The Perfect Carrot* by H. A. Rey

*Just Enough Carrots* by Stuart J. Murphy

*Harry Loves Carrots* by Laura Baldwin

*Carrot and Pea: An Unlikely Friendship* by Morag Hood

*Giant Carrot* by Allan Manham

*You Are the Pea, And I Am the Carrot* by J. Theron Elkins

*Caillou: The Carrot Patch* by Anne Paradis

*The Vegetables We Eat* by Gail Gibbons
CARROT TOP GROWTH SPURT ACTIVITY

Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards:

CD-SC3 – The child will demonstrate knowledge related to living things and their environments.

Supplies

- Water
- Carrot tops ($1/pound)
- Cotton balls ($1.50)
- Clear plastic tupperware ($4)
- Sunny windowsill

Instructions

1. Line the clear plastic tupperware with cotton balls.
2. Pour water over the cotton balls until they are soaked through.
3. Place the carrot tops on top of the wet cotton balls.
4. Set the carrot top trays in a sunny windowsill.
5. Water the carrot tops each day until the cotton swabs are soaked through.
6. Observe the growth of the carrots each day with the children.

Tips

- When watering the carrot tops, make sure the cotton balls are soaked through with no excess water in the bottom of the tupperware. Adding too much water can cause the carrot tops to grow mold.
- After setting the carrot tops in a sunny windowsill, ask the children what they think will happen to them.
- On a daily basis, engage the children through discussion of their observations of the carrot growth.
- This activity visually teaches children about the growth of carrots, it does not actually grow full carrots. This is a great opportunity to educate the children on the need for water, sunshine, and soil for plant growth.
Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards:

**CD-SC3** – The child will demonstrate knowledge related to living things and their environments.

**PDM5** – The child will demonstrate gross motor skills.

### Supplies

- Knife
- Recycled two-liter plastic bottles
- Soil ($8)
- Carrot seeds ($3)
- Water
- Sunny windowsill
- Aluminum pan ($4/2-count)

### Instructions

1. Use a knife to cut the top half of the two-liter bottles so that the bottles are open.
2. Pour soil into the two-liter bottle and leave three inches of space at the top.
3. Have children help place the carrot seeds in the soil and press a half inch down into the soil.
4. Have a child volunteer water the soil and place the bottle in a sunny windowsill.
5. Observe the growth and water each day with the children.
6. After about three months, the carrots will be ready to harvest.
7. Gently dump the soil and carrots into an aluminum tray.
8. Spread out the carrots for the children to see the root system.
9. Count the carrots with the children to see how many have grown.
10. Have the children touch the roots and the leaves.
11. Wash the carrots thoroughly before tasting them.
12. Enjoy the harvest!

### Tips

- After harvesting the carrots, discuss each of the plant parts including the root, stem, and leaves. Discuss how the carrot is a root and carries all of the food for the carrot up from the soil and into the carrot stem. Discuss how the leaves are edible and how they help to increase the amount of sunlight available to the carrot. Sunlight is what makes the leaves of the carrots green.

- Have the children describe how the different plant parts feel.

- Are the carrots rough or smooth?

- Which parts of the carrot are hard and which parts are soft?

- Lay out the carrots to compare the different shapes and sizes. This is a great opportunity to talk about the uniqueness of each carrot, just like humans.

- Take this opportunity to discuss the concept of above and below. The carrot greens are above the soil and the carrots grow below the soil.
Cravin' Carrots

HONEY MUSTARD HUMMUS

Adapted from Super Healthy Kids
Recipe makes about 1 and 1/2 cups
Taste testing serving size: 1 Tbsp.
Servings per recipe: About 24 servings

Ingredients

• One 15 oz. can white cannellini beans, drained and rinsed ($1)
• 1/4 cup yellow mustard ($1)
• 1/4 cup honey ($4)
• 1/2 tsp. garlic powder ($1.50)
• Salt & pepper, to taste ($3)
• Variety of carrot types ($1/pound)

Supplies

• Measuring cups & spoons ($10)
• Can opener ($8)
• Colander ($6)
• Knife ($15)
• Cutting board ($7)
• Blender ($35)
• Paper plates ($2/100-count)

Preparation

Cut the carrots into matchsticks for children to taste test.

Instructions

1. Have all adults and children wash their hands thoroughly before cooking and taste testing.
2. Combine all hummus ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.
3. Place a paper plate on the table in front of each child.
4. Place a slice of each color of carrot on the plate in front of the child.
5. Add a dollop of dip to each plate, if using.
6. As a class, begin tasting each of the carrots together.
7. Go through the entirety of the carrot taste test together.
8. Enjoy!

