



# Fruit Project

Owl – Lincoln Road: Preschool 1

## Background

The Preschool 1 Class at Owl - Lincoln Road completed a Fruit Project! It began January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and continued until June 15, 2017.

Teachers – Courtney P. RECE, Tracey R. RECE and Melody B. RECE

Children – 24 Preschoolers ages 2.5 - 4years old

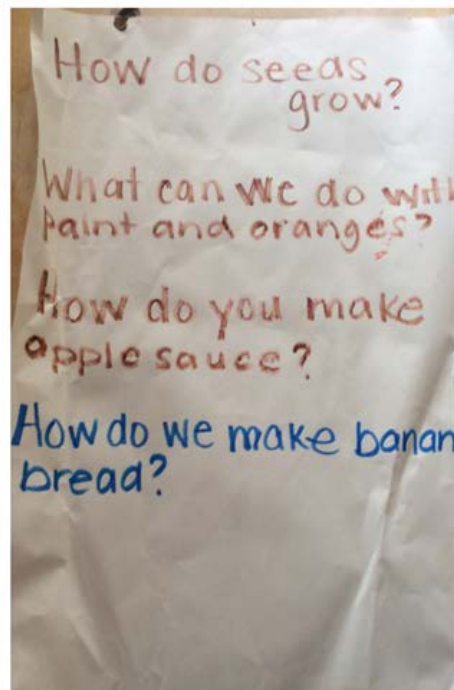
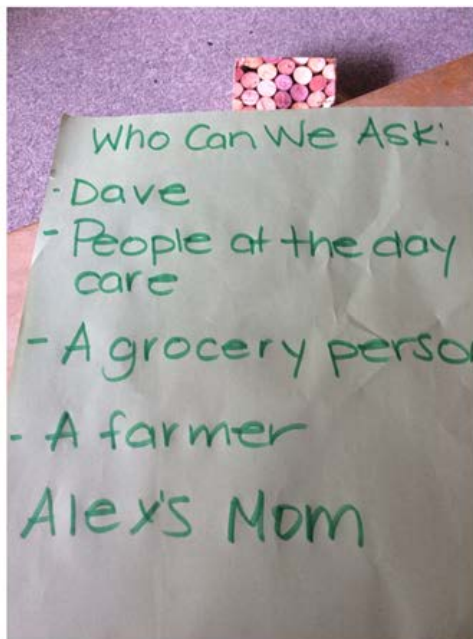
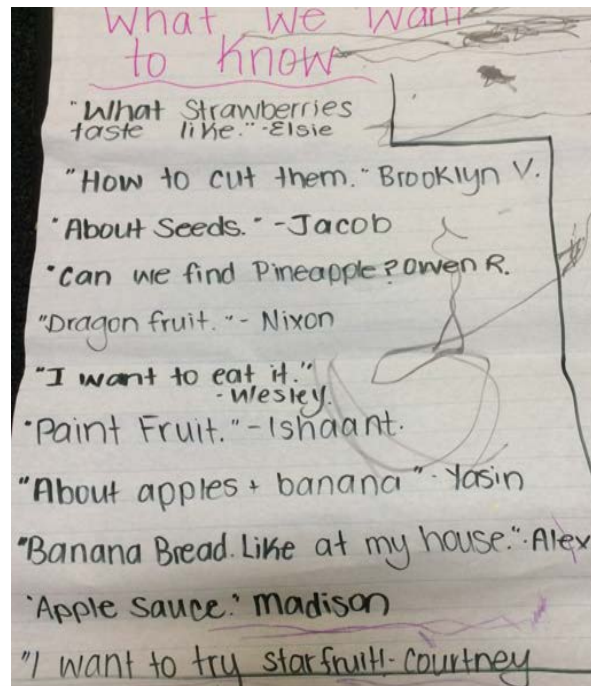
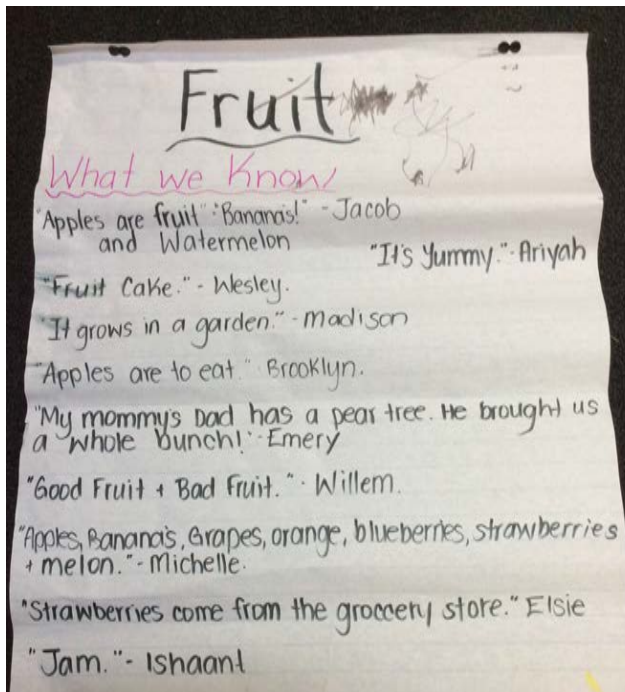
## Phase 1: Beginning the Project

