Eat and Enjoy

Using the five senses to learn about food is fun, it helps children develop sensory awareness and vocabulary, builds cognitive skills, (such as hypothesizing, categorizing, and observation) and it gives them appropriate way to play with food.

Smell; Have children smell foods and describe the aroma. Does it smell like any other foods that they eat?

Sight; Let them look at food before cooking or preparing and describe the color, shape, and size. Then look at foods after cooking and preparing. Does it look different? What has changed?

Sound: Ask children to listen as they prepare and eat food. Does the food make a sound? What is it?

Texture: Allow children to touch foods and manipulate foods. How does it feel? Is it hard?

Taste: Encourage children to describe the taste, not just say if it taste good and to compare tastes. Is it sweet or sour? Does a grapefruit taste like a grape?

Whipping Up A Sensory Meal

To make nutrition and cooking activities more of a sensory learning experience, use food that have contrasting outsides and insides or that show more noticeable changes in texture, color, or aroma when cooked.

Here is a sample sensory activity

Fruit Salad; use kiwis, pineapples, watermelon and bananas. These fruits have contrasting outside and inside textures. Let children feel and examine the outside of the fruit. Then cut it open and give the children a piece to touch and look at. Discuss the feel, smell, color and any sound when cutting it. Encourage children to taste it. When you are done checking out the fruit, cut up leftovers and mix.

Vegetable Soup: Select potatoes, carrots, spinach and beans. These vegetables go from very hard to very soft when cooked. Cooked carrots also taste sweeter. Have the children examine the vegetables. As able let the children peel and cut up the potatoes and carrots. Taste the raw vegetables. Ask them to try to mash the raw vegetables. Cook the vegetables. Sample each when cooled. Mash some cooked pieces. Note the changes from cooking. Mix together cooked leftovers and simmer in broth or tomato juice.

Biscuits: Talk about the feel, smell and look of raw ingredients. Mix the batter and then compare the mixed dough to the raw ingredients. Bake Take a look at the biscuits and see how it changed again.