Background:

Learning by “doing” is a great way to teach new concepts and skills to children. Children often get exposed to many different and sometimes new foods in school that they may not otherwise have an opportunity to try at home. Take children on the exciting journey of exploring different foods with their five senses.

This section includes various activities that engage the different senses and can be done throughout the year, with many different foods of various food groups to make the experience an ongoing journey. The “Using Our Senses” activity in the Suggested Activities section below includes “pineapple” as an example, but can be adapted to any food.

*Cost Saving Tip: Using foods that will already be served for snacks or lunch would be a great way to minimize costs and limit the purchase of “extra” food for classroom activities. Activities may be adapted to use pictures of foods as another way to help cut costs for certain foods that may be difficult to obtain, prepare or serve in the classroom setting.

Objective:

Allow children to experience foods in different ways by engaging the children’s senses.

Suggested Activities:

(A) Using Our Senses

Materials:
- Pineapple
  *You may pick a different food each time this activity will be done, by varying between foods from different food groups – fruits, veggies, milk, calcium foods, meats, grains.
- Basic kitchen preparation tools including a knife and cutting board
  *Depending on the food used, different kitchen tools may be needed.
- Sink, running water, soap, paper towels
- Small plates or trays
- Forks

Procedure:

1. Show children a fresh, whole pineapple.
2. Ask them to describe what it looks like. What color is it? What shape is it? How big is it?
3. Ask them what kind of food it is, or what food group it belongs to (Answer: fruit). Ask them if it is important to eat fruits. (Answer: Yes. We get important nutrients from fruits that keep us healthy.) Explore the
MyPyramid website (www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/index.html) for more general information on the different nutrients that each food group offers.

4. Wash your hands with soap and water. Children should wash their hands as well, since tasting will be part of the activity.

5. Prepare the pineapple for tasting. Twist off the top, rinse with running water, cut off the skin and eyes. Cut it up into slices making sure to remove the core.

6. Ask them again to describe what it looks like inside. What color is it? Does it have a smell?

7. Cut it into small pieces for them to taste the fruit. Encourage them to try the fruit, but do not force them. Eat the fruit with them. Is it sweet? Tart? Sour? Soft? Hard? Does it make a sound when we bite into it?

8. Ask children if they have eaten pineapple before. Did they eat it by itself or with some other foods? Was this part of their lunch or snack today?

9. Refer to page 39, “…Food in so many words…” for a list of helpful adjectives to describe foods in all their different elements.

10. For further expansion of this activity, you can plan a field trip to the Dole Plantation. Choose from a variety of different tour experiences. Children can learn the history of the pineapple industry, how they are grown, or see different varieties of this wonderful fruit. Visit their website to get more information: http://www.dole-plantation.com/

(B) What’s that Smell?

Materials:
- Bowls or trays
- Foil
- Different fragrant fruits and vegetables, like bananas, oranges, lemons, mangos, papayas, pineapples, onions. Other fragrant foods may be used as well. *Please remember to accommodate those children who may be allergic to certain fruits/vegetables.
- Kitchen preparation tools – cutting board, knife.
- Sink, running water, soap and paper towels.

Procedure:
1. Wash your hands.
2. Cut up the various fruits and vegetables so that their fragrance is clearly noticeable.
3. Place small amounts of the different foods in separate bowls or trays.
4. Cover each bowl or tray with foil and poke small holes in the foil to allow their smells to come through, but keep the identity of the fruit/vegetable concealed.
5. Have the children take turns smelling the different fruits/vegetables and experience the different fragrances. Ask if they can guess what the mystery fruits and vegetables are just based on the food’s fragrance.
6. You can utilize the fruits and vegetables after the activity by combining them to make a fruit or vegetable salad for everyone to enjoy for snack.
(C) Touchy, Feely

Materials:
- Paper bags or boxes
- Different fruits and vegetables that exemplify different textures and shapes, like tomatoes, kiwi, lychee, banana, broccoli, carrots, grapes, peaches, raisin/cranberries. Others may be used.

Procedure:
1. Place the whole fruits and vegetables in separate bags or boxes. Make certain the contents of the boxes cannot be seen readily.
2. Have the children wash their hands.
3. Tell children to close their eyes. Taking turns, ask them to stick their hand inside the bag or box. Instruct children to try to identify the contents of the boxes by just using their sense of touch.
4. You can utilize the fruits and vegetables after the activity by combining them to make a fruit or vegetable salad for everyone to enjoy for snack.

(D) Books
- “Lunch” by Denise Fleming, Scholastic Inc., 1992

(E) For parents at home:
- Food Riddle Game (page 40). Parents can reinforce the concept of sensory descriptions of foods by helping their children answer these riddles. Parents can work with their children to come up with riddles of their own.
...Food in so many words....

Food can be described with so many different words. You can describe a food by its taste, smell, touch, texture, appearance...the list of adjectives is almost endless!

Check out some descriptive words below to help stimulate tantalizing, tasty thoughts of foods with your children.

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<th>Aromatic</th>
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<th>Mild</th>
<th>Slick</th>
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<td>Milky</td>
<td>Slurpy</td>
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<td>Fiery</td>
<td>Moist</td>
<td>Smooth</td>
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Adapted from Team Nutrition’s "Fruits and Vegetable Galore: Helping Kids Eat More"
Food Riddle Game

Parents, we have been learning about different foods with our 5 senses—sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. Help us solve these food riddles, noting the different sensory characteristics of these foods. The answers are at the bottom of the page.

(1) I am orange and round,
And I have seeds,
I can be a sweet, juicy treat and I grow on trees.
What am I?
Answer: ______________

(2) With a green “trunk” and green bushy top,
I look like miniature trees,
But, did you know? I’m a tasty delight with melted cheese.
What am I?
Answer: ______________

(3) I am liquid and white,
I come from a cow,
I help your bones and teeth grow strong, OH WOW!
What am I?
Answer: ______________

(4) A chicken will lay me in their nest,
With the crack of my smooth, white shell,
I can be a great addition to your breakfast.
What am I?
Answer: ______________

Can you come up with other clever riddles?

Answers: (1) orange; (2) broccoli; (3) milk; (4) egg