The children in the Preschool 1 class observed their teacher Courtney getting a funny looking fruit out of her bag at lunchtime. The children were curious what the fruit was. It was green and pink on the outside and had white flesh with black spots in the centre. (See figure 1) “This is called Dragon fruit,” Courtney explained as she showed each child the fruit so they could get a closer look. The Preschoolers decided that they would like to try it. The next day (January 19, 2017), they walked down to Sobeys and bought two dragon fruits. At snack time, the children had the opportunity to taste it! This provocation was the start of our fruit project!



Figure 1: Dragon Fruit

As we started the project, we asked the children What They Know and What They Want to Know and Who Can They Can Ask about fruit. As we wrote down their ideas, we were happy to see that the children knew the names of lots of fruit! Some of them identified where fruit comes from and what they could make with it. As we wrote down What They Want to Know we noted that the children had an interest in learning how to cut fruit, make more recipes (like applesauce & banana bread) with fruit and of course taste fruit!



## Phase 2: Developing the Project

**Survey** - We completed a class survey to see which fruits were the most popular. The children walked around with clipboards and asked their peers, as well as, all the teachers in the child care centre which fruit they liked best: oranges, bananas, grapes or apples. (See fig. 2 below) The children practiced their turn taking skills when posing the question as well as when they made tick marks on the survey.



Figure 2: Children with their surveys

The tick marks were counted aloud and a final tally was made. Grapes and bananas were the most popular (by 11 people each, while oranges only had three ticks) (see Fig. 3)

