Fun not Fuss with Food: Having fun with food

Try using food activities to help your child become familiar with foods and nutrition. Involve your children in basic food preparation like making sandwiches. They will learn new skills (such as washing, mixing, measuring and stirring). Learning about food can encourage your child to try new foods. Try the following helpful ways to have fun with food.

Nature and numbers

Food activities can include numbers and nature in many different ways. Here are some examples:

- Start with a recipe for fruit salad. Children can count the pieces of fruit or the number of different types, colours or shapes of fruit. Let your child enjoy the fruit salad as a healthy snack.
- Children can experiment with different types of fruit or vegetables to see what happens when they are frozen. Try peeled and quartered oranges, watermelon balls, sliced banana, whole grapes and pieces of pineapple. Try eating them while they are still frozen.
- Count while shopping. Children can count the number of oranges or apples placed in a bag or the number of loaves of bread in the trolley.

Physical activities

Gross motor skills—from an early age

- Children can wash lettuce leaves in a tub of water and spread them on towels for patting dry.
- Children can be involved in digging and preparing garden beds with shovels, forks and rakes.

Hand–eye coordination—from about 3 years of age

- Children can put some milk, yoghurt with or without fresh fruit into a container with a lid. Fix the lid securely and shake.
- Children can be involved in planting seedlings (e.g. poking holes in prepared soil, planting a seed, covering over with soil and watering).

Fine motor skills—older children

- Children can prepare pizza with supervision. They can chop, slice or grate the ingredients such as ham, tomatoes, onions, mushrooms, pineapple and cheese. Spread the base with tomato paste and top with a selection of ingredients.
- Make a face pizza, or a clock pizza. Prepare ingredients and let the children pretend they work in a pizza shop.
- Cook pizza in the oven until golden. Remember to always supervise your child in the kitchen with a knife or hot oven.

Games and activities

Food art

- Use foods such as potatoes, apples, or carrots. Cut designs into the food (such as a cross, circle, square, triangle). Paint the shapes with bright coloured non-toxic paint and press food onto paper to create beautiful pictures.

Food music

- Fill plastic containers or plastic bottles with beans or rice and secure lid. Use as maracas to make different sounds.
- Fill plastic jars with different amounts of liquid. When hit with a spoon or stick, they will make different sounds.

Food smells

- Put a variety of herbs and spices in separate jars so your child can smell each one (e.g. herbs: basil, parsley, thyme; and spices: nutmeg, ginger, turmeric).

Acknowledgement

Information is drawn from:


This information is also the result of input and effort from many health professionals in Queensland. Their assistance with the content is greatly appreciated.