

Food Talk! Conversation Cards for Mealtimes

Meal and snack times provide great opportunities to learn about nutrition, social skills and other important habits. They are also a perfect time to develop and practice conversation skills. These questions can create and support conversation between children during the typical classroom mealtimes while helping children understand and appreciate healthy food and where it comes from. The cards were developed based on [Harvest for Healthy Kids](#) and the [Guide to Using the Creative Curriculum for Preschool to Support Farm to ECE Models](#) from the National Farm to School Network.

Preparing Cards

- Print the set of cards on the following pages.
- Cut along the solid black lines. You can choose to laminate them.
- Put each set of cards in a small basket or paper lunch sack (one container per classroom table).
- For a faster, less costly version, print each sheet and place in a clear sheet protector

How to Use Cards

- Pull a card from the basket and show the children the card. Ask them what they see on the picture. Read the question aloud and directly ask the question to individual children at the table. Model turn taking within a conversation.
- You can also allow children to pass the basket around so several children can have conversations with one or two partners at a time. The idea is to encourage and facilitate conversation, both with the adult and between children.

Tips for Increasing Child Talk & Staff Listening

- Be an “active listener” - Allow time for children to respond. Make eye contact and don’t interrupt. Repeat what they say to make sure you understand them.
- Ask quieter children questions directly to see if they want to join the conversation. Don’t push if they are not ready to speak.
- Encourage questions and related comments from children. This will help them learn to talk to each other.
- Provide help when needed to children with lower language skills.

What does your food taste like?

- Is it soft, chewy or crunchy?
- Is it sweet, sour, bitter or salty?
- Is it hot or cold?
- It is smooth or bumpy?

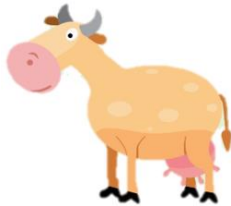
What other words can you think of to describe your food?



What foods are on your plate? What is your favorite way to eat these foods?



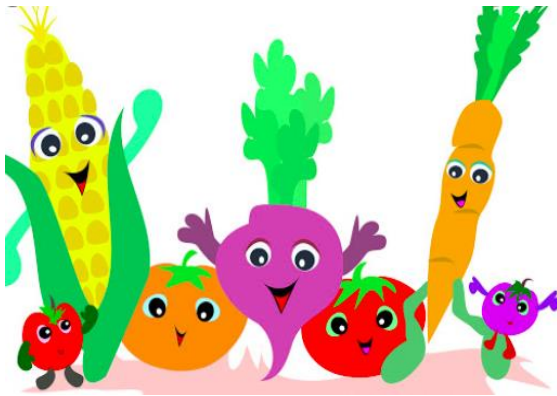
What foods are on your plate? Which foods comes from plants and which come from animals?



If you are eating a fruit or vegetable, which part of the plant are you eating? Is it a root, stem, leaf, flower, or fruit?



Which foods did you eat for dinner last night? Did you have any fruits or vegetables with dinner?



What are your favorite fruits and vegetables?



Where does your family get food from? (grocery store, farmer's market, restaurant) Do you help your family pick out food?



Why do we need to eat foods? (energy)
Which foods make our bodies grow strong?



Does anyone have a garden? What do you grow in your garden?



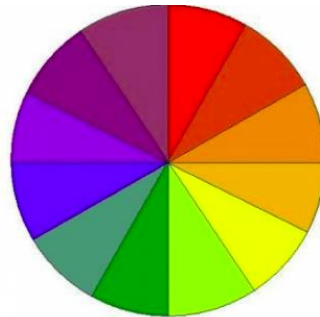
Did anyone try a new food today? Can you think of a food that you used to not like but now you do?



Why do we drink milk (strong bones, teeth)? Where does milk come from? What other foods are made with milk (yogurt, cheese)?



What color is the food you're eating? Can you think of something else that's the same color?



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