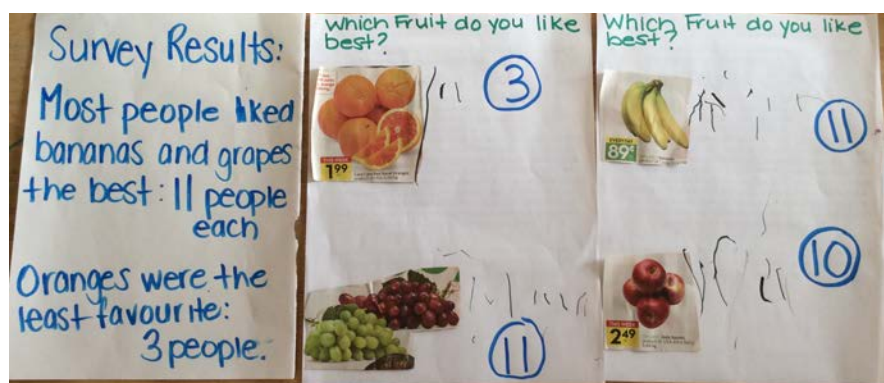


Figure 3: Survey Results

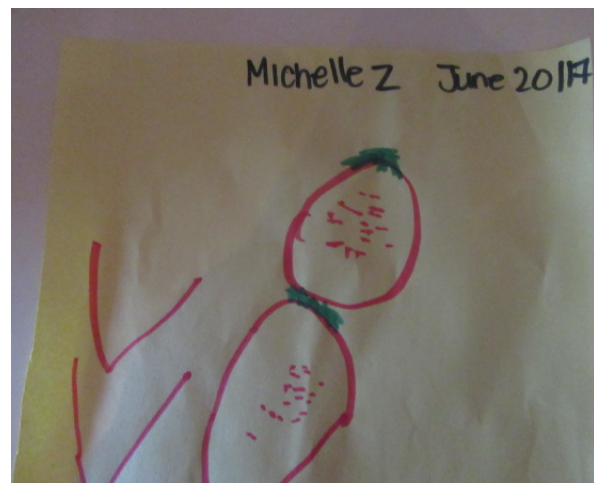
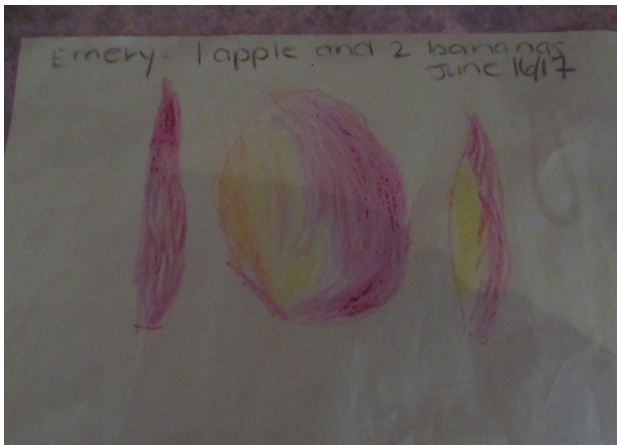
**Drawings**- The preschool children were invited over to a table. On the table, there was a bowl of fruit, white paper and markers. The children completed some observational drawings.

### First stage drawings:



### Second stage drawings:

These drawings were made near the end of the project. The children used their imagination and memory skills to draw the fruit. Emery drew two bananas and an apple, while Michelle drew two strawberries. Michelle included the colour red for the strawberry, the seeds, and the green leaves on the top.



The preschoolers were invited over to have a group conversation about fruit. We asked them what types of fruit they knew. The children named some and we looked them up on the iPad to see what they looked like. A few of the preschoolers assisted with drawing the fruit beside the word.

With regard to the web, we asked the children what they wanted to know about the fruit. We pulled information from this and documented a web that the children and parents could view.

