

# Picky Eater Taste Testing



Children can be quite particular when it comes to foods they will and will not eat. Whether it is the way a food is prepared or if it is cut in a particular way, cooking for a picky eater can be difficult. Some of children's pickiness may come from inexperience with certain foods. Food taste testing can be a great way to help children try new foods in a fun environment. Once they have tried a certain food, it may increase their willingness to eat that food again.

## How To Taste Test

- ◆ Try the new food at a time when children are hungry and in a good mood. Discuss the food with the children. Describe how the food is grown and have them help you determine the color, smell, texture, and taste of the food. Provide the children with a taste test rating sheet (see below) to rate the new food. Allow the children to take a small bite of the food and then rate it. The children can also take the rating sheet home to share with parents.
- ◆ Have a chart with stickers. When the children taste a new food, they can place a sticker on the chart. When they obtain a certain number of stickers for trying new foods, they can collect a small prize such as a small toy, choosing the next activity, or being a leader for something.
- ◆ Get parents involved. When parents come to pick the child up, have them taste and rate the food too. This will allow children to see their parents trying new foods as well as encouraging parents to try new foods and maybe even serve that food at home.



## Teach and Taste

Learn more about the specific food you are taste testing. Explain to the children how it is made and what ingredients go into the food. If you are tasting an apricot, show the children pictures of an apricot tree. Explain how apricots are grown and harvested. Show the children on a map where most apricots are grown. If you are taste testing a certain type of bread, discuss the ingredients used to make the bread. You can even show a video clip of the bread making process.

**Taste Test Rating Sheet**

Today I tried: \_\_\_\_\_

I liked this:

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|  |  |  |
| A lot!  | Somewhat  | Not very much  |

Comments on the look, taste, feel, or smell of this food: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Taste Test Themes

There are many different taste tests you can use to help expose children to new foods. Planning a theme can make taste testing fun. Below is a list of themes you can try. The children can rank the foods in the order they like them the best.

### Taste by Color

- ◆ Choose a certain color and try different foods that are the same color. If you pick white foods, you can taste test cauliflower, potatoes, and mushrooms. You could also try the same food with different colors such as white, whole wheat, and vegetable pasta.

### Taste by Variety

- ◆ Pick a fruit or vegetable that has several varieties. Have the children try Gala, Fuji, and Red Delicious apples.

### Taste by Preparation

- ◆ Prepare one food in several different ways. If you use carrots, try them stir-fried, roasted, steamed, and raw. This type of theme taste test is easiest to do throughout the week, so you could try a different preparation on different days.

### Taste by Type

- ◆ Try different types of a certain food. For example, test whole wheat, sourdough, rye, and oat breads.

Using theme type taste tests can help you better understand the likes and dislikes of the children you serve. You may even notice certain trends such as one child doesn't like soft, mushy foods and prefers only crunchy foods.



## Taste Test Ideas

- ◆ Go Exotic—try exotic fruits like star fruit, pomegranate, and passion fruit.
- ◆ Morning Munchers—taste different whole grain cereals.
- ◆ Cracker Comparison—try different types of whole grain crackers.
- ◆ Oatmeal Toppers—try different mix-ins and toppings on your oatmeal such as different fruits, nuts, and seasonings.
- ◆ Sugar Smart Drinks—infuse water with different natural flavors using oranges, lemons, raspberries, limes, mint, or cucumbers.
- ◆ Choose Your Own—have the children choose a new food they are interested in learning more about.



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