

Fruity Ice Pops Sensory Recipes

Cool off with these easy summer treats

Frank Epperson popularized ice pops after patenting the concept of “frozen ice on a stick” in 1923. In 1924 he patented the word “popsicle” for all frozen confections on a stick.

This recipe for ice pops is made with real fruit and juice. Because you make the ice pops in ice cube trays, they’re the perfect size for small mouths and hands, and a stick inserted in each ice pop creates an easy handle for your child to hold on to. If you plan to make this recipe with your child, you might want to make a separate batch ahead of time, so you don’t have to wait for your batch to freeze. You and your child can explore the taste, texture, and temperature of the ice pop while your tray is freezing.






Recipe and photo courtesy of [Tastes Better From Scratch](#)





Utensils

- For smaller ice pops use one ice cube tray with 14 holes. For larger ice pops use a silicone ice cube tray with 6 holes.
- Wooden, miniature craft sticks, 2.13 inches long. Available on Amazon (click [HERE](#)).
- A small knife, a cutting board, and a measuring cup or small glass.




Ingredients

- Fresh fruit, such as bananas, strawberries, or blueberries
- Apple juice, orange juice, or your child's favorite fruit beverage

Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
<p>1. Gather the ingredients and the utensils.</p>	<p> Start this activity with a cue. For example, you could say to your child, "We're going to make some ice pops! Remember when you licked one with your tongue, and it was cold?"</p> <p> What does a banana feel like? Let your child hold the banana while you describe its long, skinny shape and the rubbery texture of the skin. Bananas are the perfect size for children with visual impairments to practice their hold and grasp skills.</p> <p> Are your ice cube trays plastic, silicone, or metal? Shiny trays will reflect more light. Silicone trays come in many bright colors that will "pop" on your work surface.</p>

Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
2. Cut bananas into bite-size slices that will fit in the ice cube tray cavities. Small berries don't need to be cut.	<p data-bbox="678 260 1432 525"> Talk about why bananas are peeled before they're eaten. "The skin is yellow and thick. Sometimes it has brown spots. The banana is INSIDE the skin. Let's take the skin off." Did the banana make a sound when you peeled it? Talk about how you peeled the skin off the banana. Did you peel the skin up or down?</p> <p data-bbox="678 541 1432 672"> When you smell a strawberry, what other foods smell like this fruit? The jelly in a sandwich? A scoop of strawberry ice cream?</p> <p data-bbox="678 688 1432 919"> If your child has some vision, you can let them cut the fruit with a plastic knife. This helps build fine motor skills. Use the hand under hand strategy if your child hesitates to hold the knife and allow your child to place their hand over yours as you slowly push downward on the knife to cut the fruit.</p> <p data-bbox="678 936 1432 1314"> Watch your child's facial expressions and body language while you try a new sensory experience. Do they turn away, fuss, or gag when the banana gets close? Do they lean toward the strawberry for a taste, or do they turn away? Remember, any reaction is OK! Acknowledge your child's feelings and consider introducing a different fruit or moving on to the next step in the recipe. Your child may need to be exposed to the texture, smell, and taste of a food up to 50 times before it becomes a favorite!</p>

Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
<p>3. Put one or two pieces of fruit into each ice cube cavity.</p>	<p> How many popsicles will you make? Count out loud the number of ice cube tray cavities as you fill each one with fruit.</p> <p> Make your popsicles with different combinations of fruit pieces. Are you making a pattern? Letting your child pick the piece to go inside the cavity encourages choice-making and independence. Picking up each piece of fruit builds strength and dexterity in your child's fingers. Or maybe your child prefers to use their spoon or fork to scoop or spear the fruit and put it into the cavities.</p> <p> How can you create visual contrast? Red strawberries in a white ice cube tray are easier to see than banana slices.</p>
<p>4. Using a measuring cup or small glass, fill the ice cube cavities with your child's favorite juice.</p>	<p> Allow your child to put their hands over yours as you pour the juice into each ice cube tray cavity.</p> <p> Talk about how you're filling each cavity with juice. You can say, "The strawberry is floating in the juice! Our trays are full now." Use action words like "fill," "pour," and "drip" to label what you and your child are doing.</p> <p> If some of the juice spills on your work surface, put a dab on your child's fingertips or lips. Maybe your child would like a cup of juice to drink.</p>
<p>5. Stick a craft stick into a piece of fruit inside the ice cube cavity.</p>	<p> Let your child hold a craft stick. Is it hard or soft? Is the surface smooth or rough?</p> <p> What sound does the stick make when you bang it on your work surface? Can you make a different sound when you bang two sticks? It's easy to make music in the kitchen!</p> <p> Talk about how many craft sticks you need for each popsicle. Do you have enough popsicles for everyone in your family?</p>

Recipe	Suggested Sensory Directions
6. Freeze the ice cube trays for at least six hours.	 Brr, the air feels cold when you open the freezer door! Everything is frozen.  Talk about what is inside the freezer. Label the foods. For example, “The ice cream is on the middle shelf so your sister can reach it. Listen to all the ice cubes rattling in the bin!” Talk about what happens when you take something out of the freezer. It begins to thaw, and sometimes it melts!
7. Remove the tray from the freezer and gently loosen the ice pops from the cavities. Put any ice pops you don’t eat in a Ziploc bag or other container to freeze for later.	 The ice pops taste like fresh fruit. How many licks does it take to finish one?
