

The Very Hungry Toddler



In a nido Important aspects regarding food

- Relationship with mother changes
- Other people can help feed child
- Independence
- New routine develops
- Is child weaning: may not eat at table
- Grace and courtesy table manners
- Development of the hand
- Control of movement
- Development of language
- Change in food and how to eat it
- food is a sensorial experience: color texture smell taste sound of chewing or peeling
- Favorable to digestion
- Ambience as part of food experience

In a toddler room Important aspects regarding food

- food is a sensorial experience: color texture smell taste sound of chewing or peeling
- Favorable to digestion
- Ambience as part of food experience
- Prep: need a plan, kitchen area, well balanced menu, quality of food, beautiful and purposeful activities

ORGANIZING ASPECTS REGARDING FOOD

ACQUIRING FOOD

A protocol must be developed to determine how the food will get into the classroom. Is it part of the classroom budget? Are the families responsible? Where will it be purchased from? Organic? Non-organic? Other considerations: state regulations; choking issues; allergies and food restrictions/intolerances.

Steps:

1. Create menu
2. Plan and prep food activities

FOOD PREPARATION AS A LESSON

In the prepared environment we are able to use food as a way to:

- create an opportunity for education
- understand the various relationships with food
- aid the transition from breastfeeding to healthy food choices
- set a nutritional foundation
- create healthy habits
- develop an awareness of allergies, health issues and family preferences
- create an awareness of school rules (no nuts)
- develop awareness of cultural/religious norms

We are able to do this by providing:

- a kitchen-like area
- dedicated food preparation and dining tables
- real food to experience

Considerations for food practical life activities:

How to acquire food for the classroom

- School or parents
- Menu: skill or food introduction
- Budget
- Parent education for what to provide
- Have a position and opinion send food back and/or offer better options:
 - no sweets or candy
 - low salt content
 - no food coloring
 - cut in smaller pieces
 - quantity and/or portions
 - awareness of allergies

How to set-up the lesson

- Prep ahead or prep as needed
- Trays, dishes, bowls, tongs, aprons

Skills to consider

- Slicing
- Spreading
- Peeling
- Mashing
- Pitting
- Juicing

How to transition food prep lesson into snack prep

Organization

- Prepare a menu that provides a balanced diet in the course of the week: proteins, carbs, fruits, veggies, grains, fats
- Consider how many children will be eating
- Consider cost and who pays
- When: breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack
- Children participate as much as possible

- Children participate in prep and serving of food
- Remember food and eating are social activities

Eating

- Share the routine you expect with the parents
- An adult should sit to eat with the children ideally modeling
- Offer a water: plain, citrus, mint, cucumber

Grace and courtesy

- How to wash hands first, during and after
- How to sit while eating and when done
- How to drink from glass
- How to finish food on plate before asking for more
- How to ask for food: signing, 'more please', 'may I have more please'
- How to refuse food: signing, 'no', 'no thank you'
- How to set the table
- How to use utensils
- How to chew with a closed mouth
- How to swallow before speaking
- How to initiate conversation
- How to take turns talking

Added benefits

- Care of person: how to eat by themselves
- Care of the environment: composting, cleaning themselves, not waste food, washing dishes
- Moving furniture: moving tables, moving chairs
- Setting table

ORGANIZING ASPECTS REGARDING FOOD

WHAT TO HAVE AVAILABLE

Items to have in the classroom:

- Dedicated shelf for materials
- Dedicated table/work space
- Aprons
- Plenty of cutting boards

- Variety of trays
- Knives/chopper
- Apple corer
- Citrus juicer
- Egg slicer
- Various bowls and containers
- Strainers/colanders
- Measuring cups
- Rolling pin
- Various mixing utensils (whisk, spatula, spoons)
- Oven mitts
- Serving dishes, spoons and trays

Items to consider:

- Oven or toaster
- Refrigerator
- Cookie sheets, Bread pans
- Cookie cutters (can be used with bread dough)
- Blender
- Teapot or thermos
- Mortar and pestle
- Pepper grinder
- Marble block for kneading dough
- Timer
- Hand mixer
- Muffin tins
- Bread maker (depending upon number of children)
- Special equipment depending upon activity and menu: tortilla press, popcorn popper, rice maker, slow cooker

Food prep ideas:

- Peeling/slicing: banana, eggs, carrots, cucumber,
- Cutting: apple, pepper, pear
- Juicing: orange, clementine, lime, lemon, grapefruit
- Slicing: strawberries, cheese, avocado, mushroom, kiwi, mango
- Pitting: olives, cherries, figs
- Spreading: cheese, jam, butter, peanut butter
- Scooping: watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew melon

Associated practical life activities:

- Setting table
- Clearing table
- Washing dishes
- Drying dishes
- Sweeping/mopping floor
- Table wiping
- Table washing