



Taste Tests: “Try It, You’ll Like It”

Materials

- *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child
- small samples of different foods
- small paper cups for sampling
- tally sheets to register students’ reactions to the food tasted (Appendix, p.255)

WHAT’S THE Big Idea? Diversity

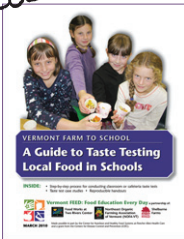
Enduring Understandings

- There are many different tastes in the world.
- Our preferences for tastes can change over time: some things take time to get used to.
- Everyone’s preferences for tastes are unique. What tastes good to me might not taste good to you; or “Don’t yuck my yum!”
- “Variety is the spice of life.”

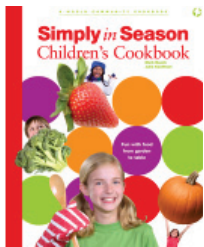
Objectives

- Children demonstrate the willingness to try new foods.
- Children show interest, curiosity and appreciation about a diversity of foods.
- Children experiment with tasting different foods.
- Children begin to learn to harvest, prepare, and serve food.
- Children develop an appreciation of foods from different families and cultures.

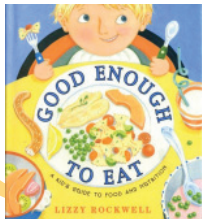
Great Teacher
Resources!



A Guide to Taste Testing Local Foods in Schools by Vermont Farm to School.
Download free at www.vtfeed.org



Simply In Season Children's Cookbook: Fun with Food from Garden to Table by Mark Beach and Julie Kauffman



Good Enough to Eat: Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition by Lizzy Rockwell

Directions

Taste tests can be simply trying new foods in your classroom or they can be a schoolwide effort to have students make healthier food choices. In early childhood classrooms, taste tests can happen as frequently as you like and should introduce children to new foods whenever possible. In addition to fresh fruits and vegetables, we encourage you to include foods that are special to children and their families, or that are important to the different cultures represented in your classroom. These foods may be fresh fruits and vegetables that aren’t common in your area or dishes that your families prepare or purchase. We have found that scaffolding taste tests by beginning with the raw food, moving on to a cooked version, and then finally trying a processed version allows children to develop an appreciation of and willingness to try new foods when they encounter them in meals. For example, you might start with raw broccoli, then try it roasted, sautéed, or steamed with different seasonings, and finally offer a broccoli soup.)

If you have a school garden, harvest a crop with your students and find a recipe that they’d like to try. If you do not have a garden, work with the food service staff to use foods that are available through the cafeteria. This collaboration can help cut down on food waste in the cafeteria.



Young children can vote on taste tests using simple smile, frown, or straight face symbols.

Students who have previously sampled a food in their classrooms are more likely to eat that same food when it is later served in the cafeteria.

1. Read *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child. Discuss if anyone has ever felt that way about eating certain foods. Explain that your class will be holding taste tests throughout the year. The goal will be for children to try new and different foods. Consider using this experience with “Eating the Rainbow,” p.81 to reinforce the importance of eating a variety of foods.
2. Offer small servings in a positive, non-coercive atmosphere. Invite children who are familiar with the food (and like it) to share what they like about it.
3. Have students help prepare the food; if they make it, they are more likely to eat it. If students grow and prep the food, this also improves the odds that they will try it.
4. After the children try a food, have them share their reactions. They can tally their preferences on a graph, write a simple smiley, frown or straight face to show their preferences, or be part of an open discussion of how they felt about the food sample.
5. Process and reflect on the experience with the children by engaging in a conversation guided by the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions

- How did you feel about the taste test?
- What did you learn about yourself during the taste tests?
- How has your attitude toward trying new or different foods changed?
- Can you think of a food that you used to not like but now you do?
- Can you think of foods that taste better to you when eaten together rather than separately?

Extensions

- Invite local farmers to school to talk about the produce or food they grew that the children will use in taste tests.
- Host a “cook off” with other classes. Trade foods to taste test and determine which food was more popular.
- Work with food service staff and families. Perhaps food service can provide the foods and family members can help with facilitating the actual taste tests.
- **Oliver’s Vegetables** by Vivian French
- **Oliver’s Fruit Salad** by Vivian French
- **The Vegetables We Eat** by Gail Gibbons