

PREP + JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

3 TO 5
YEARS
TRADITIONAL

PUMPKIN SCOOP & SORT

MATERIALS:

- SMALL- TO MEDIUM- SIZED PUMPKIN
- SHARP KNIFE (FOR ADULT USE)
- SCOOPING TOOLS LIKE SPOONS, LADLES, ETC.
- PLATES OR DISHES IF YOU'D LIKE TO PROVIDE A SPECIFIC PLACE FOR SORTING (OPTIONAL)

OBJECTIVES:

- NATURE EXPLORATION
- SENSORY PLAY
- SCIENCE CONCEPTS & LANGUAGE: SEED, STEM, PLANT, PULP
- LIFECYCLE OF A PUMPKIN
- MATHEMATICAL CONCEPTS: SORTING BY PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

INSTRUCTIONS:

- CUT OPEN THE PUMPKIN BY CUTTING A LARGE CIRCLE AROUND THE STEM, AND REMOVING THE CAP TO EXPOSE THE INSIDES OF THE PUMPKIN
- ASK YOUR CHILD TO LOOK INSIDE AND DESCRIBE WHAT THEY SEE. BEFORE THEY REACH THEIR HANDS IN, ASK THEM TO IMAGINE WHAT THEY THINK IT FEELS LIKE – FOR EXAMPLE, "WHAT DO YOU THINK THE INSIDES OF THE PUMPKIN FEEL LIKE? DO YOU THINK IT'S WARM OR COLD IN THERE? IS IT DRY, OR WET, OR ROUGH, OR SQUISHY?"
- ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO DIG IN! USING THEIR HANDS OR TOOLS TO SCOOP OUT THE PULP OF THE PUMPKIN.
- EXPLAIN THE PARTS OF THE PUMPKIN: STEM, PULP, SEEDS
- THIS IS A GOOD TIME TO TALK ABOUT THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE PUMPKIN:
 - PUMPKINS START AS LITTLE SEEDS THAT GET PLANTED OR BURIED IN THE GROUND – "DO YOU SEE SEEDS HERE?"
 - THEN, FROM THE SEED GROWS A TINY PLANT.
 - NEXT, THE TINY PLANT GROWS INTO A LONG VINEY PLANT, THAT THEN PRODUCES FLOWERS CALLED 'BLOSSOMS'
 - WHEN THEY ARE READY, THE PETALS OF THE BLOSSOMS FALL OFF AND THE BASE OF THE FLOWER TURNS INTO WHAT WILL GROW INTO A PUMPKIN!
 - THEN THE CYCLE STARTS OVER AGAIN, EITHER BY PLANTING THE SEEDS FROM THE PUMPKINS, OR IF A PUMPKIN IS LEFT ON THE VINE, IT WILL EVENTUALLY BREAK DOWN, LEAVING THE SEEDS IN THE SOIL TO GROW INTO A NEW PLANT!
- ONCE ALL OF THE PULP IS SCOOPED OUT, ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO PICK OUT THE SEEDS.
- ASK YOUR CHILD HOW THE SEEDS ARE THE SAME, AND THEN ASK THEM WHAT THEY NOTICE IS DIFFERENT ABOUT EACH SEED.
- TRY SORTING THE SEEDS BY CHARACTERISTICS, SUCH AS LARGE SEEDS, AND SMALLER SEEDS.
- ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO CONTINUE TO PLAY WITH THE PULP AND SEEDS. SENSORY PLAY IS AN AMAZING WAY FOR CHILDREN TO LEARN ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND THEM, AND IT IS ALSO VERY CALMING WHICH ENCOURAGES EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING.

We'd love to see photos of your at home learning! Tag us on Facebook and Instagram with hashtag #MeritSchoolAtHome

