Explore Food Through Play!

- ## Edible Sensory Bins

Fill a bin with cooked pasta, oats, or rice and add small toys or safe utensils (tongs, plastic knives, etc.). Allow your child to explore the textures, colors, and smells. For added fun, you can add different colored foods (grapes, berries, carrots, etc.) and have your child sort by color, size, and shape.

- ## Fruit and Veggie Stamps

Cut up different fruits and veggies (potatoes, celery, apples, pears) and let your child dip them in non toxic paint (or yogurt with food coloring). They can use the cut up food as a stamp and make designs on either paper or a tray. If they are able, have them tell you about the different food items they are using (what do they look like? What do they smell like? What does the stamp look like?).

- ## Car Wash

Let your child drive a toy car through various sauces or soft foods (applesauce, ketchup, smashed banana, etc.). Once the car is “dirty” they can take the car to the car wash and either lick off the food, or use a brush and water to clean up the car.

- ## Cookie Cutter Shapes

Let your child use various shaped cookie cutters to cut up different soft foods (bread, pancakes, deli meat, cheese). Talk about the shapes they made. Ask them if the new shape changes the taste of the food? This will help the child understand that foods can still taste the same, even if they look different. You can also allow the child to spread different sauces (peanut butter, jelly, ketchup, etc.) on the items they cut out.

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- ## Painting with Yogurt

Add food coloring or any natural food dye (beet juice, turmeric, spinach, etc.) to plain or flavored yogurt. Allow your child to paint using the colored yogurt. You can provide various tools to help them paint, or they can use their fingers.

- ## Food Exploration Tray

Offer your child a plate with a variety of different foods (cucumber slices, cereal, applesauce, etc.). Allow them to squish, sort, poke, or smell the food without any pressure to taste or eat the food.

- ## Cutting or Scooping Practice

Give your child a variety of foods (apples, pears, pudding, etc.) and tools they can use to cut or scoop with. Have them practice with a spoon or fork moving food from their plate to a small bowl or cup. Help them practice safety when it comes to cutting up their own food.

- ## Food Passport

Keep a notebook with you and let your child stamp, use stickers, or draw pictures of new foods they see, smell, or touch - no eating required! This will help them become more comfortable with the variety of food that is available in the world, without any pressure to eat new foods.

- ## Food Touch BINGO

Using a BINGO card (like the one below, or something similar) have your child pick which boxes they want to complete. This will give your child the chance to explore new foods without the pressure of eating them. You can offer tools (such as gloves, tongs, or silverware) to increase your child's comfort while playing.

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Food Touch BINGO

Tap on a food 3 times	Stack 3 crackers	Touch something cold	Squish a soft food	Touch a food with a spoon
Use tongs to move food	Touch something green	Draw with ketchup /yogurt	Smell something crunchy	Line up 5 cereal pieces
Roll a round food (grape)	Put food in a cup or bowl	FREE	Touch something sticky	Build a food tower
Smell something sweet	Make a smiley face using food	Poke something squishy	Pick up food with gloves	Touch something red
Use a cookie cutter on bread	Stir something gently	Point to your favorite food	Sort 3 foods by color	Pretend to feed a toy

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