

OCTOBER 2014

# Shape NC Connection



Fall into Shape!



## What's Inside...

This quarter's newsletter will help you welcome autumn with activity and adventure. Features include seasonal learning opportunities and games for all ages, a classroom lesson on apples, a holiday health challenge, information on fall gardening, a healthy fall recipe for your classroom, and more! Before you fall in, please join the Shape community in applauding one of the Hub Local Partnerships, Smart Start of Buncombe County on their achievement. Congratulations Buncombe!

## Buncombe County Receives RWJF Culture of Health Prize from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in Recognition of Outstanding Efforts to Help People Lead Healthier Lives

Buncombe County is one of six winners of the 2014 *RWJF Culture of Health Prize* awarded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The prize honors communities that are harnessing the collective power of leaders, partners, and stakeholders to help residents live healthier lives. Buncombe County will receive a cash prize of \$25,000 in recognition of its commitment to building a "Culture of Health."



"This work celebrates numerous cross-sectored, public/private partnerships, and innovative community efforts to improve the health of our residents," said Gibbie Harris, Health Director at Buncombe County Health and Human Services. "Through a systems approach, we have broken down the silos that traditionally exist in social change initiatives," said Paul Vest, CEO and President of YMCA of Western North Carolina. Smart Start of Buncombe County and Shape NC played a role in this collaborative effort, by leading one Early Childhood Community Health Improvement Process Committee around high-quality care, working with a local Shape Stakeholders group, and Buncombe County's Innovative Approaches. A community event celebrating the award was held on September 26 at UNC-Asheville. Smart Start used the opportunity to collect survey data about

community health needs from attendees as part of the larger community engagement efforts to ensure all children are healthy and thriving by the end of third grade. "*RWJF Culture of Health Prize* winners are leading some of the nation's most innovative efforts to build a national Culture of Health," said Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, RWJF president and CEO. "These communities are inspiring examples of what is possible when all sectors work together so that every resident has the opportunity to live a long and healthy life."

Learn more about the *RWJF Culture of Health Prize* and watch a video profile of Buncombe County and the other prize winners at [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).

Fall is the perfect season to be physically active and enjoy the great outdoors. It's also a good opportunity to try seasonal fruits and vegetables such as apples and winter squashes.



## Autumn Adventures

Take the family or classroom outside for a seasonal activity. Check out the events page on [www.VisitNC.com](http://www.VisitNC.com) for festivals, tours, etc. in your region! Here are some examples:

### Pinehurst and Sandhills Region

- Canady Farm Corn Maze in Hope Mills, NC. Canady Farm is open for the fall season. Get physical in the 6-acre corn maze or let the children pick out fresh, seasonal produce to cook as a class or take home to enjoy with their families. Also experience the educational nature trail! Group rates are available.

### Piedmont Region

- 48th Annual Autumn Leaves Festival. Mount Airy's premier fall festival occurs in its historic downtown. The festival showcases the area's music heritage such as old time, bluegrass and gospel music plus unique arts & crafts of more than 170 craftsmen. A great opportunity to walk around outside!

### Coast and Inner Coastal Plane

- Hubb's Corn Maze. Get active on the five miles of trails include three different and unique mazes. Other activities include hay rides, barrel train, giant slide, sand box, fire pit and toddler town with a maze.

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## Autumn Activities for Home or School

### Infants and Toddlers

- Allow infants 3-6 months to lie on a blanket outside and feel the breeze on their face and watch the clouds. Help them to touch the bark of the trees, the grass, the leaves, etc. and name the items as you go.
- Allow infants 6-12 months to explore their surroundings while talking to them and describing the things you see (rough, smooth, bumpy) and hear (chime, rustle, bark). At 10-12 months they will have object permanence. Gather natural objects (a smooth rock, a dandelion, a pinecone, a twig, etc) and cover them with a cloth. Say "Where did it go?" and watch as he or she delights in pulling away the cloth and discovering the treasure underneath.
- Blow bubbles for infants and toddlers outside.
- Sing and play *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* with your 1-2 year olds. Sit across from them and take their hands. Rock with them back and forth while singing the song. Try different words like bounce, wiggle and sway.
- Help toddlers explore different kinds of pumpkins. One activity to try only takes pumpkins and aluminum foil. You can wrap various small pumpkins with aluminum foil and invite them to unwrap them. You can then ask questions and help them sort, count and describe. They can then use new sheets of aluminum foil to wrap them back up. Allow their imaginations to take hold! The pumpkins are wrapped gifts, drums, etc.
- Take the toddlers outside for a nature walk. Help them to describe things they see, hear, touch and smell.

