

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER THEME: FOOD!



In the month of October and November, food is prominent. Halloween and Thanksgiving lend itself to treats and cooking. So take the time to explore food, glorious food! Help your kids' cook, create and indulge in sticky, salty, spicy, soft and crunchy treats. As you can see, this theme lends itself to a lot of language learning and sensory experiences. Vocabulary will expand as you and your child name the foods you need for recipes. Talk about the actions needed to cook/bake; stir, mix, pour, cut, measure, clean, wipe, rinse and dry. Use adjectives to describe your incredible edibles; sweet, sour, mushy, crunchy, hot, warm, etc. Talk about the sequence of steps. Use words such as before and after to give time references; "before we mix it, we need to pour more milk." You'll notice cooking gives opportunities to work on fine motor skills like stirring, spreading and using utensils. Plus these fun food activities may introduce your kids to new foods that may end up on the family menu.

Cooking doesn't need to be complicated. You don't even need to use hot appliances for some. Some low tech recipes include; mixing lemonade, building an ice cream sundae, making yogurt dish with granola and different cut up fruit or instant pudding, making pizza bagels in the toaster oven. Find kid friendly recipes on the internet, decorating a cupcake with icing, nuts, raisins and/or sprinkles.

If cooking seems too scary...have a picnic in your living room! Your picnic can include Dixie cups filled with different treats. Lick sprinkles off a banana, peanut butter off an apple. Enjoy chips and salsa. You will be surprised how our kids love hot and spicy foods. For low sensory oral awareness, it wakes up the mouth! Practice cup drinking with your child. If there is lots of spillage, practice in the bathtub.

When eating practice moving food from side to side without moving their little bodies or using their fingers. Kids with weak tongues use their fingers to help move food or use other body parts to help get the motion going! If the jaw is weak, some kids have trouble with foods you have to chew for a long time. Oral motor strengthening activities will include sustaining chewing for tough and chewy textures like dried fruit, starbursts, and chicken nuggets. Practice licking to increase separation of the tongue and jaw as well as increasing the range of motion for tongue elevation and extension. Repetition of activities help newly learned skills be transferred and maintained across settings.

Enjoy spicing up language skills with food fun in October and November.

These are suggestions. Please consult a speech language therapist if you have concerns regarding your child's communication development.