

Sharing Thoughts About Tasting and Preparing Food

Dear Families:

Perhaps the idea of involving very young children in food preparation seems strange to you. However, one of the reasons that preparing food appeals to children is that it is a meaningful, grown-up activity. Participating in activities that your child observes you doing every day is exciting for them.

In our program, we build on the children's interest in food experiences because they help your child develop many concepts and skills. For example, what do you think your child might learn from a simple task such as snapping the ends off green beans? Did you think about these concepts and skills?

- shape
- color
- part and whole
- cause and effect
- sustaining attention
- eye-hand coordination
- fine-motor skills

As you can see, preparing food is educational as well as practical and fun!

What You Can Do at Home

At home, children can be involved easily in food preparation. Here are some ideas.

- **Let your child help.** Because you probably already cook at home, it's easy for you to involve your child. You can even include a young infant. Let her sit where she can watch you as you describe what you are doing. Older infants, toddlers, and twos can participate more actively. When you let your child help you prepare and serve foods, you show that you value his contributions to family life.
- **Talk about the foods and what each of you is doing.** Here are some topics to discuss as you prepare and taste foods together:
 - the names of different foods and how they look, smell, feel, taste, and sometimes sound
 - what different utensils are used for and where you keep them
 - why you serve a variety of foods with each meal

Maybe you'd like to help the children cook at our program. We'd love for you to supply a recipe or help the children make their snack. Also, please send us your ideas for food preparation experiences. We especially welcome your family favorites. We want your child to have wonderful food-related experiences both here and at home.

Sincerely,