

University of California Cooperative Extension, Alameda County

# Tips for Early Childhood Educators



## “S” is for Summer Squash!

- Summer Squash is a warm season vegetable.
- Yellow squash, zucchini, scallop (Pattypan) and Mid-East are summer squash varieties.
- Summer squash grow on compact vines.
- Summer squash yellow flowers are edible.
- Squash means “something eaten raw.”

For more information visit:  
<http://ucanr.org/sites/gardenweb/files/117472.pdf>  
[www.harvestofthemonth.com](http://www.harvestofthemonth.com) and  
[www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)

## Classroom Activity:

*Children will learn sensory skills and language*

### RESOURCES/SUPPLIES

- Picture or Photo Card of summer squash varieties
- Empty egg cartons
- Different items around your facility or home that have different textures—rough, smooth, bumpy, shiny, furry, sticky, etc. Examples: sandpaper, aluminum foil, felt, cotton ball, sponge, wash cloth, tape, vinyl, beans, or un-popped pop corn
- Glue (liquid)

### BEFORE LESSON

- Glue samples of items securely into the bottom of each section of an egg carton. Make sure each item is firmly glued into the carton
- Have different squash varieties for children to feel and compare.

### WHAT TO DO NEXT?

1. Let the children know that summer squash is the vegetable of the month. Zucchini, yellow straightneck, yellow crookneck, and scallop squashes are some of the varieties we have pictures of on the board.
2. Ask children to compare and contrast color and shapes of the summer squash varieties.
3. Explain to the children they will be touching different textures of items glued inside the egg cartons you will pass around.
4. Ask the children to identify the textures and list them on the board (rough, smooth, bumpy, shiny, furry, sticky, etc.).
5. Now, have the children touch the summer squash varieties and identify their texture(s).

Adapted from: <http://www.extension.org/>

## Recommended Books:

*The Giant Zucchini*  
 Catherine Siracusa  
[www.half.com](http://www.half.com)

California Desired Results Developmental Profile-Preschool © DRDP-PS  
 Self and Social Development: SSD5, SSD8, SSD9; Cognitive Development: COG2, COG4; Physical Development: PD1, PD2, PD3; Health: HLTH42

## Physical Activity Brain Break

*This exercise is to reinforce the idea that some fruits and vegetables grow on vines.*

- Grab a zucchini and ask children to step to the right.
- Now bring your feet together
- Step to the left
- Bring your feet together
- Open your legs like a bridge
- Raise your right hand and reach up and tip- toe
- Now raise your left hand and reach up and stand on tip- toes.
- Repeat exercises, 10 times alternating (underlined) between fruits and vegetables that grow on vines. Examples: zucchini, scalloped, crooked squash, grapes, tomatoes, etc.

Adapted from: Tutti Fruitti Instant Recess <http://toniyancey.com/IRRResources.html>

# Cooking with Children in the Classroom

## Create a child-friendly cooking area

### CHILDREN COOKING:

*What children can do:*

- Place squash flesh on a plate
- Sprinkle parmesan cheese
- Remove basil leaves
- Chop basil leaves

### COOKING UTENSILS:

Select age-appropriate ordinary home or school cooking utensils:

- Plastic cutting boards
- Serrated plastic knives with rounded ends
- Plastic spoons, bowls, measuring spoons and cups

### CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT:

- Post summer squash pictures
- Post the cafeteria menu featuring summer squash
- Grow summer squash in the garden
- Have basil for the children to smell

### SAFETY & SANITATION:

- Have children wash their hands before and after cooking
- Have children help clean the cooking and eating area

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Read NETA Cooking with Children Guide

## Recipe: Zucchini Carpaccio

Makes 25 taste tests

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 medium zucchini
- ¼ cup of lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 tablespoons grated or shaved Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped basil
- Freshly ground pepper
- Chicken broth (optional)

### SUPPLIES

- Small microwave-safe bowl, measuring spoons, plastic knives, cutting board(s), small paper cups, colander, microwave

Note: If microwave is not available, add the slices of zucchini to boiled water or chicken broth until tender, then drain.

### PREPARATION

1. Slice the zucchini in half. Then, using a peeler (a “Y” peeler works best but a regular one will work too), create thin slices of zucchini. Place in a bowl.
2. Add some water or chicken broth. Cook 4 - 5 for minutes. Zucchini needs to be tender; do not overcook.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon juice and olive oil. Toss zucchini in juice mixture. Add ground pepper, parmesan and basil. Serve immediately.

Note: You can make this ahead of time and just keep the dressing separated from the zucchini until ready to serve.

### Nutrition information per serving:

Calories 17, Carbohydrate 1g, Dietary fiber 0g, Protein 0g, Total fat 1g, Saturated fat 0g, Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 7mg

### Adapted from:

University of California, Cooperative Extension  
Los Angeles County  
<http://celosangeles.ucanr.edu/files/97009.pdf>

*Photos: Network for a Healthy California*

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Language and Literacy: LLD1, LLD2  
Cognitive Development: COG1, COG3, COG4  
Health: HLTH2



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UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA  
cal fresh Nutrition Education

UC  
CE

University of California  
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Cooperative Extension, Alameda County

1131 Harbor Bay Parkway, Suite 131

Alameda, CA 94502

510-567-6812

<http://cealameda.ucanr.edu>

For food stamp information,  
call 877-847-3663.