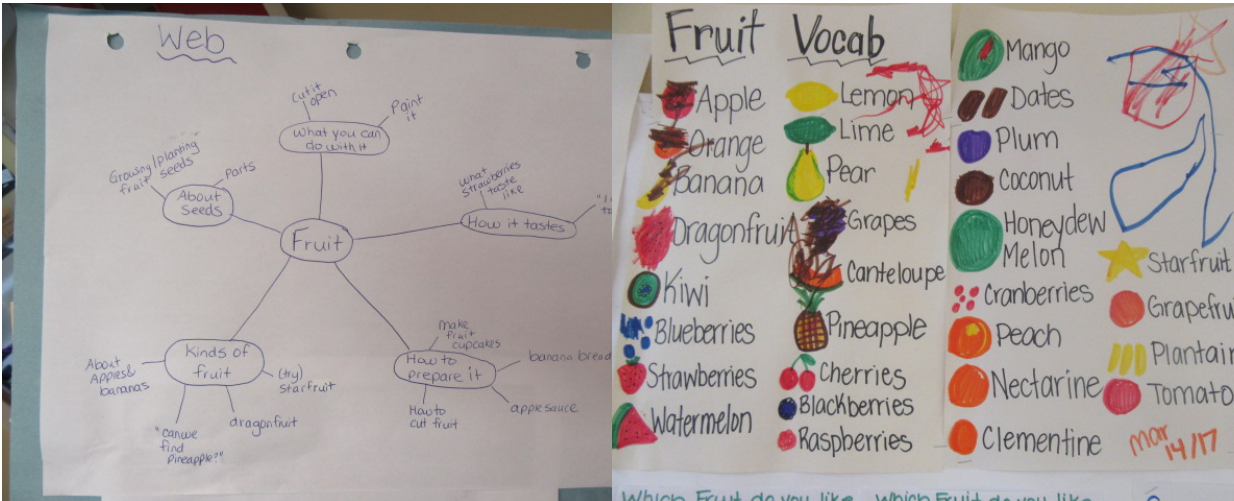


Figure 4: Fruit Web

Figure 5: Fruit Vocabulary

### Making Apple Sauce:

The preschoolers had the opportunity to foster their self-help skills, teamwork skills, and exploring their five senses while making applesauce. The participating preschoolers sat around the table where there were apples, cinnamon, lemon, a crock-pot and plastic knives displayed. After the activity was done, the children looked at the pictures and we documented in number format how the applesauce making happened:

- 1) "We washed them because we don't want them yucky," stated Emery. This was the response she gave when asked what we did first.
- 2) "Tracey peeled the apple," Madison said. "With a sharp, sharp, knife," Emery said. During the activity the children had the opportunity to use the plastic knives provided, a discussion was had as to why just the teacher would use the sharp knife to peel, as the skin would be too hard to get off with the child safe knife.
- 3) "We cut the apples with a small knife," said Doreen. This is where the children were provided with the opportunity to cut the apples into small pieces. They worked so hard fostering their fine motor skills. Some of the children were very meticulous about their cutting, using the knife to make the smallest pieces possible.

- 4) “We squeezed the lemon juice,” Emery said. “We smelled it,” Doreen said. The children used their sense of smell and touch. The lemon slices were passed around and each child had the opportunity if they chose, to smell the lemon and give it a squeeze until the juice came out. Alex squeezed so hard after he took a smell of the lemon. See fig.6
- 5) “Then we stirred it. We put it in something hot,” Ishaant and Brooklyn V. said. The children took turns throwing there cut up apple pieces into the giant black crock-pot (which later they discovered would be very hot when cooking the applesauce. The lemon and cinnamon were sprinkled in, turns were taken to stir, and then the crockpot was put up on the counter to heat up the applesauce.



Figure 6: Alex squeezing the lemon

A few of the children would go over to the counter asking if it was cooked. Ishaant said, “I’m so hungry.” We smelled the aroma of cinnamon and apples cooking throughout the day and into naptime.

The next day it was ready to eat. The preschoolers could hardly wait until afternoon snack came around that day.

They were asked: What did it taste like?

“I like the applesauce you made.” – Ishaant

“It tasted like cinnamon.” – Doreen

“Thought it was sour, but it was sweet.” – Nathan

“Strawberries.” – Michelle

“Blueberries.” – Garrett

The children were able to develop a sense of pride through this activity. They knew that they made the applesauce as a team. They were so proud when their parents and other staff walked into the room and said how great it smelled. Some parents

were even disappointed that they did not get to have a taste of their child's cooking experience.