### Preschoolers, ages 3-5 years

- Enjoy a scenic bike ride or walk on a bike path or greenway. This is an opportunity to be active, but also to explore nature. Ask preschool-age children questions such as "What colors do you see?" or say "I'm feeling the wet grass," or "I can hear the branches blowing in the wind."
- Rake the leaves and allow the children to play in them (remove sticks to avoid injuries). Take the opportunity to explain why leaves are important (ex: leaves make food for the tree with sunlight and water and they give us shade when we play outside).



- Create a pumpkin toss or pumpkin bowling. Set up a target for the children to hit. Remember, games like these should be challenging, but also allow children to be successful. Try different pumpkins and different distances.
- Do a Halloween Harvest Run- set up a relay with the kids. Fill large containers with sunflower seeds or bird feed. Have smaller, clear containers at the opposite end. Kids fill up their cup with seeds and race to dump it in the empty container. They sprint back to the start and hand-off the cup to the next person. The goal is to have the children do it as fast as they can, no one wins or loses. As an extra challenge, give the kids an over-sized soup ladle instead of a cup. Don't worry if seeds spill, that's part of the fun and the birds will eat them later!

Remember

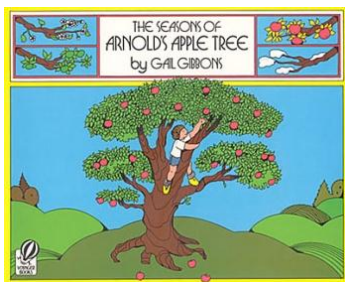
**Too easy= boredom**  
**Too hard= frustration**

<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Articles/Physical-Activity/Fall-for-physical-activity.aspx#.VCG8CPIdU68>

## Farm to Preschool Apple Discovery

- Talk about where apples come from. Explain that they grow from seeds into trees and then the farmers pick the apples in the fall. Use pictures to show them each step.
- Talk to the children about the different ways to eat an apple: whole, sliced, in a fruit salad or dipped in yogurt and what healthy foods are made from apples: applesauce, apple juice, baked apples, apple butter, etc.

- Read a book about apples, such as *I am an Apple* by Jean Marzollo or *The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree* by Gail Gibbons and/or show pictures of an apple tree in four seasons. Have the children identify the season in each picture.



- Have an apple taste test with different types of apples: golden delicious, granny smith, gala, fuji, etc. Have the children guess how the apples will look when you cut them open and what they will taste like. Ask questions as they try them: "How do the apples taste similar? How do they taste different?", "How could we sort these apples?", "Why do you think apples are good for us to eat?", etc. NOTE: Be aware of choking hazards and do not cut apple pieces too small. Serve large slices.

- Find the materials for this apple lesson here:

[http://www.ourcommunityyourkids.org/media/2981/Farm%20to%20PreK\\_Sept09\\_Apples.pdf](http://www.ourcommunityyourkids.org/media/2981/Farm%20to%20PreK_Sept09_Apples.pdf)

## All About Apples!

Apples contain no fat, sodium or cholesterol and are a good source of fiber and antioxidants. Fiber helps you maintain a healthy weight and lowers your risk of diabetes and heart disease. Antioxidants fight cancer and other diseases.

It takes about 36 apples to create one gallon of apple cider. No wonder, a glass of apple cider (8 oz) has 26 grams of sugar! Choose an apple instead which has much less sugar and is slower to process than the sugar found in cider or juice.

Apples can be stored in a dark, cool pantry or refrigerator up to four months! However, fruits and vegetables have a set amount of nutrients when harvested and lose more each day. So, the fresher the better!

