



## Preschool Home Visit Learning Plan Sweet Potato

### Harvest Objectives

Families will describe the outside and inside of the sweet potato.  
Families will identify that sweet potatoes grow underground.  
Families will taste a piece of sweet potato.



### Harvest Vocab

Outside      Inside      Firm      Smooth      Vegetable

### Materials & Prep

Sweet Potato  
Brown paper bags  
Paper/Chalkboard/Whiteboard and pen/chalk/whiteboard markers  
Knife & Cutting Board  
Pictures of fruits or vegetables (optional)  
Images (included at end of learning plan)  
Sweet Potato fries—frozen, or optional recipe below (enough for everyone to taste small  $\frac{1}{4}$  pieces)  
Taste Test Chart  
Stickers (or small Post-It Notes)  
Taste Test Extension supplies (optional)

### Literature Connections

Dr. Strong and Sweet Potatoes by Yori Takeda  
The Hungry Pua'a and the Sweet Sweet Potato by Leonard J. Villanueva  
Sweet Potato Pie by Anne Rockwell

### Warm Up

- In order to engage the family and activate prior knowledge, place whole sweet potatoes in brown paper bags (one per bag). Pass the bags around and have the family feel the sweet potato, without looking and to think of a describing word. Ask them what it feels like and record their responses in a list under the word “Outside.” Then take out the sweet potato and ask the family what it looks like and continue to record responses.
- Write the word “Inside.” Then cut one sweet potato in half. Pass it around and ask the family what they observe and record their responses. What does it look like? Feel like? Smell like?
- Finally, ask them, “What do you think this is? Have they ever seen one before?”

### Explain

- Share with the family the word “sweet potato” and write it on top of the warm up list. If nobody mentioned the word smooth in the warm-up, share that now along with other examples. Explain that botanically it is a vegetable (there are no seeds inside). What other vegetables can they think of, without seeds inside? (Carrots, lettuce, asparagus, broccoli,



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etc.) If possible, put out pictures of fruits and vegetables and allow the family to think about which ones have no seeds inside.

- Describe how sweet potatoes grow (underground), why we should eat sweet potato (healthy eyes, healthy brains, healthy immune system, and helps digestion) and for each reason come up with an action to help the family remember. For example, for healthy immune system they can shake one finger while saying “no” and then put a hand on their forehead while saying “fever.” Also explain how to pick a good sweet potato (it should be firm, dry and have smooth skin). Please see the next pages for images to share with the children.

### Taste Test

- Using the sweet potato fries (optional recipe below), cut quarter pieces for everyone to taste.
- Create another chart that says “I Like” with a smiley face and “I Don’t Like” with a sad face. Give each family member a sticker, and ask them to vote by placing it in a column. Count the number of people that like sweet potato, and don’t like sweet potato and write that number in each column.
- Review with the family how the sweet potato grows and the health benefits.

### Toddler Tasting

- To make sweet potato baby food puree, pre-heat oven to 375° F. Rinse the sweet potato, prick it with a fork and bake it for about 45 minutes, until it feels soft. Cool briefly, then cut open and scoop out the soft flesh. Allow to cool and enjoy!

### Taste Test Extension

**Rule of 15** “Put a food on the table at least 15 times to see if a child will accept it.” Susan B. Roberts, Tufts University Nutritionist and Co-author of Feeding Your Child for Lifelong Health

For an additional tasting experience, prepare this recipe with the family having each member help in an age-appropriate manner.

#### **Baked Sweet Potato Fries** (for about 4 servings)

Adapted from: <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/baked-sweet-potato-sticks-2/>

1 medium sweet potatoes	Mixing bowls and spoons
1 tablespoon oil (olive, or other)	Knife
¼ teaspoon paprika or nutmeg (optional)	Cutting Board
Salt, to taste	Baking sheet
1 plate (per person)	Oven mitt



1. All family members should wash their hands.
  - a. Wet hands with warm water
  - b. Apply hand wash (soap)



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- c. Lather and wash for AT LEAST 15 seconds (the length of the ABC song)
  - d. Rinse both sides of hands with water all the way up to the wrists
  - e. Dry hands and shut off faucet with towel
2. Rinse sweet potatoes by putting them under running water and rubbing all surfaces to remove any soil. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
3. Demonstrate how to cut the sweet potatoes to an older family member. Show them how to hold the knife handle correctly, and how to keep their fingers out of the way by rolling their fingers under to their fingertips are protected.
4. Demonstrate and then have the children help lightly grease a baking sheet. In a large bowl, have the family measure and then mix olive oil and paprika/nutmeg. Have them add the potato sticks, and stir.
5. Have everyone place three to five fries on the prepared baking sheet and sprinkle on salt.
6. Bake 40 minutes in the preheated oven. Allow to cool, serve and enjoy!

## How do Sweet Potatoes grow?



Sweet Potatoes like very warm weather. They need 150 frost free days to develop. They grow underground as part of the root of the plant.



## Why should we eat Sweet Potatoes?

### Vitamin A



Healthy eyes

### Vitamin C



Healthy immune system  
(prevents colds, heals cuts)

### Vitamin B6



Healthy brains

### Fiber



Healthy digestion,  
cleans out your system