

**Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.**

## Activity: Picnic pioneers

**We all know that food tastes better outdoors, so let's have a picnic! This hands-on activity promotes independence, an appreciation of nutritious food and the simple joy of sitting on a blanket and eating with friends.**

### Learning aims

- Develop fine motor skills – manipulating tools, cutting, spreading, pouring etc.
- Foster teamwork and communication skills
- Enhance mathematical vocabulary, e.g. bigger, smaller, halves, numbers
- Understand basic food hygiene principles and recognise nutritious foods and their benefits.



### Resources

- Child-sized cutlery
- Plates and cups
- Chopping boards
- Blankets or large sheets for children to sit on
- Food - soft fruits and vegetables, cream cheese, hummus, yoghurt, nut butters (subject to allergies), bread, crackers etc.
- Water and water jug/container
- Waste disposal bin/bag.

### Activity outline

- Wash hands – ask if the children know why it's necessary and reinforce the hygiene reasons
- Place blankets/sheets on the ground for children to have their picnic on. Get children to help, show them how it's easier when there's a person at each corner of the blanket
- Set up different stations, e.g. a fruit and veggie chopping station with strawberries, bananas and cucumbers; a bread/cracker station with things to spread such as cream cheese, hummus, butter; plus stations for plates, water and dirty plates and cutlery. Place the appropriate cutlery and necessary tools at each area

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- Show them what is at each station and demonstrate what to do, e.g. how to spread the cream cheese on to a cracker (the action required to scoop the cream cheese on to a knife and where to hold the cracker so that it doesn't slip away or break), how to slice the stalk off a strawberry and cut it in half or even quarters if it's a large one, etc.
- Tell them what you are going to make for your snack and then walk them through the process. Model cooperation and sharing by cutting a large piece of fruit such as a banana and offering a piece to someone else. Ask if anyone would like to tell you what they are going to make for their picnic snack
- Encourage children to take turns or go to a different station if one is busy
- Sit with the children and discuss their choices and ask them to describe how it tastes, feels and smells. Take the opportunity to talk about food and health and how eating nutritious food helps our brains and bodies grow strong
- Model how to clear plates, for example, scraping leftovers into the food waste bin and putting their dirty plates at the dirty items station.

### Extension ideas:

- Dressing up area with an assortment of clothing items to encourage independence and fine motor skills.

### NDNA products to support you with this activity:

- [Start Life Well Award](#)
- [Healthy eating factsheet](#)
- [Physical activity and nutrition factsheet](#)