

# Veggie Mash-Up



## What You Do

**Background:** Mashing vegetables and talking about their characteristics gives children an opportunity to explore a variety of tastes and textures as they practice important conversational skills. While very young infants are not developmentally ready to taste a variety of foods, they can still be included in the experience through conversation, observing, and exploring safe cooking utensils.

**Materials:** large mixing bowl; knife; cutting board; large spoon; child-sized spoons; vegetable brush and peeler; saucepan with lid or steamer; blender, food processor, food mill, or potato masher

**Ingredients:** vegetables for mashing, e.g., carrots, squash, peas, yams, pumpkin; water for steaming

**Directions:** Wash vegetables and peel if needed. Cut vegetables into small chunks. In a pot, add an inch of water to the pot and bring to a boil. Next, add the vegetables and cover the pot. Steam vegetables until they are very tender, checking frequently and adding water if the water level gets too low. Drain and purée in food processor until completely smooth (about 1 minute). Or, use a potato masher to mash the soft vegetables. If necessary, add a small amount of water to make the purée smoother.

- 1. Before and after cooking, ask the children to wash their hands or help children to wash their hands, as appropriate. Clean countertops. Include the children in the setup and cleanup process if they are able, e.g., washing and drying utensils, wiping the tables, and putting supplies away.**

“We’re going to have delicious mashed carrots for lunch. They taste wonderful and are so good for our bodies.”

- 3. Invite children to assist you with a developmentally appropriate task, e.g. scrubbing vegetables with a vegetable brush, pouring water into the saucepan, using the potato masher, or stirring the mashed vegetables. Talk about what they are doing.**

“Nathan, can you use the potato masher to mash up the carrots? That’s right. You’re doing it! Look how mushy they’re getting! They don’t even look like carrots anymore.”

- 4. Encourage children to feed themselves as appropriate. As children are enjoying the mashed vegetables, talk about the color, texture, taste, and smell. Use rich vocabulary and encourage them to share their own ideas.**

“These mashed carrots taste good. What else do you notice about them? Yes, they’re orange. What vegetable would you choose if you wanted a purple lunch?”

# LL46

## Tasting and Preparing Food

**Primary Objective: 10**  
**Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills**  
**a. Engages in conversations**

Related Objectives: 1c, 2a, 7a, 8b, 9a, 29

### Including All Children

- Make sure each child is seated comfortably at the table and can reach any tools.
- Stabilize the bowl with a nonslip material.
- Offer adapted utensils and dishes.
- If children are beginning to speak in sentences, give them plenty of opportunities to talk. Be sure to model the correct use of English, but do not correct their grammar.\*\*
- Invite English-language learners’ family members to help the children follow the steps while speaking his or her home language.\*\*

## Teaching Sequence

RED	<b>For very young infants, talk with the child about what you and the other children are doing.</b> “Lydia is using the potato masher. She’s moving it up and down, up and down.” <b>During his bottle feeding, talk about the way the milk tastes as he eats.</b> “Kip, your milk is warm and sweet.”
RED	<b>Talk about what is happening as the child tastes and explores the vegetables. Respond to any attempts the child makes to communicate.</b> “Winsome, you said, ‘mmm.’ Do you like your carrots?”
ORANGE	
ORANGE	<b>As the child explores the food, engage him in a brief conversation. Use simple words and phrases and prompt him to respond.</b> Child: “Pea.” Teacher: “Yes, Henry, these are peas. I put them in the blender and now they’re all mashed up.”
ORANGE	<b>When the child initiates a conversation, build on the words he uses. Rephrase what he says and then add more.</b> Child: “Beets purple.” Teacher: “You said they’re purple. You’re right. I think they might also be squishy. How do your beets taste?”
YELLOW	
YELLOW	<b>Engage the child in a conversation about the food she is eating. Ask questions and make comments. Offer prompts that help the child to stay on topic.</b> Teacher: “Your peas look tasty! Do they taste good?” Child: “They’re mushy.” Teacher: They are soft and mushy. My peas taste sweet. What do your peas taste like?”
GREEN	
GREEN	<b>Engage the child in a conversation about his vegetables. Observe if the child is able to maintain a conversation for at least three exchanges.</b> Teacher: “Caitlin, I see that you didn’t finish your carrots.” Child: “I don’t like carrots.” Teacher: “What don’t you like about them?” Child: “They taste icky.” Teacher: “What vegetable would you like for me to mash up next time?” Child: “I want avocados.”

See *The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, Volume 3: Objectives for Development & Learning* for the progression of development beyond the green colored band for this objective and dimension.

### Questions to Guide Your Observations

- In what ways did the child engage with you in a back-and-forth exchange? (10a)
- How did was the child able to feed herself? (1c)
- How did the child grasp the utensils? (7a)
- Was the child able to communicate his ideas about the food? If so, how? (9a)

### Related LearningGames®

- 65. Matching Colors