

Food Play

Activity Bank

Purpose:

To increase comfort, familiarity, and sensory acceptance of a wide variety of foods through hands on, pressure-free play

Tactile Play

(Touch-Based Exposure)



- Pasta shape sorting (cooked & uncooked)
- “Treasure hunt” in cooked spaghetti
- Smear yogurt or applesauce with fingers on a tray
- Food finger painting with purées or puddings
- Mystery bag of fruits & veggies — touch & guess

Oral Motor Exploration (Mouth & Jaw Prep)



- Blow cotton balls with a straw before meals
- Use chewy foods (licorice, dried mango) for jaw work
- Sip smoothies through different width straws
- Taste-test temperature: frozen peas vs. warm carrots
- Make “crunch contests” with apples or cucumbers



Important Notes for Parents:

- You don’t need to eat anything during food play — exposure is the goal.
- Always supervise toddlers with food (choking risk).
- Repeat exposure **(10–15x)** is key for picky eaters to become comfortable.
- If your child is extremely resistant, start small: touching, smelling, licking.



Creative Play with Food

- Build faces on toast with fruits and veggies
- Stack fruit kabobs on skewers
- Use cookie cutters on sandwiches or melons
- Make “banana sushi” with nut butter and cereal
- Create “food paint” using purées and pastry brushes



Science + Sensory

Mix colors with yogurt & food dye

- Sink or float with different snacks
- Freeze-dry fruit taste test
- Let kids wash and prep produce
- Food stamping (cut celery stalks, potatoes, etc.)

Thank you for being here!



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