

#5.1 - Vegetables



Big Ideas

Here are some big ideas about things that grow that you can help toddlers explore:

- We can grow vegetables.
- Vegetables are good to eat.
- Vegetables come in different sizes, shapes, colors and textures.



Materials to Collect and Make

Featured Books

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss, illustrated by Crockett Johnson (+BB)

The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter (+BB)

Mother Goose Books

Key: (BB) – Available in Board Book only
(+BB) – Also available in Board Book

Note: See the **Book List** section for additional books that can be used if some of the featured books are unavailable and as supplemental books to read with children.

Books to Make

We Can Grow Vegetables (See Attachment: [We Can Grow Vegetables](#))

Storytelling Figures

- Storytelling figures (felt or magnetic) for the book, [The Carrot Seed](#) (A Story a Month)
- Storytelling figures (felt or magnetic) for the book, [The Tale of Peter Rabbit](#) (A Story a Month)

Additional Materials

- Packet of carrot seeds
- Small, clear plastic self-closing bag
- Raw vegetables such as potatoes, carrots with tops, lettuce, cabbage, radish with tops, onions, tomatoes, bell pepper
- Vegetable cards – 2 sets
- Feely bag or box
- Pictures of vegetables, including vegetables that are growing
- Beanbags

Note: Choose raw vegetables that can be used in the kitchen for preparing a meal for the children. Involve the cook in preparing vegetable soup for you and the children.



Book List

*Featured Books

**The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss, illustrated by Crockett Johnson

**The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter

Humpty Dumpty and Other Rhymes by Iona Opie and illustrated by Rosemary Wells

Little Boy Blue and Other Rhymes by Iona Opie and illustrated by Rosemary Wells

My First Real Mother Goose Board Book by Blanche Fisher Wright



Reading Books with Toddlers

Note: Review the section in **Curriculum Tips and Techniques** on Reading Books with Children, for suggestions on how to use books with children.

Benchmarks: 4.5.C Shows enjoyment of books and stories
6.1.C Gains an understanding of basic concepts and relationships

Book: *The Carrot Seed* (OT)

First Reading of *The Carrot Seed*

- Open a packet of carrot seeds and pour them into a small, clear self-closing plastic bag. Include the seed packet in the bag so that children can see the picture of carrots.
- Have a bunch of carrots with tops in a container such as a bowl.
- Invite children to join you to hear a story about growing carrots.
- Show children the plastic bag with carrot seeds and allow them to hold and examine the bag.
- Invite children to say what is in the bag and to name the vegetable pictured on the seed packet. If children are unable to identify seeds and carrots, say, "These are carrot seeds. You can plant them and grow carrots like these."
- Show children the bunch of carrots with tops. Allow each child to hold a carrot.
- Invite children to name the vegetable. Encourage them to tell you what they know about carrots.
- Collect the bag with seeds and the carrots and put them away.
- Show the cover of the book to the children and say, "I'm going to read this book, *The Carrot Seed*, to you.
- Point to the seed and say, "It's tiny like the seeds we saw in the bag."
- Show each page and either read or tell the story, depending on the attention span of the children in your group.

Second Reading of *The Carrot Seed*

- Take the plastic bag with carrot seeds, the bunch of carrots and a small plastic watering can to the book area. Keep the watering can out of sight until the end of the story.
- Invite children to examine the bag of seeds and the carrots.
- Collect the bag and carrots and put them out of sight of the children.
- Show the cover, say the title, and read the story with the children.
- Show the children the watering can and invite them to take turns holding and examining the can. Encourage them to discuss their experiences with watering cans.

Third Reading of *The Carrot Seed*

- Invite children to join you in the book area to help you read the story, *The Carrot Seed*.
- Show the cover, read the title, and say to children, "I need you to help me read this book."
- Begin to read the words on a page, leaving off the last part of the sentence. For example, on page one, read, "A little boy planted a _____", pause and encourage children to say "carrot seed."
- Show the second page and read, "His mother said _____," and allow children to use their own words to say what mother said.
- Be selective in the pages you choose to leave off the words. You will want to read all of the words on the pages where the children probably won't remember the words.
- Thank the children for helping you read the story.

