

November Newsletter



Strategies for Improving Food Intake with Picky Eaters

Many children have different sensory sensitivities which can make family dinners, such as Thanksgiving, a difficult time for them. Many children can be picky eaters, so certain textures or smells can make it difficult for them to enjoy a typical Thanksgiving meal with their family. With the obesity rate in children rising, it's important to ensure that your kiddos are getting a healthy intake of vegetables in their diet.

Nekitsing, et al., 2018

Here are some tips on how to desensitize your little ones to certain vegetables to help increase their vegetable intake:

- Repeated exposure: studies suggest that regular (e.g. weekly) exposure to a vegetable for approximately 8-10 times, may help increase intake of that vegetable.
- Pairing: giving the child a vegetable they don't currently eat with a food the child is known to enjoy (e.g. apple sauce or cream cheese).
- Rewards: offering the child a small reward such as a sticker if they taste the vegetable.
- Visual exposure: listening to stories about, or looking at pictures of the vegetable.
- Smelling: have your child smell the vegetable without consuming it. This can occur when the vegetable is whole, chopped up, or after it's cooked.
- Tactile exposure: your child can feel the texture of the vegetable when it's raw, grated or chopped, and after it's cooked and compare these different textures. You can also ask your child how the vegetable feels in their mouth after consumption.
- Engage in play skills with your child by letting them play with these foods or toy versions of these foods to help increase their familiarity with them.

Nekitsing, et al., 2018

Fall Time Fun!

Try this DIY Autumn spice sensory-friendly play dough recipe for some fun at home! Scents like cinnamon and nutmeg can have calming effects and playing with play dough can help increase hand strength and fine motor skills!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of all-purpose flour (or gluten-free flour)
- ¼ cup of table salt
- 1 tablespoon of cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon/nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon of pumpkin spice
- 1 teaspoon of ground cloves
- 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon of glycerine
- ¾ cup of boiling water

Instructions:

1. Place all of the ingredients into a mixing bowl (besides the boiling water) and whisk until everything is mixed well.
2. Measure ¾ cup of boiling water using a dry measuring set and mix into dry ingredients with a wooden spoon.
3. Let the mixture cool a little as it may seem too sticky, then gather it into a ball using your hands, place on a countertop and knead it until it's cool and no longer sticky.
4. Your dough is now ready to use! In addition to molding dough into different forms, you can hide small items like beans into the dough for your child to search for to work on fine motor skills and hand strengthening.



Epilepsy Awareness Month

Epilepsy is a disorder that affects people of all ages. Individuals with epilepsy experience seizures that can make it difficult to complete many everyday activities. As occupational therapy practitioners, we work to help our clients engage in those everyday activities that are important to them. According to VeryWellHealth.com, here are some ways in which OT can help a client with Epilepsy:

- Educate clients on energy conservation techniques as individuals may become tired after experiencing seizures
- Teach medication management strategies
- Work on tracking symptoms to better understand their triggers
- Train clients in the use of assistive devices
- Create eating, exercise, self-care, and sleeping routines
- Increase engagement in social activities, hobbies, community activities, and work
- For the pediatric population, OT's will also work on improving fine motor skills, modifying the home or school environment for optimal performance, improving social skills, and educating caregivers and teachers about epilepsy and accommodations that can be implemented.

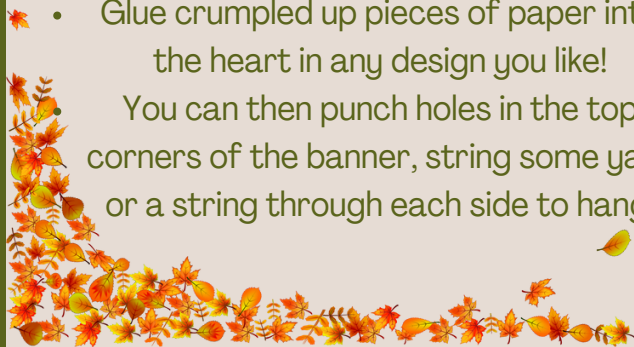
Bence, 2023

Thank a Service Member



Here's a fun craft that you can make with your child to help thank a service member this Veteran's Day. This craft can help work on your child's fine motor skills, cutting skills, and handwriting skills all while having fun!

- Cut a triangle off of the bottom of any color construction paper you like. You can draw a dotted line and ask your child to cut on the dotted line, providing assistance as needed.
 - Depending on your child's handwriting level, you can write "Thank you for your service" at the top and have them trace your letters, or your child can write this message by themselves using markers or crayons.
 - Next, draw an outline of a heart, or have your child trace one or complete this step on their own.
 - Now we need to fill our heart! Help your child cut strips of red, white, and blue construction paper. They will then rip pieces of paper off of each strip and crumple the paper using their fingers.
 - Glue crumpled up pieces of paper into the heart in any design you like!
- You can then punch holes in the top corners of the banner, string some yarn or a string through each side to hang.



Resources

Bence, S. (2023, February 21). Occupational Therapy for Epilepsy. VeryWellHealth.com.

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/occupational-therapy-for-epilepsy-7099849>

Nekitsing, C., Hetherington, M.M. & Blundell-Birtill, P. (2018). Developing Healthy Food Preferences in Preschool Children Through Taste Exposure, Sensory Learning, and Nutrition Education. Psychological Issues, 7, 60-67.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13679-018-0297-8#citeas>