This is a simple, hands-on recipe that I have used in my classroom to run a weekly dog treat service. It addresses many skills and concepts and can be taught on multiple levels. It is easily done at home, as well as in the classroom, and can be used to generate numerous related activities, such as advertising, packaging and marketing.

You will need:

- 1 clove of minced garlic
- 2 cups dry oatmeal
- 1 individual container of applesauce
- 1 egg

Combine all the ingredients, mix well and drop from a spoon onto a cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees about 15 minutes, or until lightly browned. Makes about 12.

This activity can be taught individually, in a small group, or in multiple small groups. I like to repeat the same lesson at least three times (including exploring tools and materials) to increase independence and reinforce concepts. Begin by exploring the ingredients. Define what category the ingredients belong to (classification skills). Start with the simple direction, “reach out and touch” or, “reach out and find.” Talk about the different textures and materials. Identify the ingredients as wet or dry, hard and soft (Earth & Space Science). Compare the ingredients. Manipulate the parts. Let each student explore a different ingredient and describe it to his or her peers (language skills). Pass the ingredients around the circle. Model how to use a peer’s name to get their attention and how to carry out the appropriate social script (social skills). Do the same lesson with the tools you will be using. Use switches to enable nonverbal students to interact, e.g., program the switch with the modeled script, “David, here’s the applesauce, your turn to explore it.”

The ingredients for this recipe can be combined in any order, but it is helpful to structure the steps to build sequencing skills. I like to start with classifying the ingredients into wet and dry, adding the dry ingredients first. Make simple recipe cards, using whatever medium is appropriate. For nonreaders, use pictures or tangible representations of each ingredient. I like to use Mayer Johnson pictures, but you can cut pictures out of
magazines, draw your own pictures, or use a combination of pictures and functional vocabulary. To use tangible representations, fasten a representation from each of the four ingredients onto index cards or cardboard (e.g., the lid from the applesauce, a handful of oatmeal, egg shells). To introduce the idea of following a recipe, try placing the individual index cards for each step in a bin and have the student remove one card at a time. You can also use a single pattern card, laying out the ingredients left to right to illustrate the sequence. As the student builds skill, combine the recipe cards into a book, or transition to a more standard recipe format presenting the steps on a single page.

You have a lot of options for how to actually assemble the ingredients. I like to start by having the pre-measured ingredients set out on a tray. Each student can assemble all the ingredients independently, or work cooperatively in a group effort (with each student in charge of one ingredient). Provide modeling and assistance as necessary and remember to clearly label each action. As your students develop independence, work on collecting and organizing supplies, measuring ingredients (measuring skills) and following a recipe independently (reading).

Work on counting skills, packaging the dog treats into Ziploc bags, paper bags or plastic containers. If needed, use a jig to hold the bags open, or have a peer hold the bag open as another student counts into it. Package the treats individually or as a group. Develop functional money skills by marketing the dog treats. Set up a delivery service. Have a posted sign-up sheet, or knock on doors with a clipboard and take orders (social skills). Make a checklist with pictures of your regular customers. Set up a weekly dog treat store. Sell bags of five dog treats for a quarter. Limit sales to “quarters only” if needed (coin recognition). At home, take orders from relatives and neighbors for delivery or set up a dog treat stand. At the end of the day, count the proceeds. Work on trading four quarters for dollar bills. Make experience-stories (composition) using the student’s own words, remnants of the activity or pictures. Use the computer to make switch operated follow-up stories with voice output.

Most importantly, remember to make teaching fun!

**Note:** These treats don’t have a long shelf life, freeze them if you are not delivering them on the same day.