Book: *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter (OT)

First Reading of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

- Collect small stuffed rabbits and place them in a basket.
- Say to children, "I have a basket of rabbits that I am taking to the book area. I'm going to read a story about a rabbit whose name is Peter."
- Invite children to hold the rabbits. Encourage them to describe how the rabbits feel (soft). Which one do they think is Peter Rabbit?
- Show the cover of the book to the children and say, "The name of this book is *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and this is Peter Rabbit."
- Consider telling the story, rather than reading it because of the length.

Note: *If you do not have enough rabbits for each child in the story group, take only one rabbit to the book area. Allow each child a brief time to hold the rabbit, then put it away until the end of the story.*

Retelling of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

Once upon a time there were four little rabbits (point to each rabbit as you say the name); Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail and Peter. They lived with their Mother, Mrs. Rabbit, under the root of a big tree.

One morning their Mother said, "You may go out and play, but don't go into Mr. McGregor's garden." Flopsy, Mopsy and Cotton-tail went outside and began to pick blackberries.

But Peter ran straight to Mr. McGregor's garden and squeezed under the gate. He began to eat beans, lettuce and radishes. Then Peter met Mr. McGregor who began to chase him. As he was running from Mr. McGregor, Peter lost both of his shoes and then the big buttons on his jacket got caught in a net.

Peter managed to wiggle out of his jacket. He ran into the tool shed and jumped into a water can to hide from Mr. McGregor. Peter sneezed; "Kerchoo" and Mr. McGregor heard him and began to chase him again.

Peter ran and ran and was so tired. He saw a mouse and a cat, but they couldn't help him get out of the garden. Then he saw the gate and squeezed under it and ran home.

Mr. McGregor hung up Peter's jacket and shoes for a scarecrow to scare the birds away. Peter's Mother wondered, "What has Peter done with his jacket and shoes?"

Peter didn't feel very well that night, so his Mother put him to bed with some hot tea. Flopsy, Mopsy and Cotton-tail had bread, milk and blackberries for supper.

Second Reading of *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

- Collect some of the vegetables named in the story.
- Place the vegetables in a covered container and keep the container out of sight until the end of the story.
- Say to children, "I'm going to the book area to read a story about a naughty rabbit named Peter who got into Mr. McGregor's vegetable garden."
- Show the cover and say the title of the book.
- Read or tell the story to the children.
- Bring out the container and say to children, "There are some vegetables in here that Peter found in Mr. McGregor's garden. What do you think they are?"
- Acknowledge what children say. For example, say, "Jenny says she thinks there are beans in here. Phillip says he thinks there are carrots in here. Let's open up the container and see if they are right."
- Open up the container and invite children to look at its contents.
- Take out one vegetable at a time and invite children to name it and discuss what they know about it. Does their grandfather grow it? Their mother cook it? They eat it?
- Invite children to hold and examine the vegetables.
- Call their attention to differences in color, shape, and size for example.

Book: *We Can Grow Vegetables*

First Reading of *We Can Grow Vegetables (YT & OT)* (See Attachment: [We Can Grow Vegetables](#))

- Collect two vegetables such as carrots with tops and potatoes and place in bowl.
- Say to children, "I have something special in this bowl which I'm taking to the book area."
- Invite children to name the vegetables and examine them. Encourage children to discuss what they know about the vegetables.
- Put the vegetables away.
- Read the book with the children.
- Review the book by going back through each page and inviting children to name the vegetables on the page.

Second Reading of *We Can Grow Vegetables*

- Read the book with the children.
- Review by reading part of the sentence on a page and inviting children to complete it. For example, read page 1, "We can grow..." and encourage children to say "carrots."



**Language
and
Cognitive
Materials
and
Experiences**

Benchmark: 4.5.C Shows enjoyment of books and stories

Planned Experience: Storytelling (OT)

[The Carrot Seed](#) (A Story a Month)

[The Tale of Peter Rabbit](#) (A Story a Month)

How to begin:

- Make either felt or magnetic storytelling figures for the story.
- Read the book with children several times so they are familiar with the characters and the order of events.
- Use the storytelling figures to tell the story.
- Involve children in placing figures on the storyboard when you feel they can do this..

