

Shaping Nuturious Snacks

Children love interesting shapes and often share with us the unique forms they discover like unearthed treasures. Think of the child who sees the animal shape swirling on top of their warm soup, or the child who finds the A in the bark of a tree. The recipes included explore shapes in nutritious snack recipes and ways to include vibrant conversations in our time together at snack.

Good ideas: Think about each recipe before you try it with children. Are there concepts and vocabulary you will need to introduce to the children? Should you try this recipe in a small or larger group? How can you involve the children? Before or after trying the recipes, consider going on a shape walk to call attention to interesting forms.

Your own animal crackers

Ingredients:

- ½ c rolled oats or oat flour
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- ½ cup all purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ c softened butter
- 4 t honey
- 1 t vanilla (optional)
- ¼ c buttermilk

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400. Using a blender or food processor, grind rolled oats until fine (disregard if using oat flour). In medium bowl, mix together oats, flour, baking soda, and salt. Cut in the butter with your fingers, fork, or a pastry blender. Mix in vanilla, buttermilk, and honey until a dough forms. Flour a surface where children can help roll out the dough. Use cookie cutters or form into animal or other shapes. Bake for 5-7 minutes and cool on wire racks or wax paper.



Conversation starters

Why do you think the oats are called rolled oats? (Rolled oats are traditionally oats that have been rolled into flat flakes under heavy rollers and then steamed and lightly toasted to make for easier eating). *Look at oats under a magnifying glass

Where do you think honey comes from?

Do you think our shapes we've made will change while baking in the hot oven?

Shapes of toast art

Ingredients:

Milk

Food coloring (quality, bakers' type)

Whole wheat bread (large slices)

Butter

Also needed: clean, unused, fine-tipped paint brushes and toaster or toaster oven.

Directions:

Pour small amounts of milk into clear cups. Add food coloring to each cup of milk to make specific colors (works best with strong food coloring). Have children paint their favorite shapes, forms, letters, or designs using "milk paint" onto bread. Toast and butter lightly. For larger groups, use cookie sheets to toast bread in a full size oven at 350.

Conversation starters

We are using our bread to paint on; what things do other artists paint on?

What types of shapes have you seen in paintings before?

What do you think will happen to our bread while it's toasting?

Shape pretzels

Ingredients

1 package yeast

1 ½ cups warm water

1 t honey

1 t salt

4 ½ cups flour (whole wheat or regular or a mix)

1 egg yolk

2 T water

Extra salt for sprinkling if desired; coarse salt works well

Directions:

Heat oven to 450. Dissolve yeast and sugar in warm water in a large bowl. Add flour and knead 6 minutes. Let dough rise, covered with a dish towel, in a greased bowl until double in size. While dough is rising, mix egg yolk and 2 T water and save to brush on pretzel before baking. When dough is ready, divide into pieces and form into desired shapes. Brush yolk and water mixture on pretzels. Sprinkle with salt and place on cookie sheets. Bake for 12 minutes. Makes about 10 large pretzels.



Conversations starters

Why do you think we need yeast; what does it do? (Forms bubbles in the dough to make it light)

What does it mean to knead something? Why do you think we knead the dough?

Dietary cautions

- Be aware of choking risks and food allergies when preparing and serving meals and snacks. Think about the size, shape, and consistency when choosing foods due to the potential choking risks in children. Food cut in large chunks, small hard foods, and soft and sticky foods should be avoided. The top choking hazards for children include: hotdogs, meats, sausages, fish with bones, spoonfuls of peanut butter, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, raisins,

whole grapes, raw carrots, fruits and vegetables with skins, and marshmallows. Be sure that food is cut in small pieces (no larger than ½ inch), grated, or finely chopped. Be sure that children are closely supervised when they are eating.

- Do not give honey to children under 12 months of age. Honey contains spores that can cause infant botulism.
- Many children have food allergies or sensitivities to food. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 90% of children's food allergies are from milk, eggs, peanuts,

tree nuts (pecan/walnuts), fish, shellfish, strawberries, soy, wheat, and gluten. Carefully read food labels for potential risks and be sure to ask the parents if children have a known allergy or sensitivity.

- Dental health is a growing concern with young children, so it is important to keep in mind that starchy, sticky, and sugary foods can cause tooth decay. Children should brush their teeth after any meal or snack, but particularly when you serve these foods.

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