Food exposure



THE VALUE OF EXPOSURE

- Being exposed to a food can include looking at it, talking about it, or watching parents eat it
- A child may need to be exposed to new foods several times before he/she even considers interacting with it
- > The more that children are exposed to new foods, the more they can become comfortable with it



Before a child is willing to eat a new food, he/ she will progress through a hierarchy that includes 5 major steps: tolerate, interact with, smell, touch, taste. Usually a child will not move on to the next step until he/she has mastered



the previous step. Work through these steps to help your child become comfortable and willing to eat a food. Performing each step should be encouraged and celebrated! Below is a diagram that defines each step of the hierarchy and provides some activities that can help your child work through the step. Some activities may get messy but they can also be a lot of fun! (Toomey, 2002)

- · Definition: Will be in the same room or sit at the same table as the food
- · Meal time activity: Place the food on the table on a different plate with no demand to eat it
- Non-meal time activity: Play with plastic food; read books with pictures of the food

Interact

- · Definition: Uses an object to touch the food
- · Meal time activity: Help serve the food using serving utensils
- · Non-meal time activity: Paint with condiments, load food up into a toy truck and deliver it

With

- · Definition: Tolerates the smell of the food
- · Meal time activity: Cook foods with various odours
- · Non-meal time activity: Play with smelly stickers or felt markers

- · Definition: Will tolerate the food touching a body part (e.g. fingers, hands, and face)
- Meal time activity: Prepare and clean the food; pass the food to others at the table
- Non-meal time activity: Feed food to dolls; wear it as jewelry (e.g. noodles as bracelets)

Touch

Taste

- · Definition: Any action which results in tasting the food
- Meal time activity: Lick the food; chew the food and spit it into a designated plate/napkin
- · Non-meal time activity: Pick up foods (no hands); "bobbing" for apples