

June

Harvests of the Month

First two weeks: Strawberries

Second two weeks: Kale

If these are not available in your school garden, they should be available at the Farmers' Market. Grocery stores often have locally-grown produce in season, too.

Please choose at least one activity from each week to go along with your weekly gardening time. You may also create your own lesson plan.



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
STRAWBERRY ACTIVITIES	Book – <i>Strawberries are Red</i> , by Petr Horacek, p. 3	Strawberry Mystery Bag and Taste Test, p. 3	Strawberries...A Look Inside p. 4	Recipe – Strawberry Pizzas, p. 5	Gardening!
STRAWBERRY ACTIVITIES	Book – <i>The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear</i> , by Audrey and Don Wood, p. 5	Strawberry... Where Do You Come From?, p. 5	Plant a Strawberry Jar, p. 6	Recipe – Strawberry Smoothies, p. 6	Gardening!
KALE ACTIVITIES	Book – <i>Oliver's Vegetables</i> , by Vivian French, p. 8	Kale Mystery Bag, p. 8	Kale Taste Test and Charting, p. 9	Recipe – Kale Chips, p. 9	Gardening!
KALE ACTIVITIES	Book – <i>Tops and Bottoms</i> , by Janet Stevens, p. 10	Farmer Visit, p. 10	Farmer's Market Scavenger Hunt p. 10	Recipe – Tropical Kale Smoothies, p. 11	Gardening!

Note: Please feel free to adapt these activities as necessary. Younger children may require additional assistance with some of the tasks required.



Farm to ECE Monthly Parent Update

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This month we grew _____ in our garden!

This month we tasted _____ and _____!
We thought _____ was _____!

This month we cooked _____ and _____!
_____ was our favorite!

This month we visited/had a visitor from _____!
We learned _____!

Insert picture here	Insert picture here
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Ask your children to share their favorite experiences and what they have learned from our garden, cooking, tasting, and field trips/visits! If you would like to participate or help during one of these activities, please let your child's teacher know!



Strawberries

Fun Facts

- Botany
 - Strawberries belong to the genus *Fragaria* in the rose family. There are about 12 species of strawberry plants.
 - The plants produce white or pink flowers. After flowering, strawberry plants require pollination by bees or other insects. On average it takes about 30 days for flowers to develop into fruit. The first crop can be harvested the year following planting.
 - The strawberry fruit grow on small, low growing perennial plants that prefer well-drained, sandy soil. The plants need plenty of water, warm days, and cool nights to produce lots of fruit.
 - Many strawberry plant varieties produce stolons (i.e. "runners") that spread out from the base and take root to form new plants.
- History
 - The history of the strawberry dates back 2,000 years!
 - Strawberries are indigenous to both the northern and southern hemispheres.
 - European explorers discovered strawberries in North America in 1588 when they landed on the shores of the state of Virginia. The explorers found tiny, sweet, deep red, wild strawberries. Early settlers in Massachusetts enjoyed eating strawberries grown by local American Indians who cultivated them as early as 1643.
 - The first "refrigerated" shipping across the United States occurred in 1843 when innovative growers in Cincinnati, Ohio spread ice on top of the strawberry boxes and sent them by train. By the middle of the 1800s many regions were cultivating strawberries.
- Nutrition
 - A ½ cup of sliced strawberries (about 4 large strawberries) provides: an excellent source of vitamin C (more than 80% of the recommended Daily Value) and a good source of fiber and folate.

Adapted from: http://harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/documents/Spring/Strawberries/Strawberries%20-%20Educator%27s%20Newsletter_Final.pdf

Activity: Book – *Strawberries are Red*, by Petr Horacek

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will identify the colors of different fruits from the story.

