

## ***Let's Have a Picnic . . . Let's Have a Tea Party . . .***

- Gather some teddy bears, stuffed animals, dolls or friends. Gather some dishes, pots and pans, and plastic food. A child-sized table is a great addition. Sit at the table and prepare to play!
- As the child plays nearby playing with the food, ask for some food. "Waiter, may I please have a hamburger?"
- Once the child brings you a hamburger, ask for the condiments.
- Continue to add other items to your meal until you have a full complement.
- Ask the child to join you at the table. Initiate a conversation about a completely other topic or about the food.
- Pretend to need another item of food or some dessert. Ask the waiter to bring you some dessert.
- Be silly asking for say '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 big.
- Change roles and have the adult be the waitress. Bring the child the wrong requests and encourage the child to problem solve.
- Attempt to initiate this play silently. See how far you can venture only on gestures.
- Ask the child to bake a cake in the kitchen. See if the child can describe the steps as creating.
- Pretend you're in another country. What kinds of foods would you be ordering in a restaurant or seeing in the kitchen?
- Pretend to go to the grocery store to buy food for the kitchen. Writing a list before going is a good early literacy skill.
- Use actual boxes from cereals, cans of food, etc. Try to look at the labels and find recognized letters. Look how long the words are. Count the letters in some of those words.
- Describe similarities and differences in the foods available in this kitchen or restaurant.