Benchmark: 4.4.C Communicates through language

Vegetables I Like to Eat

I like corn, carrots and tomatoes,
Peas, green beans and potatoes.

Which ones do you like to eat:
Corn, carrots or tomatoes,
Peas, green beans or potatoes?

Extensions:

- Invite children to discuss which of the vegetables they like to eat.
- Have pictures of the vegetables included in the rhyme. (See Attachment: [Vegetable Cards](#))
- Hold up the appropriate picture as you say the name of each vegetable.
- Attach vegetable pictures to a paint stirrer to make a vegetable puppet.
- Give each older toddler one of the vegetable puppets and invite them to hold up their puppet when their vegetable is named.

Ten Little Carrots

(Sing to tune of "Ten Little Indians" and hold up appropriate number of fingers while counting and singing)

One little, two little, three little carrots,
Four little, five little, six little carrots.
Seven little, eight little, nine little carrots.
Ten little carrots are growing.

Extension:

- Make ten of the carrot vegetable cards, laminate or cover them with clear self-adhesive paper, and place a strip of felt or a magnetic strip on the back of each. (See Attachment: [Ten Little Carrots](#))
- Place cards one at a time on a felt or magnetic board as you sing the song.

Note: *Place the carrots in three rows to match the numbers of carrots in each line of the song. For example, place three carrots in a row as you sing the first line, three in a row for line two, four in a row for lines three and four.*

Benchmark: 4.4.C Communicates through language

Five Green Cucumbers

Five green cucumbers (5 cucumbers on board)
Growing on a vine.
Four for my friends
But this one's mine (remove 1 cucumber from board)

Four green cucumbers
Growing on a vine.
Three for my friends,
But this one's mine. (remove 1 cucumber from board)

Three green cucumbers
Growing on a vine.
Two for my friends,
But this one's mine. (remove 1 cucumber from board)

Two green cucumbers
Growing on a vine.
One for my friends,
But this one's mine. (remove 1 cucumber from board)

One green cucumber
Growing on a vine.
None for my friends,
But I'll share mine. (Return all cucumbers to board)

Note: Print *Five Green Cucumbers* (See Attachment: [Five Green Cucumbers](#)) on cardstock or heavy paper. Laminate or cover with clear self-adhesive paper and back with either a strip of felt or a magnetic strip to place on a felt or magnetic board. Place the cucumbers in a row on the board before beginning the rhyme.

Benchmark: 6.3.C Develops strategies for solving problems

Planned Experience: Vegetable Match (YT & OT)

Materials: two sets of the Vegetable Cards

How to begin:

- Make two sets of the Vegetable Cards and laminate or cover them with clear self-adhesive paper for durability. (See Attachment: [Vegetable Cards](#))
- Invite a small group of toddlers to join you at a low table or in an area on the floor that is out of the flow of traffic.
- Place one set of the cards face up and allow each child to select a card.
- Invite children to name the vegetable on their card. Help them with names they may not know.
- Say to children, "I have cards just like yours. I'm going to show you a card and ask who has a card just like mine." Show one of the cards and say, "This is a carrot. Who has a card just like mine; a card with a carrot on it?"
- Comment when a child matches your card. Say, "Yes, Jamie, your card is just like mine. Your card has a carrot on it." Encourage children to say the name of the vegetable.
- Continue the game until all of the cards have been matched.



**Self, Social
and
Emotional
Experiences**

Benchmarks: 1.3.C Demonstrates increasing sense of competence and confidence in growing abilities
1.4.C Asserts independence
3.3.C Demonstrates caring and cooperation

Planned Experience: Create a Vegetable Garden (OT)

Materials: large strip of butcher paper, pictures of vegetables cut from magazines and seed catalogs, glue in small containers, cotton swabs for spreading glue

How to begin:

- Place the butcher paper, the glue in containers, and cotton swabs on a table.
- Spread the vegetable pictures out in a pan so that children can see each one.
- Say to children, "We are going to plant a vegetable garden. Everyone will have a turn planting their favorite vegetables." Write "Our Vegetable Garden" at the top of the paper.
- Invite two children at a time to join you at the table.
- Suggest that children select their favorite vegetable to put in the vegetable garden. Comment about the vegetables children select. Say, for example, "Caleb is planting corn in the garden and Mallory is planting cabbage."
- Guide children to turn their picture face down, use the cotton swab to spread glue on the back of the picture, and place the side with glue on it onto the paper.
- Allow children to choose where to place their vegetable pictures and to select additional pictures for the garden.