Materials: *Strawberries are Red*, by Petr Horacek

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Read *Strawberries are Red*, by Petr Horacek. After reading the story, consider asking children the following questions:
 - a. What color are strawberries? Can you name another red fruit?
 - b. What color are bananas? What color are they inside?
 - c. What color were the apples in the book? (Look and see.) Are all apples green? What other colors can they be? What color are they inside?
 - d. What color were the grapes in the book? Are all grapes purple? What other color can they be?
 - e. What recipe did all the fruits make at the end of the book?
 - f. What's your favorite fruit?

Activity: Strawberry Mystery Bag

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will identify strawberries as a lightweight, heart-shaped, red fruit with a cap of green leaves.
- Children will describe the outside appearance and smell of strawberries.

Materials: Fresh strawberries with leaves attached (1/child plus a few extra for the activity), plates (1/child), mystery bag/box, paper and pencil, marble

Preparation:



1. Gather materials.
2. Wash strawberries.
3. Reserve at least one pre-washed berry per child for tasting.
4. Place a strawberry in the mystery bag/box.
5. Keep the remainder out of sight of children, but have available in case “enthusiastic feelers” damage the fruit in the box and more are needed.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Explain to children that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have children wash their hands.
3. Introduce or reintroduce (if you have used it before) the mystery bag/box. One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box/bag with the child. Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he/she feels. After everyone has guessed, reveal the strawberry. Show the strawberry to the children. Note the children’s guesses that were close (round, a berry, food) or correct (strawberry). Offer each child a clean strawberry on a napkin to look at, touch, and smell. Talk about strawberries. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.
 - a. Is a strawberry a fruit or a vegetable? (Fruit)
 - b. What shape is it? (Shaped like a heart)
 - c. What color is the cap of leaves? (Green)
 - d. How do the seeds on the outside of it feel? (Rough, like sand in the sand box)
 - e. Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell sweet like a flower)
 - f. Is it light or heavy? (Light like a marble; let the children feel a marble)
 - g. Has anyone ever tasted a strawberry? (Yes or No)
4. Tasting:
 - a. Conclude the lesson by inviting the children to taste the strawberry. As necessary, remind the children how the group follows polite tasting manners:
 - i. “Don’t yuck my yum!” Remind children that we do not say negative things about how something tastes because it might offend someone and discourage others from trying something new.
 - ii. If a child tries something that they do not like, request that they quietly spit it out in a napkin so other children have an opportunity to taste it and form their own opinions.
 - iii. Encourage children to use respectful language like “I don’t care for it.”
 - iv. Remind children that sometimes it takes trying new things 10 times before you begin to like them.
 - b. Ask the children:
 - i. Is the strawberry soft/chewy/fleshy? (Fleshy)
 - ii. How does the strawberry taste? (Sweet)
5. Optional: Create a sticker chart for children to document whether they ‘liked’ the strawberry or ‘don’t like it yet’. A sample chart is included at the end of this document.

Activity: Strawberries...A Look Inside

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will describe the appearance, smell, and taste of a strawberry.
- Children will understand that all the entire strawberry can be eaten except the stem and leaves.

Materials: Strawberries (1/child), chef’s knife, cutting board, paper plates (1/child), napkins

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.
2. Wash strawberries.

Procedure:

1. Have children wash their hands.
2. Gather children around the cutting board, reminding them how to be safe around sharp knives. Review the parts of the strawberry, and ask children why it is important to wash them before eating them (because they grow on the ground).
3. Cut strawberries in half, place on paper plates, and distribute one to each child. Instruct children to look at the strawberry before eating it. Ask children:
 - a. What color is the inside of the strawberry? (Red)
 - b. What does the inside of the strawberry look like? (Red, fleshy)



- c. How does the inside feel? (Cool and smooth)
 - d. How do the strawberries smell? (Sweet)
4. Allow children to taste the strawberry, asking how the strawberry feels in their mouth (smooth, juicy, seeds may feel rough) and how it tastes. Explain that all of the strawberry can be eaten except the stem and leaves.

