



# Potato Dig



It's September down on the farm and Tractor Ted is helping to harvest potatoes. Young children love digging and a 'potato dig' activity helps them to discover where potatoes come from.

## THIS ACTIVITY...

- encourages children to learn about potatoes
- helps the development of upper body strength and balance
- helps the development of hand-eye co-ordination
- offers lots of opportunity for exploring shape, size, colour and texture
- enables children to sort potatoes into groups and encourages counting

## WHAT TO DO

### The potato harvest

Show the children pictures and online footage of a potato harvest down on the farm and individual gardeners digging up potatoes by hand. Help them to understand that potatoes grow in the soil and are harvested using hands, spades, forks or machines called potato harvesters.

### Digging for potatoes

Gather a collection of potatoes in different shapes, sizes and colours, including baby new potatoes, large baking potatoes, red and white skinned potatoes and unusual shapes such as the Anya variety. Create a digging bed in your outdoor space and bury the potatoes. Give the children trowels, forks, spades and baskets, and challenge them to dig up the potatoes. .

### Exploring potatoes

Help the children to look at the different sizes, shapes and colours. Can they sort the potatoes into groups? Count how many potatoes there are in each group. Which group has the most? Count the number of potatoes each child has dug up, and how many they have found altogether.



## THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Inform parents that you will be engaging in messy play and ask them to send their children in old clothes for the day.
- Bury other items along with the potatoes. Some possibilities include treasure (coins, jewels, keys), natural items such as shells and crystals, and plastic numbers.
- Encourage children to explore the tools and decide which work best for digging up potatoes. How about using hands as a digging tool? Offer gloves to children who are not keen on getting their hands dirty.
- Help interested older children to use the potatoes for adding and subtracting. Ask questions such as: If you dig up two more potatoes, how many will you have altogether? If you put a potato back in the soil, how many will you have left?
- At the end of the activity, let the children re-bury the potatoes they have found. Talk about leaving the activity ready for someone else to use.
- Once the activity has finished, emphasise to the children that potatoes are food and mustn't go to waste. Talk about how they can be turned into someone's dinner and all the different foods potatoes make (e.g. chips, crisps, mash, roast, etc) or save them for the Cheesy Mash Art activity.



## RHYME TIME

Dig down deep, under the ground,  
Hiding there without a sound.  
Pop in the basket,  
What can you see?  
Lots of potatoes for our tea!

Dig down deep, under the soil,  
Wrap them up in silver foil.  
Pop in the oven,  
What can you see?  
Butter baked potatoes for tea!

