

## TH Activity Plan – That’s Bananas

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Photo by USA Today, S. Ghani, Harry N. Abrams & Highlights



**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:** Participants will learn about bananas, with both educational and sensory activities.

**THERAPEUTIC GOALS:**

**Cognitive/Intellectual:** Expand knowledge about bananas

**Physical:** Improve nutritional intake; increase level of activity

**Psychological/Emotional:** Elevate mood using humor

**Sensory:** Attend to seated activity for 10 min. following sensory activity; identify personal alertness level

**Social:** Integrate humor into inter-personal interactions; self-regulate behavior in a group setting using [conscious discipline](#) or positive action strategies

**Materials**

Bananas, napkins, wipes

Pre-printed banana jokes, construction paper, stapler

Pre-printed charades ideas, blank slips of paper - one with an X

**STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:**

- 1. Pre-Session Preparation:**
- Facilitator begins session by starting with a [joke about bananas](#) appropriate for age of participants. The theme of bananas is introduced & a run-through of activities & format presented (tasting, fact-sharing while seated, active hands-on fun activities).
- Participants eat banana using sensory stimulation – touching & smelling peel & fruit, taking time to taste, savor & describe flavor, smell, color, & texture. Jokes allowed – facilitator should have some ready for this segment (*Did you hear about the banana who opened a smoothie stand? He really knows how to blend in.*)
- Moving into the seated - more passive segment of session, facilitator introduces banana facts including nutrition, bananas as great snack food, multiple varieties of bananas (see below for facts). Asking questions can elicit and engage participants with the intent of getting them to think about food choices, food preferences, cultural preferences for plantains or bananas etc. If working on sensory goal of extending seated attention, this segment would be the duration related to the desired goal & outcome.
- Following the seated segment, the active banana-focused activities can include jokes & creation of joke books, monkey or banana-themed charades, concluding with everyone going bananas. Make this conclusion funny and memorable with exaggerated movements. Adult facilitators are allowed to act silly, wear a banana hat or yellow clothing and lead the group in acting bananas.

**APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS:** Focusing on one fruit, bananas in this case, can open up discussion on wider topics and lifestyle choices related to nutrition. Injecting humor typically allows participants to better retain information. Using a variety of hands-on smaller activities should appeal to most in the group regardless of age. Facilitators with a sense of humor can strengthen the therapeutic bond using this and other techniques. A variety of therapeutic goals can be integrated into the session.

For people with attention challenges, using *That’s Bananas* session’s format can address therapeutic goal of lengthening attention by introducing and tasting bananas (sensory activity), followed by a seated activity for 10

minutes (or appropriate length of time for client). This therapeutic goal is used with school-aged children most frequently. It is most effective therapy when the participant is aware of the goal and in agreement and working towards the desired outcome of extending attention. The seated, fact sharing part where the attention or attending to task occurs, is followed by a number of fun, active, banana-focused activities, this being a mix of experiential, quiet, active and therapeutic segments. Making the joke book can be used as the attending to/ seated portion.

**SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:** Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. Allergies, food or swallowing issues or contraindications with medication need to be identified prior to session.

**NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** Banana facts: Bananas are the most popular fruit in the U.S. with Americans eating an average of 28 pounds per person each year – that’s 112 bananas each! Bananas are an excellent source of vitamin C, vitamin B6, potassium, iron and fiber with trace amounts of cholesterol, fat or sodium. Nutritionally dense, bananas are recommended snack food. Bananas contain chemicals and the 5-HTP compound that makes serotonin and melatonin, involved in regulating neurotransmitters impacting mood and sleep (Western Michigan University, 2024). There are hundreds of varieties of bananas. The most commonly eaten one in North American is the Cavendish, also called the dessert banana because it is soft and sweet. This fruit does not grow on trees but rather is classified as a berry growing on a giant herb plant as tall as 20 feet. The hanging fruit clusters are called hands with 10-20 bananas called fingers. Bananas are distant cousins to ginger, turmeric and cardamom (FAOUN, 2024).

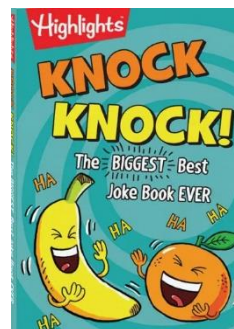
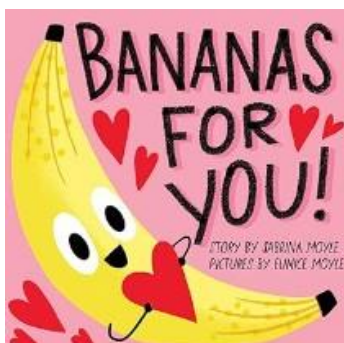
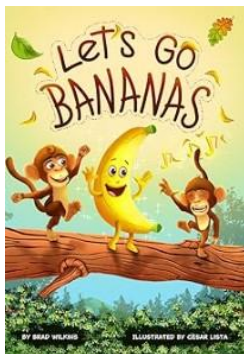
Bananas jokes abound on the internet. Sharing banana jokes with pre-printed pages that can be made into small joke books can promote interactions, laughter and engage participants. “Why was the banana so upset? Someone mistook him for a plantain.”

Banana-themed games. *Monkey See Monkey Do* - Person with X on their paper slip is the monkey who does an action like snapping fingers. The last person to join in becomes the next monkey.

*Monkey Business* – Charade ideas printed on slips can be drawn from a hat, these relating to bananas: peeling a banana, slipping on a banana, banana split, fruity goodness, and going bananas. Conclude with everyone acting bananas!

#### REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

- Birthday Party Ideas. (2023). [Gone bananas-13 yr-monkey business \(charades\)](#).  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAOUN) (2024). [Markets and trade. Bananas](#).  
Kaye, D. (2020). [110 seriously ap-peeling banana jokes for kids of all ages](#). Scary Mommy.com.  
Western Michigan University. (2024). [5 power foods to boost your mood](#). Wmich.edu/wellness/5powerfoods.  
Wilkins, B., McKinney, R., Listra, C., & Ghani, S. (2024). *Let’s go bananas*. Indie Publisher.



Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2024.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2024.