Activity: Recipe – Strawberry Pizzas

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will be able to make a simple snack with the strawberries.
- Children will taste a new food featuring strawberries.

Materials: Paper plates and napkins (1/child), plastic knives (1/child), Chef's knife, cutting board, oven/toaster oven

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 8, 10" whole wheat tortillas, cut into quarters (1/4 tortilla/child)
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 16 Strawberries (2/child)
- Cinnamon (1/8 tsp/child)
- Vegetable oil/spray (optional)

Procedure:

1. Wash and dry strawberries, and remove leaves and stems.
2. Cut tortillas into quarters.
3. Optional: Brush/spray tortillas with oil. Bake in oven/toaster oven at 350 degrees F for about 10 minutes until crispy.
4. Have children wash hands.
5. Provide each child with one tortilla triangle, a small amount of cream cheese and some cinnamon.
6. Instruct children to spread cream cheese on their tortillas and sprinkle with cinnamon. While they are doing this, slice the strawberries.
7. Provide each child with several slices of strawberry and instruct them to top their "pizzas" with the strawberry slices. Enjoy!
8. While children are enjoying their snacks, ask them to share how the strawberry smells, feels, and tastes.

Activity: Book – *The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear*, by Audrey and Don Wood

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will learn that strawberries and other fruits and vegetables are food for animals, too.
- Children will brainstorm what other animals might like strawberries or other fruits and vegetables.

Materials: *The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear*, by Audrey and Don Wood

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Ask children if they can think of anyone besides people who might like to eat strawberries. Allow children to share ideas.
3. Read book with children. Ask children what other animals might like to eat strawberries (rabbits, bugs, birds, etc.). Ask children what other fruits or vegetables animals might like to eat (lettuce, tomatoes, other berries, etc.). Have children share ways they might keep animals from eating THEIR strawberries (fence, scarecrow, etc.).

Activity: Strawberry, where do you come from?

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 30 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will describe how strawberries grow from a seed into a plant that produces strawberries.
- Children will describe the resources needed to grow strawberries.

Materials: Packet of strawberry seeds (or one fresh strawberry per child), clear plastic cup, child-size magnifying glass, ruler, strawberry plant picture

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.



Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Explain to children that you are going to learn about how strawberries grow. Show children the strawberry seeds on the strawberry.
3. Let children touch the seeds and look at them with the magnifying glass. What shape are they?
4. Ask children if they know what the seeds need to grow into a strawberry plant. Identify correct answers; explain that the seeds grow in soil and need help from sun and water to turn into plants. Using the ruler, show children that seeds must be planted at least 12 inches apart to have room to grow.
5. Show children the picture of the strawberry plant (or a real plant if you have one!). Point out the white flowers that bloom on the stems, and explain that this is where a strawberry will grow. Ask if children know how to tell when a strawberry is ready to be picked (when it is shiny, bright red, and plump).

Activity: Plant a Strawberry Jar**Ages:** 3-5 years**Time:** 30 minutes**Objective(s):**

- Children will describe the resources needed to grow strawberries.
- Children will experience planting a strawberry start.

Materials: Strawberry jar (container with openings or pockets on sides) or other container (at least 8" deep and 8-10" in diameter), strawberry starts (small plants), soil, watering can/hose/etc.**Preparation:**

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Plant starts can be found at local nurseries or Farmers' Markets. Decide on a space to keep the pot once it is planted. Assemble materials at this location before bringing children outside. Alternatively, plant strawberries in a garden patch if space allows.
3. Ask children what a strawberry plant needs to grow (sun, soil, water, air). Allow children to help fill pot with soil, describing the soil as they do. Explain that the soil has nutrients (like food for plants) that the plants need to grow and produce strawberries.
4. If planting a strawberry jar, allow children to assist with the following steps: Layer potting soil level to the first openings of the jar. Gently remove the plants from their pots and ease through the pocket opening. Spread the roots with care and cover with soil. Water enough to moisten soil but not drench. Continue, ending with 3 starts planted in the top center of the pot. Water the plants.
5. If planting a container, allow children to assist with the following steps: Fill the container 2/3 full of potting soil. Remove the start from its pot and gently loosen roots. Place the start in the center of a single container or 8 inches apart in larger containers. Cover with soil and water to moisten but not drench.