### **Painting with Oranges:**

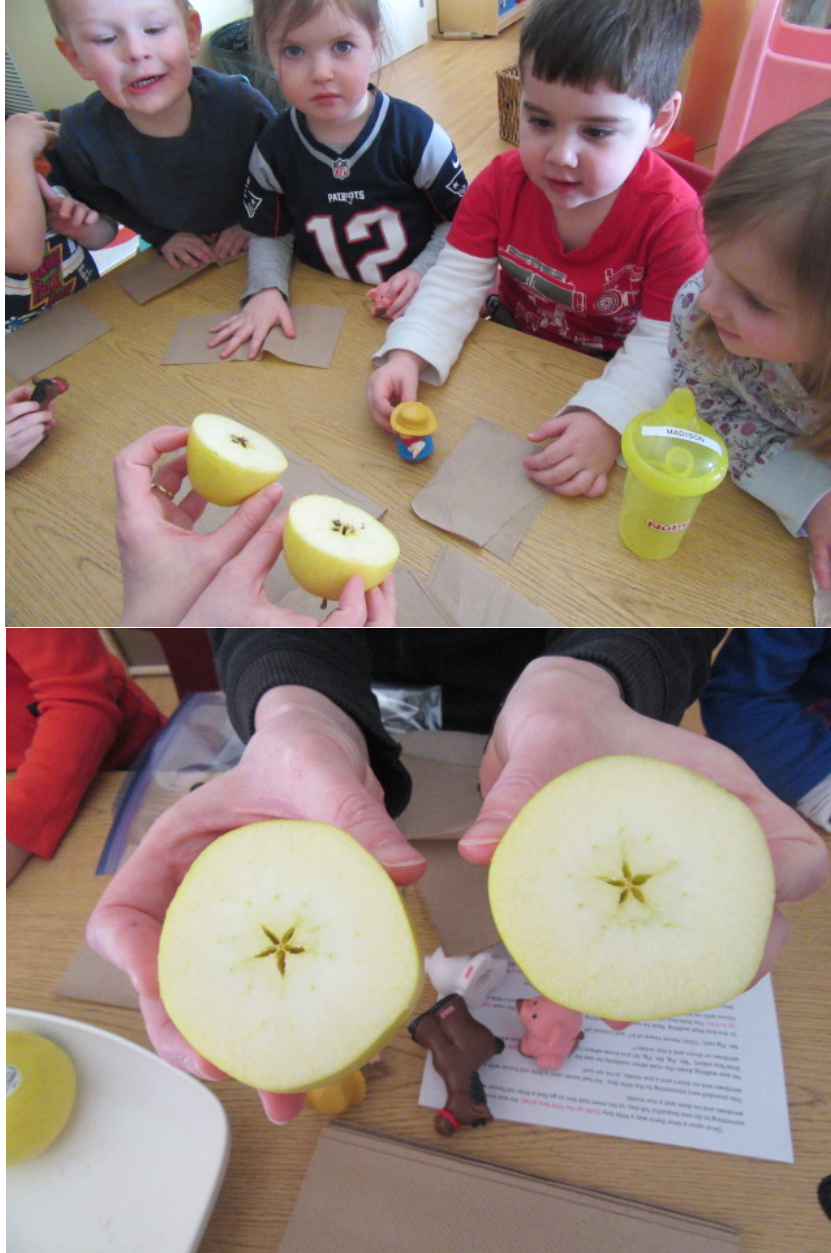
Ishaant had wanted to know what we could do with paint and oranges. We got out some paper, orange paint, and oranges. After the oranges were sliced and the children were given the option to smell and squeeze them. They decided it would be a great idea to squeeze the orange juice into the orange paint! It was an opportunity to get our hands sticky with not just paint, but with oranges too!

Yasin was busy painting on his skin with the orange scented painted.



Several children were able to foster their creative sides and take home some sort of masterpiece. We found out that you can paint with oranges; you just have to get a little creative!

**The Apple Story** - Yasin wanted to know about apples so Melody told the children a story about a little boy (as shown by Alex's hand) that was asking other animals where he could find a house with no windows, no doors and a star inside. The children took turns manipulating the animals as well. They used their language skills to name the animals and to make their sounds. When the boy found the house with no windows and no doors, Melody showed them the apple. She asked them what they were going to see inside. "I don't know." Was their response. When she cut it open sideways, they saw that there was a star shape inside! They were all amazed! Then everyone enjoyed eating a piece of the "house"!



Then we made a book about how apples and bananas are grown. The children looked at the pictures of the different stages and drew them. The book was put together, and laminated. Some of the children who helped make the book read it with Melody. We learned that apples grow from a seed into a tree. They flower and then the apples grow. They learned that bananas grow from a sucker (which is a shoot from another banana plant), that they grow in flowers and that bananas grow on a plant (instead of a tree). The children enjoyed reading them during free playtime. Alex liked to ask who made each picture that he looked at.





