

# 5 Reasons why playing with food can help children try new foods!

1. When we introduce a new food through play there is no pressure or anxiety around the child having to taste it or eat it.
2. It is a pre-feeding strategy that enables the child to explore and interact with different foods that they would not normally interact with or eat. It helps them to become more familiar with the foods in a way that is not confrontational but rather fun.
3. We need to remember that children learn through play and that we can use this to learn about food. So, allow them to explore and interact with foods. Talk about what the food feels like, smells like and tastes like and provide them with lots of opportunities to explore these different senses. Make it fun and use the language they know e.g. making a smiley face, walking their toys through a broccoli forest, or wiggly worms with spaghetti
4. The senses taste and smell are closely connected. If children become familiar and comfortable with a smell of a food that is another step towards eliminating the unknown and taking a bite.
5. Food play contributes to the hand-to-mouth connection. Interacting and manipulating food with our hands can help desensitize a child to different foods and encourage them to try new foods



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