<http://farmflavor.com/10-fun-facts-about-apples/>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/fiber/art-20043983>

<http://www.thesweetbeet.com/vegetables-nutrients/>





## Use Fallen Leaves

After the kids have played in the piles of leaves, consider using them instead of carting them to the side of the road! Turn these piles of raked leaves into leaf mold- a great substance for creating nutrient-rich soil for your garden. It is also beneficial to add to a potting mix for potted plants.

What is leaf mold? Leaf mold is a term for leaves that have fully decomposed over a long time. The leaf mold has lots of things in it to help support a healthy garden. The two best ways to use leaf mold are to either a) mix it in with your planting/potting soil to make a healthy soil for your plants or b) top your planting beds with it so it can act as a fertilizer/mulch. In fact, leaf mold spread around vegetables can prevent them from drying out during a very hot and dry summer. The leaf mold holds 500 times its weight in water! <http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/basic-leaf-mold>

### How to make leaf mold:

- Put the leaves in large lawn bags and wet the leaves with water. Poke several holes in the bag to allow airflow.
- Pile the bags in the corner of the yard.
- Leave for 1-3 years depending on climate and how quickly the leaves decompose. Fluff mixture each year.
- If trash bags are unattractive in your space, create a wire mold "cage" (about 3'x3') from stakes and chicken wire.

Hint!

To speed up the leaves' rate of decomposition, run a lawn mower over the pile a few times before putting them into the cage or trash bag.

To allow all of the leaves to decompose at the same rate, turn the pile occasionally.

To make sure the leaf mold is healthy, do not use leaves that have been sitting on the side of the road or leaves that come from yards treated with chemicals.



## Visit a Pumpkin Patch or Pick Apples

When we think of autumn we often think of pumpkins- pumpkin snacks, pumpkin decorations, pumpkin carving, etc. An enjoyable way to get outside and add some physical activity to your day is to visit a local pumpkin patch! There are often fun activities to do as a group and the children will enjoy a change of scenery. Some patches offer hayrides, slides, hay bales to climb on or animals to interact with and feed. Take a look at the links below to find a pumpkin patch in your area of North Carolina.

Try apple picking as well. There are many apple orchards in North Carolina and offer a great opportunity to be active with the children and teach them about healthy eating. Plus it's fun!

### Pumpkin Patches:

<http://www.pumpkinpatchesandmore.org/NCwpumpkins.php>

### Pick Apples:

<http://www.pickyourown.org/NC.htm>

### Other Fall Activities:

<http://www.wral.com/lifestyles/goaskmom/page/8315262/>



## Holiday Health Challenge

This holiday season, the only thing that should be “stuffed” is the turkey! Many Americans gain between 1 and 5 pounds each holiday season. While it may not sound like much, most people never manage to lose these extra pounds.

Instead of allowing the weight to accumulate, North

Carolinians are invited to join the ninth annual *Eat Smart, Move More, Maintain, don't gain! Holiday Challenge*. Rather than focusing on trying to lose weight, **this free seven-week challenge provides participants with tips, tricks and ideas to help maintain their weight throughout the holiday season. The challenge will begin Nov. 17 and run through Dec. 31.**

How to join:

1. Sign-up at [www.esmmweighless.com](http://www.esmmweighless.com).
2. Click on the Holiday Challenge tab, then click 'Sign Up Today'.

Once you join you will have access to:

- A calorie counter, a food log and an activity log to track your progress.
  - Seven free weekly emailed newsletters with tips to : Manage holiday stress, Fit physical activity into your day, Cook quick and healthy meals
  - Daily tips with quick and easy ways to include a new healthy strategy.
- Healthy holiday recipes – that are delicious too!

In 2013, more than 6,283 people from 48 different states and Canada took part of the challenge. At the end of the program, 90% percent reported maintaining their weight. In addition, 23% percent reported losing 3 to 5+ pounds. **Over 99% of participants said they were very likely to somewhat likely to participate in the Holiday Challenge next year.**

The *Eat Smart, Move More, Maintain, don't gain! Holiday Challenge* is a part of *Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less*, an online 15-week weight management program using strategies proven to work for weight loss and weight maintenance. *Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less* was developed by NC State University and the NC Division of Public Health. Find out more at [www.esmmweighless.com](http://www.esmmweighless.com).

