

Food Activities for Young Children



Children enjoy exploring foods by looking, touching, smelling, and tasting. Offer simple food activities even if you don't provide meals or snacks. The [Food Flair](#) manual is full of great ideas.

Try This!

- Match whole fruits and vegetables with cut-up fruits and vegetables
- Compare farm fresh produce with grocery store produce
- Dehydrate fruits and vegetables – (borrow dehydrators from CCRR)
- Taste and compare leafy greens like iceberg lettuce, romaine, spinach, Swiss chard, and kale
- Have a “Down Under” party - sample vegetables that grow underground (e.g. carrots, potatoes, beets, turnips)
- Grow some peas or cherry tomatoes - taste them fresh from the vine!

Provide opportunities to:

- Mash, sift, scoop, pour, stir
- Wash vegetables and fruit
- Peel oranges or eggs
- Grate with a plastic grater
- Knead dough
- Spread peanut butter on toast
- Add toppings to pizza
- Set the table and wash dishes

Did You Know?

Children are more willing to try foods they have helped to prepare or serve.

Food activities can help build vocabulary and develop skills like counting, identifying shapes, texture, colours, and patterns.



Make and Taste Cold* Food Activities

- Smoothies
- Fruit and yogurt parfaits
- Trail mix
- Hummus
- Green salads
- Yogurt based dips
- Fresh salsa (tomato or fruit)

* Have each child prepare his own portion or have staff prepare as a demonstration

Make and Taste Hot* Food Activities

- Applesauce
- Vegetable soup (“Stone Soup”)
- Cheese and vegetable pizza
- Sweet potato fries
- Spaghetti squash
- Hard boiled eggs
- Roasting pumpkin seeds

* Have staff complete all cooking tasks and handling of hot pans/pots.



Food Safety Tips

Help children wash their hands and tie back long hair before handling food.

Young children need frequent reminders not to lick

Lettuce Boats

Lettuce boats (romaine, iceberg, or butter lettuce leaves) can be filled with fresh chopped or grated vegetables (e.g. carrots, tomato, cucumber, red bell pepper, mushrooms), mashed avocado, rinsed canned beans or corn, grated cheese and even canned tuna, salmon, cooked meat or chicken if your license allows.

Preparing the Toppings:

- Involve the children in washing the vegetables and preparing the toppings according to their abilities.
- Put each topping into a small bowl.

Building the boat:

- Have children spread some avocado on their lettuce “boat”
- Pass the topping bowls around. Have the children add toppings of their choice.
- Add salad dressing if desired.
- Fold the sides of the lettuce over the toppings.



Need more ideas?

See the Interior Health website for additional resources including Food Flair (a manual for child care providers containing food activities, feeding tips, and recipes).

www.interiorhealth.ca/childcarefood