

Helping Kids Learn About New Foods in Fun Ways

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We typically think 'trying' a food means put it in your mouth, chew it, swallow it, tada!

For young children (and some older...all the way to adulthood), trying a food can actually mean anything from playing with a food to putting it in their mouth and then spitting it out. Each time they interact with the food, it's a new chance to learn about it and to 'try it'.

Think about a food you would NEVER want to eat and then go through the following process with me:

Read about the food/look at the food/watch someone else eat the food

- tolerate the food on your own plate
- poke at the food with your utensil/touch it/squish it
- look at it closer up/smell it
- touch it to your lips/kiss it
- lick the food quickly like a snake vs. slowly like an ice cream cone
- put it in your mouth and then spit it out
- put it in your mouth, chew, and swallow!



Sometimes this progression takes one time to learn about the food and sometimes it takes many opportunities to learn about the food. Here are a few things to keep in mind when doing this with your child:

1. Keep it fun and lighthearted.
2. Consider learning about new foods outside of mealtimes so there's less pressure for them to eat it.
3. Remember, it can take anywhere from a single exposure to more than 20 for a toddler to accept and begin to enjoy a food, so be patient and continue to offer no-pressure opportunities to 'try' a food in whatever way the child is currently able to do.
4. Encourage them to move closer to eating the food by modeling progressing through the steps above – both yourself and other children if available
5. Breathe, focus on creating a positive/no pressure experience.

Alright families, go have some no-pressure fun with food and with your kiddos!

* Concepts from SOS Feeding