**Kindergarten Bread Baking**

In our Lilac Garden, we usually bake bread each week on Wednesday morning. When you’re deciding what works best for your family, feel free to keep this activity on Wednesday if possible, but don’t worry if it doesn’t work out that way. We bake bread for many reasons, some of which follow. *Please note*, if for whatever reason baking bread isn’t possible at home, there may very well be another activity that could be substituted that meets some of these same goals. Let me know if you need ideas.

Baking bread appeals to children naturally - helping them to see how food is made and allowing them to participate in the process, thus giving them a feeling of inclusion and ownership in the activity. This is also a rich sensory activity, engaging the sense of touch, smell, sight, and movement. For younger children, it is often approached as a pure sensory activity, and as children get older there is a lot of planning and focus involved as they create their particular shape out of their dough. It also stimulates their developing fine motor skills, allowing them to ‘sculpt’ with the dough. And let’s not forget - bread tastes delicious, especially with toppings like butter and honey!

To do this activity at home, you’ll have to make a plan for making the bread dough ahead of time, at least a couple hours before you plan to bake the bread, because of the time that is needed to rise the dough. It also works to make the dough and complete the first rise the day before, then put the punched down dough into the fridge for the next day - that’s what we do at school each week. In addition, you’ll choose based on your family circumstances whether your child is able to be included in the making of the dough or just in the activity of making shapes out of dough before baking. If you do include your child in the dough making, gathering all your materials and ingredients ahead of time would be my recommendation.

**Kindergarten Bread Recipe:**

Makes: about 20 rolls or 2 loaves

*Materials*:

small bowl and large bowl

wooden spoon

measuring cups and measuring spoons

a clean surface for kneading bread

a tea towel (or something else to cover the rising bread)

apron for you and any little helpers (if you have them)

*Ingredients:*

6-8 cups flour (at school we use half whole wheat and half white bread flour)

1 1/2 tbsp active dry yeast (if you’re only using white flour, you can reduce this a smidge.)

3 cups warm water

1/3 cup honey

1/4 cup oil or melted butter

salt (this is to taste - we probably add about 1 tbsp)

1/2 cup ground wheat berries (optional)

*Directions:*

1. In the small bowl, mix together one cup of the warm water with the yeast and 2 tsp. of the honey. Let it sit in a warm place for about 10 minutes to make sure the yeast is active. It should get thick and foamy on the top.
2. In the large bowl, mix the remaining 2 cups of warm water with the remainder of the honey and the salt. Add the yeast mixture.
3. Add about 3 cups of the flour to the liquid mixture and stir together thoroughly. The consistency should be like cake batter at this point.
4. Add the oil/melted butter and ground wheat berries, if using. Stir thoroughly.
5. Add the remaining cups of flour one cup at a time, thoroughly mixing after each cup, until the dough starts to stick together and form a ball. You might not need to use all of the flour, or you could possibly need a bit extra.
6. Sprinkle some flour onto a clean surface and place the dough on the surface. Coat your hands in flour, then knead the dough until it is elastic and tacky to the touch, adding more flour along the way if it starts to stick to your hands or the work surface. This usually takes about 5-7 minutes (it will be quicker if you’re using only white flour).
7. Lightly oil the inside of a clean bowl and place the dough inside. Cover with a damp tea towel and set aside to rise in a warm place until doubled in size. (This usually takes about an hour.)
8. Punch down the dough. (If you’re going to save the dough for tomorrow, this is the time to cover it and put it in the fridge.)
9. Preheat the oven to 350º.
10. Place the covered dough back in it’s warm place to rise again (about 45 minutes this time).
11. Punch down again, then divide the dough into pieces. (At school, the dough is divided into 20 pieces, but you might want to divide it up differently.)
12. Give your child(ren) a piece of dough, and one for you too! Follow the included directions to make your shapes, then place on a baking sheet to rest for about 5-10 minutes before placing in the oven.
13. Bake until golden brown and hollow sounding when tapped on the bottom. For us at school this takes about 25-30 minutes, but the timing at home might be different depending on your oven and the size of your pieces.
14. Serve warm with the topping of your choice! Yum!

**Directions for Bread “Activity”:**

When you have the pieces of dough ready and the oven preheating you may sprinkle some flour on your work surface and sing the bread song, making your actions follow along with the words alongside of your child.

*\*This is sung to the tune of “Here we go round the mulberry bush”*

**Sing\***: “Put some flour on your hands, on your hands, on your hands,

Put some flour on your hands, early in the morning.” (*put flour on hands)*

*“*Open up your oven door, oven door, oven door,

Open up your oven door, early in the morning.”(*child cups hands together, then you put the piece of dough into their hands*)

“This is the way we pat our dough, pat our dough, pat our dough,

This is the way…” *(place dough on table/counter and pat it down flat)*

*“*This is the way we push our dough….”

*(make fists with hands and gently push into dough)*

*“*This is the way we fold our dough…”

*(fold the flattened dough in half, then in half again)*

“This is the way we roll our dough…” *(using both hands, roll the dough into a log shape)*

“This is the way we knead our dough…” *(pick up dough and squish it around in hands)*

“Make it in a nice round ball, nice round ball…” *(roll dough into ball)*

“Make whatever shape you want, shape you want…” *(start making a shape out of your dough while your child makes their shape. You may put the shapes on the baking sheet when you’re done.)*

*After you’ve placed the dough on the baking sheet, find a few things for your child to help to clean up. Maybe that is wiping the flour off the counter into the trash. Maybe it’s sweeping or holding the dustpan. Maybe its helping with dishes and/or hanging up an apron. Perhaps then it is free indoor playtime until it’s time to clean up for snack-time.*