

Summer allows us opportunities and experiences no other season can. Access to fresh produce, to colorful seasonal foods, and being able to play outside for longer periods of time gives our children more time to engage, to try and to build on their foundation of skills.

Many of our children want to be a part of doing more on their own. They want to do more tasks and help around the house but don't always know how to do that. The frustrations that come from not being able to help can lead to tantrums.

### Snack Idea #1 – Fruit Kabobs

**Materials Needed:** Small pieces of Fruit – fresh or canned  
Yogurt or whipped cream to dip sprinkles if you choose  
Wooden chopsticks or plastic straws  
Plate, no thank you bowl, napkins

**How to:** When introducing new foods, having a chance to explore the item and having a 'no thank you' bowl can set your child up for an enjoyable and safe experience.

- The idea is to have your child touch the item, smell it, and maybe give it a kiss. If your child is not interested, you can have them put the item in the **no thank you bowl** – this allows them to remove it from in front of them but still has them touching the item to remove it.
- Does your child like to dip food into sauces? Vanilla yogurt, whipped cream, and sprinkles could be a fun way to encourage engagement and tasting.
- *Give it time* – have other toys out so your child can go to something they are familiar with.
- If your child enjoys music, you can find some songs that can be played in the background so that your child can be playing while they are making.
- Location, Location, Location. Where would this activity be easy to control, wash hands, clean up. Is that outside, inside, at the table, or maybe at the highchair?

**Developmentally this activity encourages** language development by giving you opportunities to use descriptive language, action words, and silly sounds. Eye/hand coordination and fine motor development with picking up *the* small food items, looking at them, smelling them, and exploring them.

Having your child see you playing and exploring they will try to imitate you – and then you can imitate them. This supports self-confidence as you show your child that you believe they are someone to follow.

Our goal is to have our children initiate engagement with us. Learning that they can invite you to interact with them, mimicking each other with actions and sounds while expanding their ability to stay engaged in an activity for a longer period. Expanding on the length of engagement allows for more time to explore, to play – and **play is how children learn.**

Being silly, doing something unexpected, and new can be exciting and encourage exploration.

**Remember** – *when we model, and they mimic that is the beginning of understanding communication. When we mimic them, we are telling them their ideas and choices are powerful, which can encourage them to want to do more.*

**Again – use your imagination, plan for what works best for your family and child and HAVE FUN!**

Lesson Plan developed by AnnMarie Adams, special education teacher

Photo credit – [Fruit Kabobs - Dinner at the Zoo](#)



## Snack Idea #2

### The Beach on my plate.

**Materials Needed:** Vanilla pudding (instant, pre-packaged – whatever works best)  
 Graham cracker crumbs  
 Yogurt or whipped cream to dip sprinkles if you choose  
 Blue food coloring (optional)  
 Teddy Grahams or other animal cookies, fruit snacks  
 Plate, no thank you bowl, napkins/wipes



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- This one can be messy – we want to be **messy with** our children. Put the pudding on your plate, and their tray, and use your fingers to poke and smear around. Sprinkle graham crackers to create ‘sand’. Add in some animal cookies to poke, walk, and jump in the pudding.
- We’re not going for a finished product – this is a child-centered activity. It is ALL ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE.
- *Give it time* – have other toys out so that your child can go to something they are familiar with.
- If your child enjoys music, you can find some songs that can be played in the background so that your child can be playing while they are making.
- Location, Location, Location. Where would this activity be easy to control, wash hands, and clean up? Is that outside, inside, at the table, or maybe at the highchair?



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Photo credit – [Under the Sea Snacks - Perfect Ocean Theme Party Ideas - Natural Beach Living](#)  
[UNDER THE SEA COOKIES - Butter with a Side of Bread](#)