



Dear Parent / Carer,

We're TastEd (which is short for Taste Education) and we wanted to offer you some free resources which we hope will be useful for families wanting to do a bit of food education at home during these strange times when a lot of us have had home schooling thrown upon us.

We've created a series of super-simple powerpoint presentations that are an easy and fun way for you and your child to explore fruit and vegetables together using whatever ingredients you happen to have in your kitchen right now. The hope is that by the end of these sessions, your child will have used their natural curiosity and their five senses to develop a more positive relationship with food, especially vegetables. The sessions should also help them develop a new language for talking and writing about food. Our experience in U.K. classrooms has shown us that the TastEd approach can be a method for helping picky eaters try and enjoy new foods. Our methods are based on the tried and tested Sapere method which has been used in Finland, Sweden and elsewhere as a way to help children develop healthier eating habits. But every child is different and it may take longer for some children than others to learn new tastes.

Here are the very basics of what you need to know to run these activities.

- There's a slide at the beginning of each powerpoint explaining briefly what the 'lesson' is about and what you will need to run it.
- TastEd doesn't need any special equipment and you don't even need to know how to cook to do these activities with your child (although they can make a great stepping stone to cooking together).
- Each activity is geared around a specific ingredient or set of ingredients but we are very aware that getting fresh fruits and vegetables can be tricky at the moment. Everyone has different stuff in their fridge. If a lesson says 'green vegetables', please use anything you can get your hands on, whether it's frozen peas or leftover bits of salad. If a lesson says 'tomatoes' but you only have peppers, it will still work just fine.
- The most important thing we would encourage you to do is make these sessions fun and relaxed. It's a chance for your child to explore food with you in a no pressure setting.

If you want to know more about What TastEd is, why it's important, and further information on how to run the lessons then feel free to keep reading.

Also there's one thing you can help us with! There's a feedback form available online, if you are able to spare a couple of minutes to fill it out we'd really appreciate it!

All the best,
Bee Wilson
Chair of Trustees



What is TastEd?

TastEd is a charity that exists to promote taste education to children across the UK.

Why is it important?

We know that most children in the U.K. don't eat enough vegetables and fruits. One of the biggest reasons – aside from the cost of fresh food - is that many children just don't enjoy vegetables. TastEd is a method for giving children the positive exposure to vegetables that is known to be the route to learning a liking for them over time.

Research from Finland found that this kind of sensory food education can increase a child's willingness to eat vegetables and berries.

As well as building a child's confidence around new foods, these lessons in eating can also raise attainment in speech and writing because we find that food is a subject that grabs every child's attention and they end up doing some great speaking and writing without even realising it. If your school has asked your child to work on their writing at home, this could be a helpful tool to help you engage their attention.

How does it work?

Attached you should have five powerpoint lessons for you to work through with your child, these have been designed to be suitable for the key stage your child is in. There is no time frame for these lessons, they can be done over a few days or weeks, whatever suits you.

At the beginning of each powerpoint are two slides to help you know what's coming up in the lesson, don't worry if you don't have time to read through all of this, just have a quick glance at the 'What do I need?' to help you get set up. This will tell you what fruit or veg you might require for the lesson. The aim is for these lessons to be simple and fun, allowing your child to explore food in a new way.

The basic structure of the lessons are as follows:

1. Here is some food
2. Tell me what you see, feel, hear, smell, taste
3. You can try some of the food if you like

If you have enjoyed one of the lessons, feel free to repeat it using different foods. There is no limit to the number of TastEd sessions you can do once you get started and you may find that once your children have got the hang of it they will want to invent their own TastEd games during dinner.



The Golden Rules

The golden rules for all TastEd sessions are:

- No one has to try
- No one has to like

These rules take all the pressure off a child and strangely make it easier for them to both try and like new foods over time. Establishing these ground rules will create an atmosphere where your child is free to explore food without worrying that you may be offended if they don't like something or if they feel they just can't bear to taste it.

We know that these rules may be different from the ones you have at family mealtime where lots of parents do ask children to try just a bit of everything on their plate. That's fine. You can explain to your child that there is one rule for mealtimes and another rule for TastEd sessions.

Teachers who have seen TastEd in action in the classroom have mentioned how powerful the 'golden rules' are as a way to engage even reluctant eaters in interacting with new vegetables.

One Year 4 teacher from Cambridge commented:

'No one has to try, no one has to like' was the motto for the sessions. And with this in mind the children felt at ease and in fact more willing to try something as they knew it was all about their own palate'.

It's fine not to like the food but encourage your child to use words to explain why they don't like the food, for example, 'I dislike the tomato because of the seeds'. 'I don't like the lemon because it is too sour'. Reinforce the idea that even if they don't like something now, they might grow to like it one day. If you have any examples of this from your own life you can tell them about, the message will be even more powerful ('I never used to like tea without sugar but now I find sweet tea too sickly'. Or 'I didn't realise I liked broccoli until I tried it with garlic').

Also remind them that we need to respect each other's tastes and never make fun of someone who enjoys different foods (including parents!). If they do not want to eat the food today, they can explore it using their other senses, by smelling, licking or touching it instead. If they do this, praise them for being brave.

What do I need?

In the parent/carer notes at the beginning of each powerpoint there will be information on what fruit or veg you will need for the lesson.



It's important to make sure the fruit and vegetables are thoroughly washed before you and your child try them, a colander may make this easier. Depending on what food is used you may need a chopping board and a knife, this is just so you can chop the food into bite size pieces for your child.

Occasionally other equipment may be suggested, e.g. a grater, however for the most part the lesson will be able to be completed without any extra equipment.

I'm not good at cooking, can I still run these lessons?

No cooking skills beyond boiling a carrot are required for these lessons, and if you can't boil a carrot that is also ok!

Using the senses

These lessons aim to use all five senses to explore food, every lesson includes fun sensory experiments with food: e.g. sniff the tomato, feel the peach, listen to the crunch carrot.

- Sight - this will be the least invasive sense for your child to explore as it's the one we use most, a child who might be scared to taste something new will be happy to look at the food.
- Touch - this is our biggest sense, mostly found in the skin but also in muscles such as the tongue. We touch food with our hands but also with our mouths, the feeling of food in our mouths is called texture. Often, when children say they hate the taste of food what they really mean is texture. So this is a really powerful concept for children to learn and explore.
- Smell - 'flavour' happens mostly in the nose not the mouth, children can explore this by holding their nose whilst trying different foods.
- Hearing - the aim is for children to think about how hearing impacts our food experience, which is something they may never have considered before.
- Taste - try and end with the taste lessons. By the point your child reaches the 'Taste' lesson they should have built up some confidence with new flavours, knowing they will not be judged for not liking something.

(N.B. Tastes - we have five; sour, salty, bitter, sweet, umami. Many children (and adults) won't have heard of umami, it's a Japanese word that refers to 'savoury' tastes such as mushrooms, tomatoes, soy sauce, marmite, cheese, meat and toast)

If you do have any questions please get in touch with info@tasteeducation.com