Activity: Recipe – Strawberry Smoothies**Ages:** 6 months-5 years**Time:** 15 minutes**Objective(s):**

- Children will taste strawberries in a combination food.
- Children will describe different ways to eat strawberries.

Materials: Blender, measuring cups, paper cups (1/child)**Servings:** 17, 4 oz servings**Ingredients:**

- 1 ½ cups frozen whole strawberries, unsweetened
- 1 ½ cups frozen sliced peaches
- 1 ½ cups low-fat or fat-free milk
- 8 oz low-fat or fat-free plain yogurt

Procedure:

1. Have children wash hands.
2. Allow children to help measure ingredients and pour into the blender. Cover the blender and puree until smooth. Serve immediately!



3. While children are helping, ask them what other ways they can eat strawberries (on a salad, as jam/jelly, as fruit salad, etc.). Ask children their favorite way to eat strawberries.



Kale

Fun Facts

- Botany
 - Kale is a member of the cabbage family. This group is also known as *cole crops* or *brassic*as and includes broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower.
 - Kale is a cool-season vegetable grown for its leaves, which taste sweeter after exposure to cold temperatures.
- History
 - Kale may be popular now, but people have been growing this super food for more than 2,000 years. Popular in Europe during Roman times and the Middle Ages, it arrived in the U.S. in the 17th century.
 - Kale is such a popular vegetable in Scotland that being invited to “come to kale” was an invitation to dinner.
- Nutrition
 - Some research suggests that regularly eating vegetables in the cabbage family, like kale, helps lower the risk of certain cancers.
 - Kale contains lutein, an antioxidant, which helps create the plant’s color and helps protect our vision.
 - One cup of chopped raw kale provides more than 100% of the recommended daily amount of vitamins A and K and a good source of vitamin C and calcium.
- Selection and Storage
 - Choose dark colored kale bunches with small to medium leaves. Avoid brown or yellow leaves.
 - Store kale in a plastic bag in the coldest part of the fridge for 3-5 days.

Adapted from: <http://mgsantaclara.ucanr.edu/garden-help/vegetables/kale/> and <https://fruitsandveggies.org/fruits-and-veggies/kale/>

Activity: Book – *Oliver’s Vegetables*, by Vivian French

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will identify vegetables they already like.
- Children will name vegetables they don’t like yet, but are willing to try.

Materials: *Oliver’s Vegetables*, by Vivian French

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Ask children to name vegetables they like to eat.
3. Ask children if there are vegetables they don’t like to eat yet. Explain that sometimes you have to try a new food several times before you like it or try it in a new way.
4. Read book with children. Discuss ways they might try vegetables they don’t like yet that may taste good.

Activity: Kale Mystery Bag

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will identify kale as a thick, leafy vegetable with rough, curly edges.
- Children will describe the outside appearance and feel of kale.

Materials: Fresh kale, mystery box/bag

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
1. Out of sight of children, place a leaf of kale in the mystery box/bag.
2. Introduce or reintroduce the Mystery Box/Bag, if you have used it before. One at a time, ask each child to come and feel inside the box or bag without looking. If a child seems afraid, feel inside the box/bag with the child. Ask each child to describe quietly to you what he/she feels. After everyone has guessed, reveal the kale. Show the kale to the children. Note the children’s guesses that were close (lettuce, leaf) or correct (kale). Pass the kale leaf around for children to look at, touch, and smell. Talk about kale. Ask the questions below and any other questions you like.
 - a. Is a kale a fruit or a vegetable? (Vegetable)



- b. What shape is it? (Long, leaf-shaped with curly edges)
- c. What color is it? (Green, depending on variety)
- d. How does it feel? (Rough on the edges, smooth on the inside, thick)
- e. Does it have a smell? (May have no smell or smell like grass)
- f. Is it light or heavy? (Light)

Activity: Kale Taste Test and Charting

Ages: 2-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will taste raw kale.
- Children will describe the taste and texture of raw kale (chewy, bitter, depending on the variety you use).

