Harvest of the Month

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

All Hail Kale

Prepared by Diana Myers, MS, RD
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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Kale is high in Vitamins A, C, and K.

- Vitamin A keeps our eyes, skin, teeth, and bones happy and healthy.
- Vitamin C helps to keep germs away, keep us from getting sick and heal our bumps and scratches.
- Vitamin K keeps our blood flowing through our bodies.

- There are over 50 varieties of kale. That’s a lot of kale!
- People have been cooking and cultivating kale for more than 6,000 years - that’s older than your great-great-great-grandparents!
- In Kenya, kale is traditionally sautéed to create a dish called sukuma wiki. Kenyans use this as a nutritious staple in their diet.

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

- Kale has several other nutritious and delicious cousins including cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower.

**Fun tip:**
Show children pictures of these vegetables. Ask the children if they know any of these types of vegetables and if they have tried them before.

References:
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.

**All Hail Kale!**

**KALE-THEMED CHILDREN’S BOOKS**

The Wondrous World of Kale
by Sarah Khan

Captain Kale and the Superfoods!
by Amy Roth

The Tale of Kale: Based on a Real Kid’s Real Story by Lisa Borden

The Vegetables We Eat by Gail Gibbons

Our School Garden! by Rick Swann

If You Plant a Seed by Kadir Nelson

Book Options
All Hail Kale!

KALE CONFETTI ACTIVITY

Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards:

**CD-CR2** – The child will create and explore visual art forms to develop artistic expression.

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

**PDM6** – The child will demonstrate fine motor skills.

**Supplies**

- Glue ($0.50)
- Marker ($2.50)
- Paper bowls ($2.50/42-count)
- Construction paper ($8)
- Kale leaf print-outs

**Preparation**

Rip up construction paper into tiny pieces.

**Instructions**

1. Give a kale leaf print-out to each child.
2. Write the child’s name on their print-out using a marker.
3. Give each child a bowl of ripped up construction paper.
4. Demonstrate the activity to the children by putting a dot of glue on your kale print-out and putting a piece of torn construction paper on top of the glue.
5. Put glue on top of each child’s kale leaf print-out.
6. Have the children pick up a torn piece of construction paper and put it on top of the glue.
7. Continue adding construction paper until the colorful kale design is complete.
8. Decorate the classroom with the final creations!

**Tips**

- Looking for extra help? Have the children help rip up the construction paper with you prior to the activity.
- Consider having older children use glue sticks rather than having the teachers add the glue.
- Prior to beginning this activity, make a kale leaf as an example to show the children.
- Bring in real kale leaves to show the children prior to starting the kale confetti activity. Open up a discussion with the children to talk about the kale.

**Examples of questions include:**

- What does the kale look like?
- What colors do you see on the kale leaves?
- What does the kale smell like?
- What does the kale feel like?
- Does the kale make a sound when you pull it apart?
All Hail Kale!

SWEET BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards:

PDM2 – The child will participate in activities related to nutrition.
PDM4 – The child will use senses (sight, touch, hear, smell, taste) to explore the environment and process information.
PDM5 – The child will demonstrate gross motor skills.
PDM6 – The child will demonstrate fine motor skills.

The simplest way to introduce kale to children is in its most basic form, as a plain kale leaf. Kale is a beautiful leaf with vibrant colors and healthful nutrition. Taste testing in this way will teach children that you don’t have to cook everything to eat it. Try taste testing with a simple vinaigrette. A recipe is provided for you, however, get creative! A vinaigrette can be made using three parts oil, one part vinegar, and seasonings to taste. Refer to the Buying Local Guide for tips on buying local kale.

*Adapted from Super Healthy Kids*

Recipe makes about one and a 1/2 cups
Taste testing serving size: One Tbsp.
Servings per recipe: About 24 servings

**Ingredients**

- Kale ($1/bunch)
- One small garlic clove, minced ($2)
- Pepper ($1)
- Five Tbsp. balsamic vinegar ($2.50)
- One Tbsp. maple syrup ($5)
- Two Tbsp. Dijon mustard ($1)
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil ($3/8-oz.)

**Supplies**

- Small bowl ($5)
- Measuring cups & spoons ($10)
- Knife ($15)
- Cutting board ($7)
- Paper plates ($5/100-count)
- Whisk ($7)

Tips

- Depending on the amount of kids, this recipe may need to be doubled.
- Taste testing the kale with the children will help to encourage them to try it themselves.
- Rather than using a bowl and a whisk, consider making the dressing in a plastic jar. Allow each child an opportunity to shake the dressing and mix it.
- Ask children about their opinion of the kale.

Examples of questions include:

- Have they tried it before?
- Would they try it again?

Continued on next page →
1. Have all adults and children wash their hands thoroughly before cooking and taste testing.
2. Mix together all of the dressing ingredients in the bowl or mason jar.
3. Give each child an opportunity to whisk the dressing.
4. Pass around a kale leaf on a plate for each child.
5. Have them touch it and ask them what it feels like. Does it make a sound? What does the texture remind you of?
6. While conversing with the children about the kale, pour a small amount of dressing on each plate for the children to dip their kale in.
7. If they want seconds and there is enough, encourage them to try more if they like it.

Tips for Tasting

• 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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KALE SALSA

Adapted from FoodCorps
Recipe makes about three cups
Taste testing serving size: two Tbsp.
Servings per recipe: About 24 servings

Ingredients
- Five tomatoes ($1.50/pound)
- Two large kale leaves ($1/bunch)
- 1/3 cup cilantro ($1/bunch)
- 1/2 medium white onion ($0.50)
- One clove garlic ($2)
- Two Tbsp. lime juice ($0.60)
- Two Tbsp. lemon juice ($1)
- 1/2 tsp. cumin ($3.50)
- Whole-wheat tortilla chips ($3)

Supplies
- Measuring cups & spoons ($10)
- Blender ($35)
- Knife ($15)
- Juicer ($8)
- Cutting board ($7)
- Paper plates ($2/100-count)

Preparation
- Remove hard stems of kale.
- Peel garlic clove

Instructions
1. Have all adults and children wash their hands thoroughly before cooking and taste testing.
2. Have children help pull the leaves off of the cilantro stalk and juice the lime and lemon.
3. Have individual children help put each of ingredients into the blender.
4. Pulse until the salsa is fully processed. Note: If the salsa doesn’t pulse upon starting the blender, add ¼ cup of water.
5. Serve with chips and enjoy!

Tips
- Giving children small responsibilities such as tearing off cilantro leaves helps empower them through being part of the recipe creation process.
- If additional adults are present for supervision, consider creating stations for each responsibility in the preparation and instructional process. This may be helpful in maintaining classroom management.
- Place the blender in an area where children cannot trip on the cord but can still see the blending process.
- Stimulate conversation by asking children questions.

Examples of questions include:

Have you tried kale before?
Did you like the kale salsa?
What did you like about it?
Would you try it again?

Examples
- Remove hard stems of kale.
- Peel garlic clove

Notes
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)