

PLAYING WITH PUMPKIN PUREE

A Satisfying Sensory Discovery

Our curious two-year-olds dive into the sensory wonderland of pumpkin purée mixed with seeds. The table is set with trays of bright orange pumpkin, filled to the brim with squishy goodness and slippery seeds. The teacher, smiling at the organized chaos about to unfold, cheerfully announces, “Today, we’re going to scoop and squish pumpkin purée! God gave us senses to explore how things feel. We get to squish the gooey inside of a pumpkin and scoop the seeds into our bowls.”

The toddlers’ eyes widened with anticipation. Some are eager to jump right in, hands at the ready, while others eye the slimy concoction with a mix of curiosity and caution. Noah is the first brave youngster to pat the curious gooey substance. One by one, more little hands dive in, and soon the room is filled with the sounds of tapping and scooping as each child tries to spoon the pumpkin seeds into their bowl.

While the children are fully engrossed in the sensory experience, they are also developing important fine motor skills. Scooping up the purée and seeds with their hands or small spoons helps build the strength and coordination in their hands, which will eventually support tasks like holding pencils or utensils. The texture of the pumpkin purée provides a wonderful opportunity for them to practice grasping and manipulating objects—essential skills for their growing independence.

As the squishing continues, the teacher encourages the children to look for the seeds buried in the purée. “Look at all these seeds! God put them in the pumpkin so that more pumpkins can grow,” she explains.

Caleb, along with his classmates, clenches his spoon in a fist and begins scooping up seeds, plopping them into the bowl beside him. Sophia carefully places her seeds in a bowl with a tap, tap, tap. This act of sorting seeds from the purée strengthens problem-solving skills and teaches the basics of categorization, which are important cognitive skills for young children.



And then there's the inevitable "taste test." Ruby, with the sly determination of a two-year-old, decides that perhaps pumpkin purée is meant to be eaten and brings a spoonful towards her mouth. Ms. Nyah, quick on her feet, intervenes with a lighthearted, "Uh-oh! This pumpkin is for playing, not eating!" Ruby's cheeky grin proves that she enjoys using more than just her sense of touch to experience this pumpkin activity. This humorous exchange reinforces the value of listening and following directions—key skills at this stage of development.

The sensory nature of this activity also provides a great opportunity for the toddlers to explore cause and effect. They learn that if they squeeze the pumpkin, it oozes between their fingers, or if they press down hard, the seeds pop out. This exploration helps them develop cognitive skills, as they make connections between their actions and the results.



Bringing It All Together:

As the children wash their hands (and arms, and faces), they've not only had a blast with the pumpkin purée, but they've also developed key motor skills, practiced problem solving skills, and learned that even in the simplest of activities, God made all things for our enjoyment which is essential for their understanding of the world around them.