Materials: Kale (1 leaf/child)

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.
2. Wash kale, slice into smaller pieces if desired.
3. Reserve at least one pre- washed leaf/piece per child for tasting.

Procedure:

1. Explain that we should always wash our hands before preparing and eating food. Have the children wash their hands. If this is the first activity involving food tasting, talk with the children about polite food tasting habits:
 - a. "Don't yuck my yum!" Remind children that we do not say negative things about how something tastes because it might offend someone and discourage others from trying something new.
 - b. If a child tries something that they do not like, request that they quietly spit it out in a napkin so other children have an opportunity to taste it and form their own opinions.
 - c. Encourage children to use respectful language like "I don't care for it."
 - d. Remind children that sometimes it takes trying new things 10 times before you begin to like them.
2. Provide each child with a piece of kale. Invite children to taste the kale. As necessary, remind the children how the group follows polite tasting manners. Ask the children:
 - a. Is the kale soft/chewy/fleshy? (Chewy)
 - b. How does the kale taste? (Bitter, grassy, mild, depending on variety)
3. Optional: Create a sticker chart for children to document whether they 'liked' the strawberry or 'don't like it yet'. A sample chart is included at the end of this document.

Activity: Recipe – Kale Chips

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 30 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will try kale prepared in a new way.

Materials: Several baking sheets, measuring cups, measuring spoons

Servings: ~10 tastes

Ingredients:

- 1-large bunch of kale
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ¼ tsp sea salt

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Have children wash their hands.
3. Explain that you are going to try making kale in a new way to see which way they like to eat it better: raw or baked. (Ask children to remember tasting the raw kale.)
4. Allow children to rinse and dry kale leaves. Drizzle the olive oil over the kale. Have children rub the oil onto the leaves. (This coats the leaves and softens them.)
5. Instruct children to spread their leaves on the baking sheets so that the leaves do not overlap. Ask children to sprinkle sea salt over the leaves.
6. Bake at 400 degrees F for 8-12 minutes, rotating baking sheets from top to bottom of cooking multiple sheets at once. Check kale at 8 minutes to prevent burning the edges.



7. Cool and serve! Ask children which way they prefer to eat kale. Explain that sometimes you might like a food when it is cooked differently, so it is important to always try something before deciding if you like it.

Activity: Book – *Tops and Bottoms*, by Janet Stevens

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 15 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will identify the edible part of a kale plant as the “top” (leaves).
- Children will identify other vegetables whose “tops” are edible.

Materials: *Tops and Bottoms*, by Janet Stevens

Preparation:

1. Gather materials.

Procedure:

1. Gather children in a circle on the floor.
2. Ask children if they know which part of the kale plant is edible (the leaves, the “top”).
3. Read *Tops and Bottoms*, by Janet Stevens aloud to children.
4. Discuss other vegetables whose “tops” are eaten (spinach, broccoli, lettuce, celery, etc.).

Activity: Farmer Visit

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 1-2 hours

Objective(s):

- Children will make connections between where and how their food is grown and how it gets to their table.
- Children will be engaged in an early step in the growing and procuring process of food.

Materials: N/A

Preparation:

1. Plan ahead for this one! Connect with a local farmer (see Farm to ECE Toolkit for suggestions, or contact Farm to ECE staff for assistance) and schedule a time when someone can come in to share with children about the farming process.

Procedure: N/A

Activity: Farmer’s Market Scavenger Hunt

Ages: 3-5 years

Time: 30 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will become familiar with a Farmer’s Market.
- Children will engage in searching for specific fruits and vegetables using clues.

