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Activity: Banana Pudding in a Bag

This week's activity comes from Cooking Matters, an organization dedicated to helping families, schools, child-care facilities (and more!) provide healthy, affordable meals to children. A big piece of their work involves finding ways to get kids excited about food, often through getting involved in the cooking process. In addition to the recipe we're highlighting here, their website has many more ideas about what to cook with your kids, feel free to check it out! <http://cookingmatters.org/recipes>

The recipe we've selected is a great one for our Anchor kiddos – even if your child isn't able to taste it, anyone can help mash up ingredients in a bag! Note: this recipe has been cut down to accommodate little tummies, as it originally contained enough for 3 bananas. Hence the odd measurements. Feel free to eyeball, this recipe is not an exact science!

Some notes before you get started:

1. Set up the activity. Make sure you have a clear, flat space that is free of visual clutter. Sit your child in front of the surface so that he/she can easily reach it.
2. Preview the activity with your child. Show them all of the ingredients they will be using, giving them plenty of time to explore each one. Talk about what it is called, feel the packaging/peel, maybe open it and try to smell it. Do the same with the kitchen utensils you will use (bag, spoons, etc.).
3. Get cooking! Encourage your child to participate – whether that means feeling/smelling each ingredient as it is added, peeling the banana,

passing you ingredients as they are needed, or helping to scoop/measure them.

4. Always feel free to stop and smell or taste as you go!

#### Ingredients:

8 teaspoons (or 2 Tb + 2tsp) low-fat granola

1 medium banana

8 teaspoons (or 2 Tb + 2tsp) unsweetened applesauce

8 teaspoons (or 2 Tb + 2tsp) nonfat vanilla yogurt

#### Materials:

Large zip-top plastic bag

Measuring spoons

#### Instructions:

1. In a large zip-top bag, add granola. Squeeze out the air and seal. Lightly crush the granola with a can or the bottom of a measuring cup.
2. Peel bananas. Break them into pieces and add to the bag.
3. Add applesauce and yogurt to the bag.
4. Press out extra air before sealing.
5. Let your child squish and mash the bag until everything is mixed.
6. Once it's mixed, eat your pudding or put the bag in the fridge for later.

This is a great activity because it addresses so many different skills simultaneously in addition to feeding, including:

- Sensory – mashing up the goo is a great sensory activity, particularly for those who may not want to touch things that are sticky or gooey since it's contained in a plastic bag.
- Science – what happens to a banana when it gets mushed? How does it change when other things are added?
- Math – measuring, counting scoops
- Fine motor – encourage your child to open and close the bag, peel the banana, break it apart, help mash the granola, open and close applesauce and yogurt containers, etc.
- Sequencing – talking about the steps and what order they come in. Try to incorporate sequence words like *first*, *next*, *last*.