



DINNER GAMES

FOOD COLLAGE

Research shows that when kids play with their food they may be more apt to eat it. Let your kids play with their food!

Take the elements of a salad such as sliced red pepper, cucumbers, avocado, carrot sticks, lettuce leaves, cherry tomatoes, bean sprouts, and nuts and have each person make a face, a car, a plane, houses, or animals, out of these elements on a plate.

The only rule is that whatever you pick, you need to eat or at least take a bite.





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PRETZEL PLAY

Doughs of many kinds can be plied and twisted into recognizable shapes, and it's fun for kids to get their hands goopy and sticky.

In your own kitchen, your kids can go wild molding the dough into different shapes. While bread usually requires patience to wait for, rising pretzels provide much quicker gratification.

Get the recipe here!

<https://thefamilydinnerproject.org/food/pretzels/>





DINNER GAMES

MAKE WHIPPED CREAM

If you like the idea of making something out of nothing, then you'll enjoy this recipe.

Place whipping cream in a tightly covered container (test the tightness of the lid first, to prevent wardrobe disasters). Then, you shake the daylights out it. You can put on music and dance with it. Pass it from person to person and do the hokey pokey if you like!

When you're done, the cream thickens to become whipped cream. Save it for dessert...if you can resist.





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APPLE TURKEYS

This is a fun and easy activity to do around Thanksgiving, or anytime!

Use apples, toothpicks, Cheerios (or similar O-shaped dry cereal), raisins, marshmallows, baby carrots, and/or whatever other ingredients you can imagine to make decorative turkeys out of whole apples.

Display them as centerpieces, or have an apple turkey competition for extra fun!





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SENSORY CENTER

- Letters and Numbers. Fill a large rimmed tray with a thick, smearable food like pudding, yogurt, applesauce, or mashed potatoes. Have your child trace letters and numbers into the food using their fingers. For a dry experience, you could try flour or cornmeal for tracing.
- Map Maker. Starting with a tray of smearable food, gather small toys and vehicles that can fit inside the tray. Build a “map” together, then use the vehicles to drive along different routes. (“This is our house, and that is the store. Let’s drive the truck to the store!”)
- Buried Treasure. Fill a bowl or deep tray with food as outlined above. Hide small objects like little toys or coins inside the food and have the child use their hands to dig for the objects.
- Pasta Picasso. Cook and cool some spaghetti or other long pasta shape. Let kids make pasta “artwork” or write messages by bending and twisting the cooked pasta into shapes.





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BEET TATTOOS

*This activity comes from Melanie Potock, MA, CCC-SLP.
Find more of Melanie's work at mymunchbug.com!*

1. Rinse the beets to remove any dirt.
2. Cut beets in half crosswise (around the equator). Leave roots and stems attached for easy holding.
3. Place the beets cut-side-down in boiling water for 4-5 minutes, just until the bottoms are fork-tender. Cool until they can be easily handled.
4. Push a simple cookie cutter shape into the cut sides of the beets. Stars or hearts work well.
5. Remove the cookie cutter. Use a small paring knife to remove the excess beet around the imprint of the shape. Now you have a beet stamp in your desired shape!
6. Lick the stamp, then press the beets onto clean skin and hold for a few seconds. Remove and let dry. The imprint will darken slightly as it dries, in a minute or two.
7. Now you have a pink "tattoo!"





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COOKIE FACE RACE

This hilarious cookie face race challenge doesn't have to be played with cookies — any flat-bottomed food item, like crackers, bread, slices of cheese or dried fruit strips, can work!

Each player tips his or her head back. Place a cookie (or other chosen food item) on each person's forehead. Set a timer for one minute and say "On your mark, get set, go!" See who can get the cookie from their forehead to their mouth first — but no hands! Players can only use their facial muscles to move their cookies.





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Kids love to make concoctions from leftover food and cleaning supplies. These unexpected chemical reactions create bubbling, strange aromas and weird colors that are dramatic and require careful vigilance so your kids don't try to eat or drink these brews.

Play dough is simple and fun to make. Just combine two cups flour, 1 cup salt, 2 cups water, 4 teaspoons cream of tartar, 2 tablespoons oil and food coloring. Mix and stir constantly over very low heat until a ball forms. Then play with your dough!





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FOOD DETECTIVE

- Set up a “detective’s office” area. You’ll need a place to set out the food, plus lots of different “tools” your detective will use to help investigate.
- Ask your detective to investigate the food you’ve chosen and record their answers to the following questions (or any others you might think of!):
 - What color is the food?
 - How big is it, and/or how much does it weigh?
 - What does it feel like to touch this food? Is it smooth, rough, squishy, dry, wet...?
 - Does it have a smell? Can you describe it?
 - Try to push this food across the table to the other end. Measure how far it goes.
- Now add an extra challenge for your detective! Ask them to share their notes and findings with another family member who wasn’t present for the activity. Can the other person guess what food they were investigating just by reading the notes?

