Discovery All Around!

Hands-on Exploration Fun

Salem Public Library
Spring 2020

Over the years the all-time favorite theme in the Salem Public Library's Discovery Room has been the pretend grocery. There kids role-play various food related jobs while learning about nutrition and practicing sorting and basic math skills. In your home there are many experiments to share with your child that involve food, fun and imagination.
Here are some suggestions — **yumm!**

FOR PRESCHOOLERS

While for a parent food preparation can be just one more chore, for your preschooler it can be a fun role-play game, and a great way to practice fine motor skills and learn about steps and measuring. Investigating with food ingredients allow your little chefs to practice their budding science skills of predicting, and experimenting and, or course, tasting!

Vegetable Stamps

Here is a fun way to investigate the makeup of fruits and vegetables while creating art. With a plastic knife (or a parent's hands on a metal knife) cut an apple, a green pepper, a head of celery (or whatever you're willing to sacrifice to the cause) crosswise. An apple will create a star pattern cut crosswise, a celery head will make a rose shape. Talk about the seeds, the roots, the taste. Next, put some poster paint on a paper plate, swish your stamp in the paint and create!

Image from firstpalette.com/

Kitchen Explosion!

One of the simplest, and most dramatic, kitchen experiments takes only four ingredients.

Image from funathomewithkids.com

I n a clear glass pour some baking soda. (Warning: put that glass in the center of a pie pan or on the ground outside.) In a separate cup or squirt bottle pour some vinegar (4 times the amount of baking soda), a tiny bit of dishwashing soap, and for extra fun, several drops of food coloring. Pour the liquids into the baking soda and watch the eruption begin. Try without the soap (you'll get larger, more fragile bubbles), and experiment with ingredient amounts for the perfect explosion!

Edible Play

A healthy snack, recipe fun, and sensory exploration all in one: what could be better?
Spoon into a bowl 3/4 cup peanut or almond butter and honey or maple syrup to taste. Add 1 cup wheat germ or rolled oats. Squish together to your heart's content. You can add milk powder for a protein boost, raisins, and chocolate chips. Shape into balls (a wonderful fine motor skill) and roll through shredded coconut or cocoa for an extra kick. This is an absolutely open-ended recipe. Do a taste test with your little one, explore and enjoy!

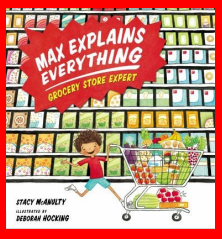
Picture Books for your little shopper!

Little Taco Truck

JP Valentine

Max Explains Everything: grocery store expert

JP McAnulty



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ELEMENTARY STEM EXPERIMENTS

Edible Slime !

Image from lemonlimeadventures.com

There are many "edible" slime recipes on the internet. Although none will take the place of your favorite dessert, here's one that might come close! Mix together a 14 oz can of sweetened condensed milk with one tablespoon cornstarch in a small saucepan. Heat and stir just until thickened. Remove from heat and add coloring (could be flavored gelatin powder or food coloring) and flavor extract of choice. Stir, allow to cool, and let the slimy fun (and taste test!) happen. Be sure to refrigerate leftovers, and clean up with warm soapy water.

DIY Fruit Slushy

Store bought slush drinks are nothing more than chemicals, sugar and water. Make your own healthy alternative AND learn about the chemical effect salt has on ice. Carefully pour a cup of fruit juice into a quart zip-lock bag. SEAL! In a gallon zip-lock bag put in 25-30 ice cubes and two tablespoons salt. Add the sealed juice bag, seal and shake. After 10-15 minutes rinse off the inner bag, pour out your frozen drink into a glass, add a straw and enjoy!

Image from Indypl.org/blog

Science: The salt lowers the melting point of water; having the temperature around the juice lower than 32° makes the juice itself freeze. Experiment with different salt amounts to test the chemical reaction at play.

An alternative (if that shaking time is just too long!) is to have your child put 2 cups of frozen fruit, a 1/2 cup water and honey to taste in a blender and blend into chilly goodness.

Magnetic Cereal ?

Check out your "iron-fortified" cereal to see if it really has iron in it. You'll need a

Image from stevespanglerscience.com

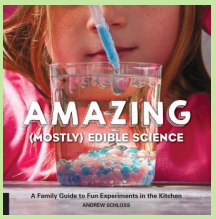
strong magnet, a box of cereal, and some water. Float a few pieces of cereal on top of a small bowl of water. Pass your magnet slowly over and see if you can move the cereal without actually touching it. Can you make your cereal spin? The iron in the cereal is reacting to the magnetic field of the magnet. Test out different cereals with varying percentages of added iron. This is also a good chance to look at other added nutrients and minerals.

FOOD HERO FoodHero.org

Want an easy source for healthy recipes for your family, fun kids activities and ways to learn about food? Register to be a Food Hero. Food Hero is an initiative of the Oregon Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) program and was developed by the Oregon State University Extension Service and funded jointly by the OSU Extension Service, Oregon Department of Human Services, and the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. Check it out at foodhero.org/

Another great website for family nutrition is through the Choose My Plate program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Check it out at choosemyplate.gov/

FOR FURTHER FOOD EXPLORATION

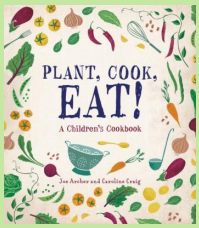


Amazing (Mostly) Edible Science

J 641.3 Schloss 2016

Plant, cook, eat!: a children's cookbook

J 641.65 Archer 2018



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