Extensions:

- Consider writing under the pictures the name of the vegetables and who planted them. For example, write: Caleb's corn.
- Hang the vegetable collage on the wall at toddler's eye level.
- Invite children to join you in "reading" the names the vegetables and who planted them.



**Sensory
and Art
Materials
and
Experiences**

Benchmark: 5.2.C Develops fine motor skills

Planned Experience: Scrubbing Potatoes (YT & OT)

Materials: three or four potatoes, potato scrubber, small dishpan or tub, towel

How to begin:

- Place two or three inches of water in the pan and place the pan on a towel on a low table.
- Place the potatoes and the scrubber on the table next to the pan of water.
- Invite a child to scrub the potatoes so they will be clean for cooking.
- Remind the child to keep the water in the tub.

Benchmarks: 4.4.C Communicates through language
6.1.C Gains an understanding of basic concepts and relationships
6.3.C Develops strategies for solving problems

Planned Experience: Vegetable Feely Bag (YT & OT)

Materials: feely bag or box, vegetables such as onion, carrot, cucumber, bell pepper

	<p>How to begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite an older toddler to join you at a table or on the floor in an area that is out of the flow of traffic. • Show the child two of the vegetables; an onion and a cucumber, for example. Invite him/her to name the vegetable. If the child does not know the name of the vegetable, say, "This is a cucumber and this is an onion." Allow the child to explore and talk about the vegetable. Call attention to the way the vegetables feel and their shape and color. For example, say, "The cucumber is long and the onion is round." • Place the two vegetables in the feely bag or box. • Invite the child to put his/her hand in the bag and feel the vegetables. Say to the child, "Can you pull out the cucumber?" • Comment on what the child has done. For example, if he/she pulls out the cucumber, say, "Yes, Jared, you pulled out the cucumber." If the child pulls out the onion instead, say, "Jared, you pulled out an onion. Can you reach in again and pull out the cucumber?" <p>Extensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue this experience with two more vegetables; a carrot and a bell pepper, for example. • Extend the experience to include three vegetables if children are able to easily distinguish between two. • Adapt the experience for Young Toddlers by having them reach into the bag, pull out a vegetable and name it. <p>Note: <i>Begin with two vegetables that are quite different in shape and/or texture so that children can be successful.</i></p>
 <p>Food Experiences</p>	<p>Benchmarks: 1.3.C Demonstrates increasing sense of competence and confidence in growing abilities 1.4.C Asserts independence 5.4.C Develops self-help skills</p> <p>Planned Experience: Vegetable Tasting (OT)</p> <p>Materials: small pieces of raw vegetables such as bell pepper, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumber, small plates, napkins, dip such as Ranch dressing</p> <p>How to begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash the vegetables thoroughly, cut them into small pieces (bell pepper in strips, cucumber in slices and broccoli and cauliflower in flowerets), and place them in separate bowls. Place a small spoon in each bowl. • Place the dip in a small bowl and add a spoon that children can handle. • Invite two or three children to join you at a low table. • Give each child a plate and napkin. • Spoon one or two of each of the pieces of vegetables on your plate, describing what you are doing. Say, for example, "I'm taking bell pepper, broccoli, cauliflower and cucumber. Now I'm going to put a spoon of dip on my plate". • Invite each child to spoon at least one of the pieces of vegetables on his/her plate. Assist the children as needed. • Take a taste of one of the vegetables and comment, "I'm going to eat the cucumber first." Name each vegetable as you taste it. Say, "Sometimes I like to use a dip for my vegetables" as you dip the broccoli into the dressing. • Invite children to taste the vegetables on their plate. • Avoid forcing a child to taste the vegetables. Model and describe, but do not insist.

