

# Let's Have a Tea Party!

(In the kitchen or pretend restaurant)



- Gather teddy bears, stuffed animals, dolls and friends. Gather dishes, cups, silverware, pots, pans, and plastic or real food. A child-sized table is a great addition. Sit at the table and prepare to play!

- If the child plays with food nearby, ask for some food. "Waiter, may I please have a hamburger?"

- Once the child brings you a hamburger, ask for the condiments.

- Keep adding other items to your meal until you have a full complement.

- Ask the child to join you at the table. Initiate a conversation about the food or a new topic. Have a conversation!

- Pretend to need another item of food or some dessert. Ask your 'waiter'.

- Be silly asking for 'an elephant' to eat. Play along with the child as she figures out what to do.

- Categorize the foods: perhaps ask for all green food or all purple or all sweets or all crunchy food.

- Change roles and have the adult be the waitress. Bring the child the wrong requests and encourage problem solving.

- Attempt to initiate this play silently. See how far you can venture with only gestures.

- Ask the child to bake a cake in the kitchen. Ask the child to list the steps as creating.

- Pretend you're in another country. What kinds of foods would you order in a restaurant?

- Pretend to go to the grocery store to buy food. Writing a list before going is a good early literacy skill.

- In the play kitchen, place empty cereal boxes, cans of food, etc. Together, look at the labels and find recognized letters. Look how long the words are. Count the letters in those words.

- Describe similarities and differences between foods in this play kitchen or restaurant.