

Eating around the world

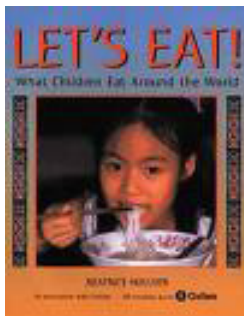
Chopsticks

Let's play and talk together

- ❖ Talk with your child about how people around the world use different utensils for eating. Explain that chopsticks are used in China and Japan instead of forks and spoons.
- ❖ Give your child some chopsticks and a bowl of one or two different foods cut into cubes, e.g. buttered whole grain toast, banana pieces, broccoli flowerets or cheese.
- ❖ Invite your child to try using the chopsticks to pick up the food. Let your child experiment for a while before showing how to use the chopsticks.



A good read-together book



Let's Eat: What Children Eat Around the World
by Beatrice Hollyer

You will need some chopsticks, a rubber band, a small piece of cardboard, and some small (about 1 cm or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch) cubes of food that are easy to pick up.

This activity is good for developing finger dexterity and eye-hand coordination and learning about different ways to eat.

Hints for success

- ❖ Chopsticks can be tricky to use. To make it easier for your child, try wrapping a strong elastic around the square ends of the sticks. Then slide a piece of folded paper up to the elastic to help wedge the chopsticks in an open position.
- ❖ Children are more likely to try new foods if they have a chance to learn about them and explore them in a fun way.



People use many different tools for eating. Which ones can you think of?

Chopsticks are like little pinchers to pick up food. Would you like to try them?

Ways to say it

More ideas for Chopsticks

Try this way

- ❖ With younger children, begin by talking about countries that use their fingers as tools. Compare eating with fingers to using forks and spoons.
- ❖ With older children, try eating foods that are harder to pick up with chopsticks, e.g. leafy greens such as spinach or gai lan (Chinese broccoli). Compare eating with chopsticks to using a fork.

Learning about the world

Talk about different ways people eat around the world—e.g. sitting on the ground or on a mat or at a table; eating with their hands, spoons, skewers or chopsticks.

Use the Internet or books from the library to learn about mealtime customs and utensils from different countries. Have a tasting party with foods, utensils and seating styles from each country.

Early literacy

Make a chart with your child showing mealtime customs from different countries. List the utensils used for eating, how people sit for meals and one or more special foods from each country.

Mark off each country as you try their customs. For instance, in Japan many people eat sushi with chopsticks while they sit on pillows on the floor or at a low table.



Safety tips

- Cut foods into 1 cm or $\frac{1}{2}$ inch pieces for children 1-4 years old to avoid choking.
- Chopsticks can be sharp. Keep an eye on your child when using new utensils.