**Songs –** The preschoolers enjoyed singing the song, “I like to eat Apples and Bananas.” We would often customize this song and change the words to make it silly! Sometimes listing other types of fruits “I like to eat, eat, eat grapes and oranges!” and other times listing things we shouldn’t eat just for a laugh. “I like to eat, eat, eat chairs and tables!”

The song went like this:

“I like to eat, eat, eat, apples and bananas  
I like to eat, eat, eat, apples and bananas.”

Each time the same verse is sung the sound of the letter is replaced by the vowels in the alphabet. First A, E, I, O, then U.

### **Definitions of Fruit:**

#### **Informal**

Children: Fruit is grapes, apples, berries, bananas, pineapple. It is for eating.

“When you watch shows, you can eat them.”

Staff: Something hard or soft to eat that come in a variety of colours shapes and textures that is healthy for you.

#### **Formal**

The sweet and fleshy product of a tree or other plant that contains seed and can be eaten as food.

## Planting Seeds

Apples were placed on the table in front of the children along with dirt and a planter. A few of the preschoolers took their time investigating the items. The children were asked what they thought we could do with the materials. Some of them guessing they could play with it, eat it, or possibly plant something. Tracey said, “We are not going to be growing carrots, we will be growing...”

“An apple tree,” said Garrett

“It’s green,” Michelle said as she pointed at the Granny Smith Apple.

“Red and Yellow,” said Jacob

Tracey then asked, “Where are the seeds?”

“Inside the apple,” Stated Zach.

Zach first explored the green apple. After Tracey cut it open, the children saw that there were seeds inside! The preschoolers decided that we would plant the apple seeds! We counted how many seeds were in the apples. The Granny Smith had three seeds and the Honey Crisp had two, so Tracey carefully got them out with a sharp knife.

The participating children helped to scoop the dirt into the plant holder. It was a Root Viewer with a clear front, which allows the children to watch the roots and plants grow.

The preschooler children were asked what they thought the apples needed to grow. The said water, sunshine and air.

The seeds were carefully put into place and a half an apple was placed in to see if it would grow an apple tree.

To our disappointment, we watched the planter for a few weeks, watering it and even setting it outside in the fresh air. No seeds grew.

### 3D ART PROJECT

The children were given their choice of a balloon colour and were encouraged to blow it up. Emery blew hers up all by herself. She helped Melody blow them up for everyone else too! They were all different sizes of “fruit”.



Then they were given a mixture of flour and water that made a paste, as well as strips of paper. They dipped the paper in the “glue like” substance and stuck it to their balloon.



When they were finished, they decided to play catch with the balloons. When we were done, we let the air out of the balloons slowly to hear a squeal noise. Melody cut the tops off and let them go so they would move quickly in the air and land on our heads. They were too quick to catch but everyone helped to collect the balloons. Everyone's favourite thing was to hear them go "pop" when Melody popped them with scissors!

The following day, the children were given 3 colours of paint to paint the balloon fruit. Some children painted a "blueberry" and some made a "strawberry." Then they decided to mix all of the colours together to make some interesting coloured fruit.



**Field Study** - We completed two field studies. We went to Zehrs and the St. Jacobs Farmers Market!

At Zehrs we met with a dietician. We focused on expanding our vocabulary by labeling the fruits we knew. We also learned about some fruits we didn't know like starfruit and yellow dragonfruit. We collected lots of fruit in a basket and tasted it in a delicious and healthy fruit salad!



To further extend their learning we also went on a field trip to the St. Jacobs Farmers Market. "It's my Market," Jacob laughed as he recognized his name in the title.



The preschoolers all excitedly boarded the school bus. Several clipboards were given to children and adults on the trip. The clipboards contained a paper with photos of many different fruits. Our instructions were to use a pencil to circle the fruits that we found on our market trip. The goal was to find as much fruit as possible!

As we walked passed the outdoor vendors the preschoolers used their language skills to label all the things they saw. They noticed so many fruits but also discovered flowers, plants, vegetables, honey, and maple syrup. When we went inside, we discovered more fruits and veggies but also found meat, preservatives, chips and hot food booths with things like apple fritters, meatballs and even a doughnut-making machine! It was interesting looking at all the options available at the market!