## Holiday Eating Tips

Here are a few tips from Registered Dietitians at Mayo Clinic to help you enjoy the season and avoid holiday weight gain:

- **Take it a day at a time.** Strive to balance out your calories over the day. If you'll be consuming extra calories at a social event in the evening, make adjustments earlier in the day.
- **Spurn the party snacks.** Don't waste your calories mindlessly munching salty or sugary snack foods. Save them for dinner and dessert.
- **Be selective.** Buffets don't have to be all you can eat. Survey the offerings. What looks too good to pass up? What can you live without?
- **Decorate your plate.** Fill at least half of your plate with colorful raw veggies, fruits or items that have these as their main ingredient. Fill the rest with lean protein like chicken or seafood and limit high fat items.
- **Mind your manners and your portions.** At sit-down affairs, graciously sample all foods — for your own experience and to please your host. However, you don't have to clean your plate to show appreciation.
- **Plan for indulgence.** If you want to indulge in a homemade holiday treat, ask yourself what you're willing to give up in exchange — something at lunch or your afternoon snack?

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-blog/holiday-weight-gain/bgp-20056222>



## Extend Gardening Season

For many child care providers and children alike, the gardening season is too short. In much of the country the danger of frost limits the time students can explore their gardens. You can do something about it! For centuries gardeners have used a variety of strategies to extend the season and protect plants from the cold. By covering the plants with contraptions such as glass bells or moveable greenhouses, gardeners can keep them going longer into the fall (and starting growing earlier in the spring!). The children can help build cover-ups so get them involved. Try one of the following ideas, they all do the same thing- trap the sun's heat, which encourages plant growth.

### Cover-Ups (used for individual plants)

- A plastic milk jug with the bottom cut off is an easy and affordable way to get individual garden seedlings to start growing.
- Glass jars offer even more insulation for small plants.
- Tomato cages covered with plastic are good for protecting larger plants.



### Fabric Cover (for multiple plants)

- Creating a fabric cover: Lay fabric row covers made of polyester right on your plants, securing the ends with rocks or boards. These covers keep bugs out and keep in the right amount of heat.
- Heavier weight covers made from polypropylene offer good frost protection and warmth in autumn.



### Growing Tunnel (for multiple plants)

- To extend the season for beds and rows of vegetables or herbs or flowers, create tunnels or hoophouses. Do this by putting semi-circular hoops over garden beds and covering them with plastic or garden fabric. If you use solid plastic, you should slit aeration holes in the roll before unrolling it.
- For step-by-step instructions please visit:



<http://www.kidsgardening.org/article/extend-season-plant-cover-ups>

## Healthy Fall Recipe

### Farmer's Harvest Chili

Ingredients	6 Servings	12 Servings	24 Servings	48 Servings
Onion, finely chopped	1/2 cup	1 cup	2 cups	4 cups
Carrots, diced	1-1/2	3	6	12
Garlic, cloves, minced	1/2 clove	1 clove	2 cloves	4 cloves
Green bell pepper, diced	1/2 cup	1 cup	2 cups	4 cups
Corn, canned, drained	1/2 - 12 oz can	1 - 12 oz can	2 - 12 oz cans	4 - 12 oz cans
Kidney beans, canned, drained	2-1/4 cups	4-1/2 cups	9 cups	18 cups
Diced tomatoes, fresh or canned	1/2 - 14.5 oz can	1 - 14.5 oz can	2 - 14.5 oz cans	4 - 14.5 oz cans
Tomato paste	1 can	2 cans	4 cans	8 cans

### Directions:

1. Spray large saucepan with non-stick cooking spray.
2. Sauté onions for about 3 minutes.
3. Add carrots and garlic. Sauté for another 3 minutes.
4. Add rest of ingredients and cook for 30 minutes (until heated thoroughly) on medium heat, uncovered. Stir occasionally.

