



5 Tips for Getting Kids Curious about Food

Use these 5 tips, adapted from Spoons Across America's programming, to turn your picky eater into a food explorer!

1. "Don't Yuck My Yum"

This is a rule that we use in all our programs at Spoons Across America. Tell kids that it's okay if they don't like everything they try, but make a rule against words like "yuck, or gross." Encourage kids to instead think about why they don't like something and how they could change the recipe to make it "yummiier."

2. Talk about the 5 senses

Encourage kids to use all their 5 senses to explore foods. Before eating, talk about what a new food looks like, smells like, and feels like. Ask questions like "what does the taste remind you of?"

3. Use "juicy" vocabulary

Challenge kids to describe taste, smell, and texture of food with interesting, "juicy" vocabulary. Expand beyond "yummy" and "yucky" by asking kids to describe what about the food makes it yummy or yucky. Use the Elements of Taste (sweet, sour, salty, bitter) to describe new foods.

4. Talk about from where food originates

In our 2nd grade program, Farm to Book, we find that kids are excited to try local apples after learning about apple harvesting in the Fall and how apples are grown in New York State. Kids are eager to try honey sticks after learning about how worker bees make honey from flower nectar. Spark your child's food curiosity by talking to them about how different foods got to your plate. Bonus: take your child to a farmer's market to meet farmers and pick out local produce!

5. Let kids help in the kitchen

In our 4th grade program, Spoons Recipe Days, we find that self-proclaimed salad haters suddenly have a change of heart when given the agency to make their own vinaigrette and chop their own veggies. Start by letting your kids help with simple tasks in the kitchen, and eventually let them take a leading role (e.g. oversee making the salad).