

October: Pumpkin Month



Do you love Hallowe'en? We do too! Not everyone knows a lot about one of the most common symbols of this fall celebration, the pumpkin. That is why it is the focus of this month's issue.

Learning about Pumpkins

To introduce children to pumpkins, you can begin by having them sit in a circle and play Mystery Food (*LEAP HOP*, pp. 108-109 or *LEAP Food Flair*, pp.90-92). Hide a small pumpkin in a bag and ask the children to feel the food (without peeking). Then they can describe what the mystery food feels like (for example: the food is hard, it's rough, it's round, etc.) or they can ask questions about it (for example: Can you peel it? Does it have a seed? etc.) After everyone in the circle has had a turn, ask them to guess what the mystery food is.

Pumpkin Activities

- Once the pumpkin has been identified, have the children vote on whether they think it is a fruit or a vegetable. Then explain its dual identity as a fruit and a vegetable (it grows like a fruit but is eaten as a vegetable).

- Next, you can describe how a pumpkin grows from a seed into a food.



Photo : Audrey Lizotte

- You can also show the children pumpkins of different sizes so that they can see that they can be small, medium or large (you can use pictures to compare them).
- Another good way of introducing a pumpkin is to have the children taste it in different forms (raw, puréed, muffins, soup, seeds, etc.).

Other Activities

- Ask the children what other fruits and vegetables they know that begin with the letter "p" (peach, pear, pineapple, pea, pepper, potato, etc.).
- You can ask them to do the same thing with fruits and vegetables that are orange (orange, pepper, carrot, sweet potato, cantaloupe, peach, nectarine, etc.).
- You can also play "pumpkin volleyball" (*LEAP Food Flair*, pp.107-108) or visit a nearby pumpkin patch, if possible.
- You can also read Helen Cooper's book, *Pumpkin Soup* (see the *Active Book in my Library* section of this newsletter).
- You can make some pumpkin soup (see our recipe of the month), or find other pumpkin recipes that are fun to make (*LEAP Food Flair*, pp.144-145, 160).
- You can also integrate learning about pumpkins into a Hallowe'en themed activity. That way, you can show the

children that, while we associate candy with this celebration, it can also be enjoyed while eating healthy!

Did you know that pumpkins can be cooked in the oven?

Simply cut the pumpkin in half, put it on a pan with a little bit of water in the bottom. Put it in the oven for 45 minutes or just until the middle is soft and can be made into a puree. Simple as that!

Source:

"Bundles of Fun – Pumpkin Possibilities", *LEAP Food Flair*, Legacies Now, pp. 107-108.

Share your stories with us!

Has Healthy Start made a positive difference in your day? Send us your story and pictures and you could be featured on our website or in our newsletter! Please send your submissions to info@healthystartkids.ca or visit www.healthystartkids.ca/your-stories/.

Let's make: Pumpkin Soup*

*Source: LEAP Food Flair, Legacies Now, p. 144

What you need:

- 1 can (16 oz/540 ml) solid pack pumpkin, unsweetened
- 1 tbsp. soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. honey*
- 1 tsp. garlic salt
- ½ tsp. powdered ginger
- 3 cups milk or soy milk
- * Do not serve to children younger than 12 months old.

How to:

1. Put the pumpkin, soy sauce, honey, garlic salt, ginger and milk into a saucepan.
2. Stir soup together well with a whisk.
3. Cook on low heat for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon.

Serves 10 children.



Healthy Start@Home

Active Household Tasks!

According to the *Canadian Physical Activities Guidelines*, children from birth to 4 years of age should get at least **180 minutes of physical activity per day**, at any intensity. Children aged 5 to 11 should accumulate at least **60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily**.



A good way to integrate physical activity into the routine of young children is to have them participate in household tasks. According to the website *Naitre et grandir.com*, "it is

appropriate to have children take part in household tasks. Chores help them learn to organize their time, to be responsible, to set goals, and to gain skills".

An easy way to get children involved is to make household tasks into games that help develop their physical abilities. Here are a few ideas:

- **Swoop and Scoop** (LEAP HOP, pp. 90-91, 141): Ask your child to use bottle scoops to pick up his or her toys and put them into a basket or a box. You can also make the activity into a competition or a race.
- **Special Deliveries** (LEAP HOP, pp. 86-87): Have your child pretend to be a letter carrier, delivering clean clothes, towels, and sheets to specific rooms. The child can use a basket or a wagon to carry more clothes.
- **Laundry Basket Ball** (LEAP HOP, pp. 50-51): Let your child pick up or sort dirty clothes by tossing them into a laundry basket. You can make the activity more challenging by asking them to sort the clothes by colour (ie. whites in one basket and dark colours in another). Another way to increase the challenge is to have the child turn around and throw the clothes into the basket behind them, throw clothes over

their heads, etc.

- Put on some music and dance as you tidy the house.

For other activity ideas, see the activity cards for parents at:

<http://deco.ca/resources/online-resources/resources-child-family-literacy/leap-resources/>.



Sources :

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines and Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines, Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, www.csep.ca/guidelines
"Laundry Basket Ball", "Special Deliveries", "Swoop and Scoop" & "Bottle Scoop", LEAP HOP, Legacies Now, pp. 50-51, 86-87, 90-91 & 141.
"Faire participer les enfants aux tâches ménagères", *Naitre et grandir*, October 2013, <http://naitreetgrandir.com/fr/etape/3-5-ans/vie-famille/fiche.aspx?doc=ik-naitre-grandir-faire-participer-enfant-corvee-tache-menagere>
Jones, Rebecca. "Have Fun and Get Things Done: How to turn chore time into family fun on the Longest Day of Play", *ParticipACTION*, June 13, 2014, <http://www.participation.com/have-fun-and-get-things-done-how-to-turn-chore-time-into-family-fun-on-the-longest-day-of-play/>

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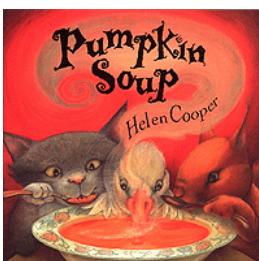
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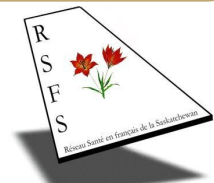


Active Books in your Library

Pumpkin Soup by Helen Cooper tells the story of three friends who always make pumpkin soup together and who always make it the same way. Then one day, one of the friends decides to make a change. This sets in motion a charming story about the challenges of friendship. The book is a perfect accompaniment to *October: Pumpkin Month* (in this issue) and to "Bundles of Fun Activities – Pumpkins" in the LEAP Food Flair guide. Read it once you have tried our Recipe of the Month!



Healthy Start is made possible through the funding and support of the Saskatchewan Network for Health Services in French and PHAC



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