**Food For Thought** Use any beans or vegetables you have available to change the flavors of this dish!

**CACFP Crediting** For 3-5 year olds; Lunch/Supper. Must serve all of the following:

- Grain/Bread ☐
- Fruit/Vegetable ☒
- Meat/Meat Alternate ☒
- ☐

### Nutrition Facts

Serving size: 3/4 cup (175g)  
Servings Per Recipe: 24

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 288	Cal. from Fat 10
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 299mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 55g	20%
Dietary Fiber 20g	80%
Sugars 8g	
Protein 19g	
Vitamin A 55%	Vitamin C 40%
Calcium 15%	Iron 40%

Recipe adapted from Thomas, R., Khouri, L., Fenton, W. *Nutrition in the Kitchen*. Children's Hospital of Philadelphia 2nd ed.; 2008. [www.chop.edu/export/download/pdfs/articles/healthy-weight/healthyweight-pdf-nutrition-kitchen-complete-book.pdf](http://www.chop.edu/export/download/pdfs/articles/healthy-weight/healthyweight-pdf-nutrition-kitchen-complete-book.pdf).

Accessed June 10, 2010.

# Sensory Play for the New Season!

Sensory play is a great way to introduce children to natural and healthy food items. Below are some ideas for creating sensory activities for the fall season that support healthy behaviors.

Children benefit greatly from sensory play. What is sensory play? It is a type of play that helps children develop and refine their five senses: touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. Children (and adults) learn best and remember the most when they engage multiple senses. Imagine trying to explain to children what “melting” is, without allowing them to hold an ice cube in their hand or trying to explain how sand can stick together without giving them a chance to do it themselves. Children need to experience things with their senses to understand and communicate important concepts. By giving a child the chance to investigate using all of his/her senses, you’re helping to develop and refine their cognitive, social emotional, creative, physical and language skills.

**Cognitive:** Sensory play supports problem solving and decision making. It also provides opportunities to build math skills with sorting and counting and to build science skills with predicting and experimenting. For example: holding an ice cube allows them to see a solid become a liquid.

**Social-emotional:** Sensory play allows children to take charge of their own actions and decisions which increases their confidence. Playing side-by-side with other children also increases collaboration and relationship building.

**Creative:** Sensory play allows children to have open-ended opportunities and focus on the process instead of the outcome. They are free to explore various materials in their own way.

**Physical:** Sensory play, often supports fine motor skill development with the opportunity to mix, pour, stir, squeeze, scoop, etc.

**Language:** Sensory play encourages children to use descriptive language and helps them put meaning to new words. Hearing the word “sticky” is just a word until he or she feels something sticky.

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/child-development/sensory-play/developing-and-cultivating-skills-through-sensory-play/>

## Fall Foliage Sensory Bin

Put some natural, seasonal items into a plastic bin and allow children to explore. Consider using the following: leaves of different colors and sizes, acorns, twigs, grasses, mulch, cedar chips, pinecones, rocks and dirt. Note: always supervise children around small items such as pebbles and acorns.

Questions to ask:

“How could we sort these items?”, “How are these leaves different?”, “What happens when you add water to the dirt?”, etc.



## Fall Vegetables Sensory Bin

Use seasonal produce for children to explore. Various types of pumpkins, squash and potatoes are perfect for this. They come in a wide range of colors, shapes, sizes and textures. Placing them in water can add to the experience, especially if you offer both fresh items and dried, hollow items (i.e. a dried gourd). Allow the children to explore further (and get a little messy) by cutting the items in half and allowing them to feel the inside of the vegetables. Playing with “pumpkin guts” is an activity most children enjoy!

Questions to ask:

“What does this feel like in your hands?”, “How are these pumpkins alike?”, “How many seeds do you think this pumpkin has?”, “Do you think this one will float or sink?”, etc.

## We Want to Hear from You!

We will continue to share Shape NC news and current resources related to nutrition, physical activity and outdoor learning environments in child care. Do you have a story related to healthy weight promotion in early childhood? Do you have a topic that you would like included in the next edition? We want to hear from you! Please send your thoughts and ideas to Alyssa Michel, Shape NC Project Coordinator, at: [AMichel@ncsmartstart.org](mailto:AMichel@ncsmartstart.org)

Over the course of each school year, trends showed the percent of children who reached a healthy weight is gradually improving.



[www.smartstart.org/shape-nc](http://www.smartstart.org/shape-nc)



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