

Exploring

children's health and wellness

Capital District
Child Care Council

a tipsheet for parents and caregivers of children

Experience the World From Your Kitchen Table

Open your kitchen to multicultural eating experiences. Help children learn about and appreciate other countries and their cultures through food. Here are some ways to incorporate diversity into your menu:

1. When planning menus, focus on the food cultures of countries represented in your community.
2. Ask friends, neighbors or parents to share recipes. Due to food allergies, be careful when introducing foods with unfamiliar ingredients.
3. Try new recipes during special days or events. For example, Mexican food recipes on Cinco de Mayo, or Thai food recipes on August 12, celebrating mothers' day in Thailand, etc. Be creative and find out about other holidays from other countries.
4. Take children on field trips to grocery stores, markets, bakeries, and/or allow the children to help with planning the food and activities for special celebrations. Children are more willing to try new foods when they participate in planning.
5. Choose a day per month to try new fruits and vegetables from other countries. It will allow you to share with children the benefits and nutrients of the chosen fruit or vegetable. A Fruits & Veggies Produce Wheel could be a good tool, visit www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org.
6. Visit the local library and explore children's books about multicultural foods. One suggestion is [The Kids' Around The World Cookbook](#) by Deri Robins.
7. Talk to children about cultural diversity at meal times. Try the apples activity in the activities section of this article.
8. October 16 is *World Food Day*. This is an excellent opportunity to celebrate diversity with a food feast. Consider inviting families of different races or cultures to your home and ask them to share their traditions, cultural information and language.

Snack time is a perfect time to help children learn about diversity. Try these activities:

Different Colors Outside All the Same Inside

For snack time place different colored apples on the table (red, green, yellow, etc.)

- The apples' colors can be named by the children.
- Discuss how apples have different colors on the outside. Then, cut the apples open and continue explaining even though they look different on the outside, the insides are the same, just like people.
- Add graham crackers or peanut butter and water & enjoy the snack!



Chop Stix Pick-up

During this multicultural activity preschool children use eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills. You will need enough pairs of chop sticks for everyone in the small group, lots of large cotton balls, paper plates.

Description:

Explain to a small group of preschoolers that not everyone eats with forks and spoons. Introduce the chop sticks and tell children they are used for eating. Let the children help put the cotton balls (pretend food) on their paper plates and ask them how they could use the chop sticks to pick up the pretend food. Permit the children to experiment with ways to pick up the cotton balls. Then demonstrate how they might pick up the pretend food. Give children lots of time to try before reading the book: [How My Parents Learned To Eat](#) (Japanese - American) by Ina R. Friedman

Comment: A few children might attempt to "taste" the pretend food so advise the children, in advance, NOT to put the cotton balls into their mouths.

Taken from: www.preschoolrainbow.org