



Food For Thought

Healthy Ideas for Preschoolers

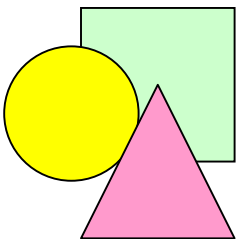
Fun Activities with Food

Children learn by playing. They can learn about healthy food through fun activities. Take advantage of this last month of summer to make learning about healthy food fun for your children.

Focus on Shapes and Colors

One day or at one meal talk about the color and shape of foods. Build a snack or meal around one color or shape. For example, an “orange” snack could be cantaloupe, cheddar cheese, carrot sticks, orange juice, or orange wedges.

A snack built around the shape “round” might be grapes, cherries, carrots sliced across, cheese slices cut in circles, or sandwiches cut in circles with a cookie cutter. Be creative with shapes.



Numbers

Serve a meal based on numbers, for example, one glass of milk, one slice of meat, 2 slices of bread, three pieces of lettuce, four carrot sticks and five strawberries. Cutting a food into many pieces lets older children understand fractions and also eat fruits and vegetables.



Selecting food

When you go to the grocery store let each child pick a fruit or vegetable they would like to eat this week. Encourage them to pick a food they have not tried before.

When you get home let the kids help you prepare the food. Talk about the color and shape of the food, and why it is a good food for them. Have them draw a picture of their food and put it on the refrigerator door. After several weeks they will have an art gallery of healthy foods.



Food Choices

Help the kids prepare 2 or 3 healthy snacks. Put these in plastic containers or plastic bags and store on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. They can then help themselves to the treats they helped make at snack time.

Involving kids in choosing and preparing food can help them develop healthy food habits.

Reading About Food

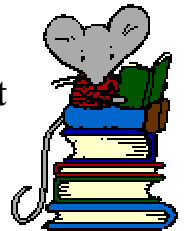
There are a lot of good books for kids about food. Many of the books teach about food and about other things too.

Many books for kids are available at your local library. Take the kids for a cool afternoon visit and select a couple of books that you can share during the next week.

Two books you might find available are:

Shapes for Lunch by Charles Reasoner

The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food by Stan and Jan Berenstain





Rainbow Ribbons

These colorful snacks-on-a-stick are almost too pretty to eat. But the kids seem to manage anyway.

Clean and cut fruit and place in separate bowls if you want the kids to make their own Rainbow Ribbons. Place fruit on skewers in order listed to make a rainbow.

Talk about the colors and the shapes of fruit as you make the Rainbows.

Assorted fruit in the colors of the rainbow:

Red – watermelon balls, strawberries, or cherries



Orange – orange sections or cantaloupe balls



Yellow – pineapple cubes or banana slices



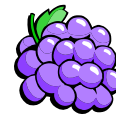
Green – green grapes, honeydew melon balls, or kiwifruit slices



Blue – large whole blueberries



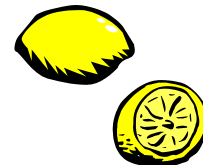
Purple – purple grapes



Use very thin pretzel sticks as skewers for young children.

Fruit Dip

- 2 cups (16 ounces) reduced-fat sour cream
- 1 package (1 ounce) sugar-free instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1/4 cup fat-free milk
- 4 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel



In a bowl, whisk the sour cream, pudding mix, lemon juice and peel until blended. Serve with fruit. Yield: 2 cups.

Nutritional information: One serving (1/3 cup dip) equals 127 calories, 7 g fat (5 g saturated fat), 27 mg cholesterol, 255 mg sodium.

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