	<p>Extensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the children to talk about the vegetables. Which was their favorite? Do they eat any of these vegetables at home? • Allow all children who want a turn to be involved in the vegetable tasting experience. • Involve the cook in preparing vegetable soup for the children. As you and the children enjoy the soup together, call attention to the different vegetables that are in the soup. <p>Note: <i>Make sure that the vegetable pieces do not pose a choking hazard.</i></p> <p>Note: <i>Check for food allergies before offering new foods to children.</i></p> <p>Note: <i>Caregivers and children should always wash hands before participating in a food experience.</i></p>
 <p><u>Movement,</u> <u>Music and</u> <u>Gross</u> <u>Motor</u> <u>Experiences</u></p>	<p>Benchmark: 5.1.C Develops gross motor skills 6.1.C Gains an understanding of basic concepts and relationships</p> <p>Planned Experience: Shake It! (YT & OT)</p> <p>Materials: clear plastic water or drink bottles and vegetable seeds and dried beans</p> <p>How to begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place vegetable seeds and dried beans in individual bottles. • Superglue the caps on securely and cover with strong clear tape. • Place three or four of the bottles on a shelf where children can easily see and select them. • Observe as a child experiments with the bottle. • Join the child, select a bottle and begin to sing the following song to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Suit actions to the words <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Shake, shake, shake that bottle.</i> <i>Shake it if you can.</i> <i>We can shake it, then we’ll stop.</i> <i>Then we’ll start again.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Shake, shake, shake that bottle,</i> <i>Shake it if you can.</i> <i>Shake it loud, then shake it soft.</i> <i>Then we’ll start again.</i></p> <p>Extensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the shakers as you and the children move and dance to music. <p>Note: <i>Encourage other children to join you in the experience.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Benchmarks: 3.3.C Demonstrates caring and cooperation 4.3.C Responds to verbal and non-verbal communication</p> <p>Planned Experience: Pass the Beanbag (OT)</p> <p>Materials: 2 or 3 identical beanbags</p>

	<p>How to begin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place the beanbags on the floor in an area that is out of the flow of traffic. • Pick up one of the beanbags and say, “I wonder what we can do with these beanbags.” • Allow children who join you to explore the beanbags. Encourage them to say and demonstrate what they can do with beanbags. • Collect the beanbags and say, “We’re going to play a game with just one of the beanbags” and put the other beanbags out of sight. • Invite the children to form a circle with you by holding hands, then ask children to drop hands. • Say, “I’m going to pass the beanbag to John. John you pass the beanbag to Audrey, and Audrey will pass the beanbag to Leandra.” • Guide the children through the process of passing the beanbag to each other as you say or sing, “Pass the beanbag to your friend, Audrey. Pass the beanbag to your friend Leandra. Pass the beanbag to your friend, Ms. Brown.” <p>Extensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vary the game by adding the words “Stop” and “Go.” Say to the children, “When I say ‘Stop’, hold the beanbag until I say ‘Go’.” Make sure each child has a turn holding the beanbag when you say “Stop.” • Add variety by playing music as you pass the beanbag to each other. • Make a Sensory Bottle with beans and play “Pass the Bean Bottle” with the children. The bottle allows the children to see the beans.
 <p><u>Transition Times</u></p>	<p>One Little Tomato, Oh, So Red</p> <p>Materials: pictures of real tomatoes backed with felt or magnetic strips, felt or magnetic board (See Attachment: One Little Tomato)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say the following rhyme as you take a tomato from the board and touch a child’s head with it to send the child to the next activity such as washing hands or getting a jacket: <p style="text-align: center;">One little tomato, Oh, so red, Fell “Kerplunk” on Susan’s head.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt the rhyme as follows to send more than one child at a time to the next activity: <p style="text-align: center;">Two little tomatoes, Oh, so red, Fell “Kerplunk” on Susan and Andrew’s head.</p> <p>Note: <i>Adapt other finger plays previously listed as transitions to move children from one activity or place to another.</i></p>
 <p><u>Family Experiences</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite families to collect and bring to the center magazines or catalogs that contain pictures of vegetables. • Share with families the Vegetable Garden that children created. • Share with families some of the vegetables children ate during the food experience.