

Dining Out?

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We all enjoy going out to eat once in a while but it can be difficult with young children. Here are a few tips for making wait times at restaurants a bit easier for your family, while also building strong speech and language skills!

Activity #1: Categorize foods on the menu - Build Vocabulary Skills

Grouping words into categories is a great language skill that will improve your child's ability to understand words and recall them. Look at the menu with your child and help them group the different foods into categories like, "vegetables, desserts, hot foods, cold foods", etc.

Activity #2: Play "I Spy"- Improve Describing Skills

Take turns with your child using adjectives to describe something that you see in the restaurant while the other tries to guess. "I spy something that is white, shaped like a rectangle, and I put it in my coffee." (a packet of sugar!)

Activity #3: Find letters/words on the menu - Target Literacy Skills

Make it a game with your child to see who can find a certain letter or words on the menu. Once your child finds the letter, have him think of a word that starts with that letter or have him write/trace that letter. You can also play a rhyming game - give your child a word on the menu and have her think of a rhyming word.

Activity #4: Teach your child to order - Expand Social Skills

Although it may seem easier to order for your child, it will actually build your child's language skills and confidence if you allow him to order for himself. You can practice ordering beforehand at home so that it may not be so intimidating. Talk about looking at the waitress, using polite words, and talking loud enough. Once they have practiced at home and at the table with you, celebrate their independence and have them order! If they get nervous at the moment then help by saying "did you want pizza or chicken?" Talking to unfamiliar people can be scary for young children but being able to use language in a social outing is an important skill to learn.

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