

Water play while preparing food

Rationale:

Your child learns best through play, and through exploring his environment. You can make a simple everyday task like washing fruits and vegetables a playful learning opportunity for your child.

Age range information

3-6 years

What you need

For this activity, you involve your child in washing the fruits and vegetables after you bring them home from the market or supermarket. A variety of fruits and vegetables will give him more opportunity to explore. Other than that, just follow your regular routine for washing your fresh produce and allow a bit of extra time for your child to help.

How to do it

Fill the sink or a tub with clean cool water for washing your fruits and vegetables. Make sure your child can see and reach. Find him a safe stool or stepladder to stand on if you need to.

Show your child how to wash the fruit or vegetable by tipping it into the water and gently rubbing the skin with your hands. Take it out of the water and dry it.

Once your child has the hang of it, you can let him explore. Watch what he does and introduce words by talking and asking questions. For example:

- Talk about colours. Ask him to name the colours of the fruits and vegetables.
- Talk about shape, size and texture. Compare things – for example, ‘Which tomato is bigger?’, ‘This broccoli is green, the same as this cucumber’.
- Explore floating and sinking. Ask your child to guess whether something will float or sink before he puts it in the water.
- Talk about which parts of the plant the produce comes from. Spinach is a leaf vegetable, radishes and carrots are roots, and tomatoes are fruits (even if they don’t taste sweet!).

Adapting for children of different ages

Be aware of the interests and attention span of your young child. If he just enjoys splashing in the sink, give him a few firm pieces of produce (like carrots or apples) to wash and handle, and then take over when he has had enough.

You can challenge your older child with more complex questions while he washes your fruit and vegetables for you – for example, ‘Why do plants need leaves?’ You can also just use the time to chat about your favourite fruits and the meals you are planning to make with the produce.



Recommended Reads by the National Library Board

Recommended Reads

- [Water play the safe way: a parent and child guide to staying safe in and around the water](#)
- [Near water](#)
- [Pool](#)