Materials: Printed clues for each child or group of children, notebooks for children to record findings, if desired.

Preparation:

2. Plan ahead! Plan field trip to the Boulder County Farmers Market.
3. Prepare children by explaining that farmers’ markets are places where local farmers bring the food they grow to sell directly to you, without using grocery stores or trucks to ship food far away.
4. Explain that the fruits and vegetables at a farmers’ market are grown near their homes and schools.
5. Share with children that they are going to go on a scavenger hunt, looking for certain fruits and vegetables, when they get to the farmers’ market. If this is your center’s first visit to the farmers’ market, you may want to visit ahead of time to get to know the layout, etc.

Procedure:

1. Allow children to walk around the farmer’s market to become familiar with it. Share clues with children, and instruct them to search for a fruit or vegetable that matches each clue. Children may record findings in a notebook, or a teacher or parent may keep track, or teachers may photograph children’s finding.
2. Optional extensions: Challenge children to get to know different farmers, asking about how they grow their food or what other things they have on their farm. Ask children to compare prices from different farms. Consider why certain fruits or vegetables are not found at the farmers’ market (not in season, don’t grow here, weather destroyed this year’s crop, etc).
 - a. Clues:
 - i. I am green, but when you cut me, I am red. You eat me in the summer time. I am a fruit. What am I?
 - ii. I am a vegetable that grows in the ground. I am crunchy and I am good for your eyes. You can pull me from the ground by my green, leafy top. What am I?



- iii. I am a fruit, but people sometimes think I am a vegetable. I am squishy and red. I am used to make ketchup and spaghetti sauce. What am I?
- iv. I am a dark red or purple root. You can eat my root AND my leaves. I am crunchy and taste earthy. What am I?
- v. I am long like a banana, but I am green. I am used to make pickles. What am I?
- vi. I am a green vegetable and full of Vitamin C. You might think I look like a tree, but you can eat me! What am I?
- vii. I am a green vegetable. My leaves have curly edges that you can eat. I can taste bitter if you eat me before I am cooked. What am I?
- viii. I am a heart-shaped fruit. I grow on the ground, and my seeds are so small you might need a magnifying glass to see them. What am I?
- ix. I am a heart-shaped leaf. You can eat me in a salad, a smoothie, or mixed in with pasta or pizza. I have a mild taste. What am I?
- x. I am a red and white root that you can eat! I might taste bitter. What am I?

b. Answers:

- i. Watermelon
- ii. Carrot
- iii. Tomato
- iv. Beet
- v. Cucumber
- vi. Broccoli
- vii. Kale
- viii. Strawberry
- ix. Spinach
- x. Radish

Activity: Recipe – Tropical Kale Smoothies

Ages: 6 months-5 years

Time: 20 minutes

Objective(s):

- Children will try kale prepared in a new way.
- Children will learn how to prepare a smoothie.

Materials: Blender, cups (1/child)

Servings: 13, 4 oz servings

Ingredients:

- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 banana
- ½ cup pineapple (frozen)
- ½ cup chopped kale, stems removed
- ¼ cup plain Greek yogurt

Procedure:

1. Prep fruit and kale ahead of time.
2. Have children wash hands.
3. Allow children to assist with measuring and pouring ingredients into blender. (If doubling recipe, smoothies need to be made in two batches!).
4. Cover and puree until smooth. Serve immediately!
5. Discuss with children their favorite way to eat kale. Can they taste the kale in the smoothie? What else unexpected might be good in a smoothie (spinach, peanut butter, milk, carrot juice, etc)? Brainstorm other ways to eat kale (in pasta, pureed into a sauce like pesto, in soups, etc).



Name of Taste Test Here

"I LIKE THIS"



"ME GUSTA"

"I DON'T LIKE THIS YET"



"NO ME GUSTA
TODAVÍA"