As we walked, we looked for fruit that we wanted to purchase to make a fruit salad back at the centre. We decided on strawberries, blueberries and pears! We found most of the fruits on our clipboard checklists and were very proud!



When we got back to school, we washed the fruit and the children carefully used a knife and cutting board to slice it all up. The children continue to demonstrate how competent and capable they are through our food preparation activities. Next, we mixed it all together in a large bowl and then we tasted it. It was so delicious!

## Phase 3: Concluding the Project

### Baking Banana Muffins:

The preschoolers had asked, “How do you make banana bread?” Alex had said, “My mommy makes banana bread!” We asked him if it would be okay to see if his Mommy could send us a recipe. We sent an email asking her for her banana bread recipe. While waiting we also got a banana bread recipe off the internet. Alex’s mom emailed us back and the day finally came where we were going to do some baking.

First, we had to go to Walmart to pick up some ingredients. We took a walk over to the plaza across the street to look for some butter and eggs, as the rest of the ingredients were available at the child care centre. The preschoolers discovered other items in the grocery store that they were excited about. Especially the yogurt! We paid and were on our adventure walk back to the child care centre.

Everything was set out on the table to make the banana bread. The preschoolers were mostly excited about the chocolate chips they could see and even more excited after they got to smell them.



The children took turns squishing the bananas in, cracking eggs, scooping in the flour and adding the other ingredients. We combined both recipes and questioned the amount of butter it called for as 2 cups seemed like a lot but we went with anyway to see what would happen. Everyone took turns trying his or her best to mix. Afterwards they used their fine motor skills to scoop the mixture into the individual muffin compartments. Hands were washed and the anticipation for afternoon snack began.



The muffins were baked and ready for the taste test! They came out extra moist due to all the butter and the chocolate chips were melted just right. The children had smiles on their face and you could see their pride as they devoured their delicious muffins. The yumminess being licked off their finger tips and chocolate chips smeared on their faces. The preschoolers were excited to tell their parents at pick up about their baking accomplishments.



## Teacher Reflections

Courtney – I really enjoyed working on this project with the preschoolers! I am a big fan of healthy eating – and I love to see the children enjoy fruits and veggies! Through this activity, I observed the children gain independence as they learned to peel, cut, prepare or bake with fruit. Each time that I introduced a new fruit to the preschoolers, they were eager to help and learn more! I think my favourite part of the fruit project was trying new fruits with the children. We tasted papaya, kiwi, dragon fruit, yellow dragon fruit, starfruit and canary melon! The children were always excited to join in on the learning experiences!

Melody – I enjoyed working on this project with the children. It was fun seeing their excitement if they recognized a fruit they knew or seeing their curiosity peek when they saw or tried a new fruit. I learned from this project as well. I learned how apples and bananas grow. I found it very interesting. I also tried some fruits that I never would have tried without this project taking place. It was a neat learning experience for me as well!

Tracey- For me the fruit project was a learning experience. It was not about just learning what the different types of fruits are out there, how they taste, and if I liked them, but also learning that things also may not go as planned. It helped teach not only myself, but also the children, that you may try to do something and sometimes it does not work out. For example, planting the apple seeds, the children and I were anticipating that the seeds would grow and that an apple seed would sprout. It did not happen and everyone was okay with that. Later we would see that the vegetable seeds we planted in our garden would grow (but that is a whole other possible project!). As teachers, we also learned that putting two cups of butter into a banana bread recipe probably was a misprint! However, the wide eyes and smiles on the preschooler's faces as they bit into them made that small mistake seem so trivial.

It was interesting to hear what types of fruits seemed to resonate with the preschool children. Dragon fruit was what got the whole project started and even months later on our trip to the grocery store you could still hear children talking about the infamous dragon fruit. It is great to know that through a project, even if the children come out remember only a few things, it is something we accomplished together as a group. Having the children being so engaged, and at times leading the way through the project themselves is a reward unto itself.