

GAMES TO PLAY WITH FOOD

Typical Age	Mealtime Behaviors	Outdoor Play & Movement	Social Games with Others	Creative “Pretend” Play
Infancy	Frequent “on demand” feedings, Liquids (milk or formula) Pureed foods (after 3-4 months) Messy-food falls out mouth Frequent choking Occasional spitting up Cries for food	Reaches for & grasps bottle, spoon, cup, caregivers hands Explores textures, flavors, smells with hands & mouth	Food in an “airplane” spoon Peek-a-boo Pat-a-cake Repeating sounds & words	Food songs Imitates facial expressions Explores hands & feet with food on them Bangs utensils to make noise Explores toys with food on them
Toddler	Eats small portions Eats on a schedule Sits in high chair Pureed to soft chopped food Drinks from a sippy cup Messy-food falls out mouth Squeezes food with fingers Food falls off spoon Prefers single foods Avoids foods that “touch” Asks for foods by name	Eating snacks at the playground picnic table Making “mudpies” with flour (or cornstarch) and water Splashes water in sink Playing with pots & pans	“Stealing” foods to get a child to try a new food Sharing food Hiding & finding Naming foods Helping with groceries Helping with dishes	Pretend cooking “Feeds” dolls/stuffed toys Play with kitchen utensils Explore foods by tearing them up Scribbles in whipped cream, pudding, ketchup
Preschool	Eats small portions Eats on a schedule Sits at a table Eats solid foods Drinks from a cup Uses a spoon Shows interest in a fork Wipes mouth Spills drinks Enjoys “dipping” foods Asks for food in sentences Says “please” “thank-you”	Eating snacks at the playground picnic table Outdoor barbecues Digging in a “garden” Watering plants with a can Planting seeds Picking fruit & vegetables	Sharing food Making Mr. Potato Head Helping w/ jack-o-lanterns Finding eggs, matzoh Use vegetables for games Putting away dishes Putting away groceries	Helps with cooking Stories about food/eating Names pictures of foods Build gingerbread houses Build sugar cube houses Arrange crackers on a plate Draw pictures of food Making foods from dough

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School age	Small portions get larger Remembers meal schedule Sets table Occasional spills pouring or carrying liquids Learns to cut own meat Clears table Washes dishes Makes own sandwiches Converses at table Remembers “manners” Asks to leave table	Plans garden Digs garden Plants seeds & seedlings Waters plant with can Picks bugs off plants “Mother May I?” manners game	Follows directions for recipes Shares food she made Use vegetables for board game tokens Enjoys cooking classes	Help plan meals & parties Pick out recipes Make food collages Makes “ <i>amuse bouche</i> ” Makes “ <i>bento box</i> ” lunches Helps carve “jack-o-lantern”
Pre-teen	Portions get larger May “skip” meals Makes own lunch Makes simple dinners Conversations need prompts Forgets “manners” Leaves table to join friends Brings friends home Measures ingredients	Can have a small garden Chooses plants Digs garden Plants seeds, seedlings Waters plants with hose Picks bugs off plants Harvests garden produce Dries produce from garden	Cooks with friends Collects recipes Makes food for school Enjoys cooking classes Helps with canning & fermenting	Plans menus Experiments with recipes Puts together appetizer trays
Adolescent	Portions get much larger then stabilize May begin “dieting” Makes dinners for family Converses about interests “Manners” better away from home Eats out with friends Cooks meals for friends	Plans more complex gardens May use lawn mower, tractor or other power tools	Plans parties with friends Collects recipe books Cans & ferments food Enjoys exotic foods with friends & family Gets a restaurant job	Makes more elaborate recipes Prepares complex meals