

Food activities for playdates and parties

Rainbow foods

1. Make a large coloured rainbow using cardboard or paper and put it on the floor.
2. Collect pictures of fruits and vegetables. These can be from magazines, catalogues, colour-in stencils or you could draw some.
3. Ask each child to take a picture, name the food and colour and put it on the rainbow.
4. When all the pictures are in position get the children to count the number of foods on each section of the rainbow.

You could add to this activity by making a rainbow salad or rainbow fruit kebabs.

Rainbow salad

Try cherry tomatoes, capsicum, snow peas, corn, carrot, red cabbage and beetroot.

Rainbow fruit kebabs

Try a mixture of oranges, rockmelon, watermelon, strawberries, grapes (cut in half for children under three), bananas, pineapple and blueberries.



Growing foods

Make some hairy heads or spiky monsters.

1. Decorate a container with a face. You can use small glass jars, old cups, yoghurt pots or even half a potato with the middle scooped out.
2. Place some damp cotton wool or potting mix in the middle of the container and sprinkle with mustard or cress seeds.
3. Get the children to put the hairy head or spiky monster in a warm sunny spot and wait (don't forget to water if it's hot!).
4. When it has grown, trim the 'hair' and use the shoots in a salad or sandwich.

Have a tasting party

1. Check to see if any of the children have allergies or intolerances.
2. Collect a range of everyday foods from the five food groups for tasting.
3. Make sure you have some old favourites as well as some less familiar foods. For example you might like to try eggplant, feijoa, brussels sprouts or radish alongside banana and apple.
4. Chop up larger foods and arrange each food on a different plate.
5. Give each child their own cup or plate to put the foods onto.
6. Spend some time talking about the foods: what they look like, what they smell like, what they feel like, what they might taste like or even where they are from.
7. Offer everyone the chance to be 'food tasters' but don't pressure any of the children to try the foods.

Food activities for playdates and parties

8. Get them to draw a picture of the food that they liked best.

Getting busy with food

Choose simple recipes to make with children. Match the difficulty of the recipe to the children's ability.

An easy option is to make 'survival packs':

- Get the children to decorate their own paper bag, or make simple cups or bags of their own from paper.
- Put out bowls of different dry foods such as dried fruit, shredded coconut, plain popcorn (for children three years and older) and bran flakes. Don't forget a scooping spoon.
- Get the children to scoop whatever they like into their 'survival packs' and head outside for a walk or a play in the garden.

Don't forget food safety! Get the children to wash their hands well before working with food.

