

Let's Play Restaurant!

Materials:

- Play food: Plastic fruits, vegetables, bread, meat, fish, poultry; you may also borrow real food from your own fridge or pantry!
- Miscellaneous: Cooking utensils, notepad and pencil, dishes, table napkins, silk flowers, old sheets for tablecloth, salt and pepper shakers—whatever you can find!
- Dress-up clothes (optional): White shirt and bow tie, apron, fancy clothes, jewelry and hats for customers, purse or wallet
- MyPlate template printouts (one per “customer”)

Preparation:

Place a sheet or tablecloth on a table, then set place settings for each “customer.” At each place, set a [MyPlate template](#) printout with a fork and napkin on the left and knife and spoon on the right.

Instructions:

Have children take turns playing waiter/waitress, bus boy/girl, and customer. If you have dress-up clothes, let the kids get creative! If you have a range of ages, consider having older preschoolers wait tables, while younger ones bus tables and assist. If you have mainly younger

preschoolers, have them take turns being customers and bus boys/girls while you play the waiter/waitress.

Now take turns playing waiter/waitress. Demonstrate first by going through the steps start to finish. Explain that it is the dinner hour in your restaurant, and that you will be serving a full menu of foods from the 5 food groups. They may repeat the same options that you say below in your demonstration, or they may use different ones in those food group categories.

First, introduce yourself:

Hello, I'm [your name] and I'll be your waiter/waitress this evening.

Then ask:

[start with protein]: *Would you like beef, chicken, fish or beans?*

[then vegetables]: *Would you like carrots or corn?*

[then fruit]: *Would you like applesauce or grapes?*

[then grains]: *Would you like rice or bread?*

[then dairy]: *Would you like milk to drink?*

Next you can prepare, fetch and serve the food; ask the customer if they'd like ketchup or mustard, salt or pepper; clear the table; ask if they'd like dessert ["Our choices are frozen yogurt or fruit!"]; and then bring a check.

This is also a great way to teach grace and courtesy lessons. Model how to say "please" and "thank you" each step of the way.