

Learning words and concepts while playing in the pretend kitchen/playing with foods

- Sit down in a chair at the small table and pretend to be a customer. Order food from the 'waiter' or 'waitress'.
- Try to set up a problem for the child to solve, such as saying, "Do you have any ketchup for my hamburger?" If the child indicates she doesn't have ketchup, try to work through a solution with her - compromise, encourage creative thinking, etc.
- Ask the child for all the red foods or orange foods or yellow foods. Have him label the foods as he places them on the table.
- Make a sandwich, but have the child give you directions to make the sandwich. Try to put something silly onto the sandwich, such as a fork and follow through with the reaction that ensues.
- Ask the child to give you pairs of foods, for example 'what goes with salt?', 'what goes with peanut butter?', 'what goes with bread?', etc.
- Have the child count the amount of red foods, yellow foods, green foods, etc.
- Have the child match the colored foods to different colored plates.
- For an older child (4-5 year old or older) ask them to separate the foods that come from plants from those that come from animals.
- Choose several foods and ask the child to put them in a line in order of size - smallest to largest.
- Have your child organize foods by textures - soft vs. hard, fuzzy vs. prickly, squishy vs. solid, sweet vs. sour, etc.