Kitchen Herb & Spice Exploration

**Learning Targets:**
- To use the 5 senses to explore everyday herbs and spices
- To develop a concept of how herbs/spices are used in everyday cooking
- To recognize herbs/spices used in favorite dishes

**Activity 1: Exploration with your Senses**

**Recommended for infants, young toddlers and first introductions to herbs/spices**

1. Go through your herb and spice cabinet. Pull out spices for a regular or favorite meal/dish. Introduce one herb at a time and one sense at a time.
2. **Listen:** Tell your child what the herb is and shake the herb in the jar. Talk about what you are planning to cook/bake with these herbs. (tacos, spaghetti, soups, cookies, curry, etc).
3. **Look:** Place the herb jar in the child’s best field of vision and have them watch you open the jar and pour some on a color contrasting surface.
4. **Smell:** Open the jar and allow the child to smell (remember to prompt that you are bringing the jar to their nose and to use their nose to smell, physical touch cues on the nose are great!)
5. **Touch:** Introduce the jar to your child’s hands and pour a bit on a color contrasting surface and allow for tactile exploration.
6. **Taste:** If appropriate allow the child to taste a small amount on tongue, toothbrush or in a drop of water.
7. Cook this meal sometime during the week and discuss/repeat with your child the spices you are using. “We are cooking spaghetti, remember we played with Italian seasoning? Can you smell the garlic, oregano, etc?”
Activity 2: Herb and Spice Painting
**Recommended for older infants, toddlers and preschoolers**

1. Choose 3-4 herbs spices that have strong smells and colors. (Cinnamon, curry powder, ground ginger, cocoa powder, chili powder)
2. Mix herb/spice with small amount of water and mix until a thick liquid texture.
3. Discuss the names of the herbs and smells of each one.
4. Provide paper and paint brushes
5. Paint! Want more sensory input? Try finger painting.

Activity 3: Scratch -n- Sniff Pizzas (or Tacos!)
**Recommended for older toddlers and preschoolers**

Supplies: paper, scissors, herbs/spices, glue, makers, tape or puff paint

1. Gather your favorite herbs and spices for pizza, tacos, cookies, or favorite dish.
2. Cut out the shape of the food/dish.
3. Create the slices or layers of the dish using dark outlines, blue tape, puff paint or other tactile barrier to highlight the different areas. Label each section with a
different herb or spice. You may use puff paint/ tape to create a tactile sign for each herb.

4. Have your child decorate the dish.
5. Use glue stick or glue with a cuetip in a section.
6. Shake herb onto glue or have the child use hands to sprinkle on a small amount.
7. Repeat for all herbs.
8. Remember to name each herb being used and what dish they are making. Have your child smell and/ or taste each herb along the way.
9. Cook/ bake the dish later in the week and have child help!