Tips for Tasting

• This dip is not necessary in the taste testing of carrots. Get creative! Is there another nutritious dip recipe that you think the children would enjoy dipping their carrots into?

Examples of questions include:

What sound does the carrot make when you chew?
What color is the carrot?
Have you tried carrots before?
Would you try carrots again?

• Teach children how to give respectful responses, even if they don’t like what they tried. “Don’t yuck my yum!” is a great way of teaching children that they may not like it, but their friends might. Remember, it can take a child multiple times of exposure before they like a new food.
Cravin' Carrots

SUPERPOWERED VEGETABLE SOUP

Adapted from Chowhound
Recipe makes about 6 cups
Taste testing serving size: 1/4 cup
Servings per recipe: About 24 servings

Ingredients

- 4 tsp. olive oil ($3/8-oz.)
- One medium onion, chopped ($0.50)
- Salt & pepper, to taste ($3)
- Four medium carrots, chopped ($1/pound)
- Two medium garlic cloves, chopped ($2)
- One celery stalk, chopped ($1.50)
- One cup peas ($1)
- One bay leaf (optional) ($3)
- 1 tsp. dried thyme (optional) ($4)
- Four cups low-sodium vegetable broth ($2)
- One-pound Yukon Gold potatoes, chopped ($1/pound)

Supplies

- Induction burner ($50)
- Large spoon ($6)
- Four-quart saucepan & lid ($20)
- Knife ($15)
- Fork ($2)
- Cutting board ($7)
- Measuring cups & spoons ($10)
- Paper bowls ($2.50/42-count)
- Plastic spoons ($2/100-count)

Preparation

- Chop the onion, carrots, celery, and potatoes.
- Mince the garlic.
- Measure out the ingredients.

Tips for Tasting

- Consider making the soup ahead of time and cooking a smaller batch with the children.
- Place the induction burner in an area where children are not close to it and ensure that the cord cannot be tripped over.
- Have one child at a time help with measurements and pouring; this helps with classroom management.
- Teach children how to give respectful responses, even if they don’t like what they tried. “Don’t yuck my yum!” is a great way of teaching children that they may not like it, but their friends might. Remember, it can take a child multiple times of exposure before they like a new food.

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Cravin' Carrots

SUPERPOWERED VEGETABLE SOUP

Instructions

1. Have all adults and children wash their hands thoroughly before cooking and taste testing.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat.
3. Once heated, add the onion and cook until translucent, stirring occasionally. This will take about five minutes.
4. Add the carrots and garlic, and stirring for two minutes or until the garlic is fragrant.
5. Add the celery and bay leaf and thyme if using.
6. Add the broth, potatoes, and peas.
7. Let the soup come to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and gently simmer, uncovered, until the potatoes can be easily pierced with a fork, about 15-25 minutes.
8. Season with salt and ground pepper and let cool.
9. While cooling, read one of the recommended carrot themed children’s books.
10. Place a spoonful of vegetable soup into each child’s tasting bowl.
11. Try the soup together as a class.
12. Enjoy!

Examples of questions include:

Do they have any other ideas of items to add to the soup?

Have they tried vegetable soup before?

Would they try this soup again?

What are other ways that they have eaten carrots?
Buying Local Guide

WHY BUY LOCAL FOOD?

- Procuring items from local farms will help to support the local economy and create jobs.
- When produce doesn't have to travel far, it is able to be harvested closer to its peak ripeness causing it to taste better and fresher.
- With less travel time and a sooner harvest date, produce has longer shelf life which helps to reduce waste.
- Children will begin to develop a connection surrounding the origins of their food.

HOW DO I BUY LOCAL FOOD?

- Reach out to your food distributor to ask for local foods.
- Connect with nearby farmers to purchase directly from their farm. You can find farms near you at www.localharvest.org
- Find nearby farmers markets to purchase local produce from. Visit www.georgiaorganics.org/good-food-guide/ to find a farmers market near you.
- Reach out to local purchasing agencies on procuring local produce.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR BUYING LOCAL FOOD

- The Common Market (www.thecommonmarket.org)
- Farm’d (www.farmd.com)
- Fresh Harvest (www.freshharvestga.com)
- Georgia Grown of the Georgia Department of Agriculture (www.georgiagrown.com/)
- The Turnip Truck (www.turniptruckga.com)