



TASTE EDUCATION

FOR THE TEACHERS: Taste education starts in the first years of life and it never stops. Each age has a different approach to food and nutrition. It's necessary to know the differences between age groups to plan interventions which may help children to develop knowledge about nutrition during their growth. We will provide you some ideas of activities to carry out taste education in your classroom and to teach children to discover foods. The activities are based on both appearance and taste of food. Actually, sometimes children refuse to taste some foods or show food *neofobia* because of an insufficient exposure to their sensorial characteristics. Children need a prolonged and multi-sensorial experience to accept foods such as fruit or vegetables.

ACTIVITIES:

Here you can find educational activities to carry out with your students of the first two school years, trying to improve their knowledge of foods and expand their taste experience.



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The food alphabet

For singles or couples.

5 years and over.

Objective: Learning the names of fruits and vegetables.

What to do:

The teacher says the letters (in alphabetic order), individually. For each letter, children have to find a food whose name begins with that specific letter. If a child does not know the name of a food with the specific letter, he/she will be eliminated, and the child next to him/her could then try to answer. The winner of the game is the child who survives to the end of the game. If all the letters have been spelt, the alphabet could be repeated several times.

At the end of the game, children can draw the food that they have found for each letter and the teacher could hang them on the wall of the classroom.

Game variation. Teacher could decide the length of time for the answer, lower the time... more difficult the game!

Vegetable face

For singles or couples.

5 years and over.

Objective: learning different varieties of vegetables. Observing fruit and vegetables to find out their characteristics. Promoting curiosity and creativity.

Tools: drawing paper, glue, and photos or figures of fruit and vegetables (if you choose the “A” proposal) or different varieties of fruit and vegetables (if you choose the “B” proposal).

What to do:

Proposal A: the teacher gives each child or each couple some photos or figures of fruit and vegetables. Children must use them to invent a face, a body, a landscape or any other type of image. The teacher could show some examples to make children understand the activity. Children can also invent a name for their image.

Proposal B: The teacher brings to school different varieties of fruit and vegetables, cuts them in pieces and puts them in different containers. Each child or couple can use different pieces of fruit and vegetables to create their picture or image. The teacher can take some photos of the works.

Discussion: Children show their works to the rest of the classmates explaining why they have chosen those images to create the eyes, the hair or a landscape. Whom does that vegetable look like? What does it represent in my fantasy? Do some food-made paintings exist? You can invite the children to make a research at home on books or on the web to find paintings or drawings made with food and share them with the class.

Let's redesign the menu!

2/3 children groups.

5 years and over.

Objective: stimulate food tasting attitudes by giving new funny names to the plates.

Duration: 30 minutes. To be proposed at every change of season.

What to do: assign a different menu of a school day to every group. Children must invent new funnier names for the plates, but always descriptive of the recipe. Hang in the classroom the menus with the new names every week and in turn each group will read it to the class.

Discussion: are some recipes tastier with a new name? Does the name of a plate create a positive or a negative expectation?

Fruit detective

From 5 to 30 children.

5 years or over.

Objective: learning to recognize different foods.

Tools:

- different fruits (hard/soft; smooth/rough; small/big; spiny/with different shapes);
- A closed box with a hole to insert the hand.

Duration: 60 minutes.

What to do: prepare a pair of each fruits, then put one inside a box and another one on a desk to be observed and touched. In turn, children must touch the fruit within the box (without seeing it!) and find the same fruit on the table using only their touch. Each child will have 2 minutes to find the right fruit.

Discussion: the teacher will focus the discussion on the sense of touch. Some fruits have a rough peel, some others a smooth one. Some fruits are big, some others are small; some are round, others have a peculiar shape...

Use all your senses to recognise and discover food!

Sight



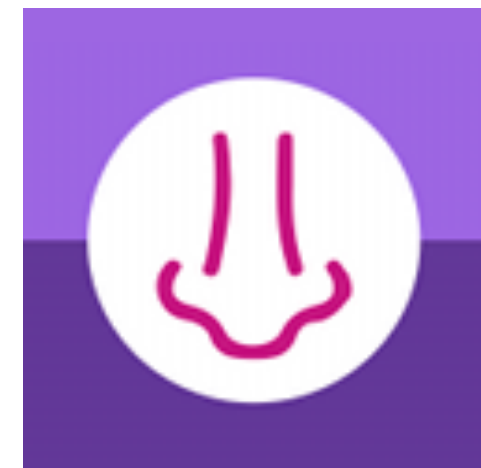
- Shape
- Colour

Hearing



- Crunchy
- Fizzy

Smell



- Smelly
- Luscious
- Aromatic



Taste



- Sweet
- Salty
- Sour
- Bitter
- Umami
- Spicy

Touch



- Smooth
- Rough
- Damp
- Soft



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