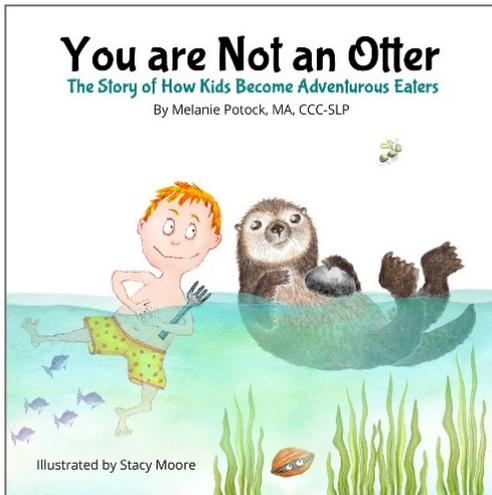


5 Ways to Use the Food Adventure Map and Matching Cards!



When I wrote **You are Not an Otter: The Story of How Kids Become Adventurous Eaters**, my goal was to show parents how to use imaginative play to decrease a young child's anxiety about trying new foods. You can use this free download of the Food Adventure Map and the matching cards in a variety of ways to encourage children to interact with foods. Download both from the FREE TOOLBOX tab at www.melaniepotock.com

First, download the map, print it and ideally, laminate it or put it in a protective clear folder. Download the matching cards, two copies of each. If you'd like, you can laminate that sheet before cutting each picture into an individual card. Below you'll find five ways to use the map and the cards. I encourage you to use your imagination and create news ways too! Be sure to post your ideas on Instagram, Facebook or Twitter with the hashtag #youarenotanotter . Be sure to tag me!

1. Put pea sized bites of one new food, one semi-preferred food (a food that your child eats on occasion) and two favorite foods on the adventure trail. If you sense that your child might be able to lick the new food, put it under the anteater. If you sense that today is day to try chewing the new food, put it under the crocodile. If your child might only be able to examine the qualities of the new food, put it by the raccoon. Trying a fun new utensil or practicing fine motor skills? Put the new food under the otter. The other foods can be placed by any animal and enjoyed as you travel down the adventure trail together, using pretend play as you go! Add more foods to the map over time, but always start with just four to keep the experience fun, so that we don't overwhelm a hesitant eater. If your child wants to play again, that's fantastic!
2. Draw lines on your trail and use the map as a game board. Place one set of the cards in a pile, face down, and turn over the card for each turn. Move the new food to each animal (you might go forward; you might go backward!) Whoever reaches the end of the trail, wins!
3. I discourage the use of a treat (candy or even preferred foods) at the end of the trail as a reward. If you'd like to put a small treat anywhere else on the map, I love that idea! Take desserts off their pedestal by making a small sweet treat just part of the other tastes, rather than the reward for eating other foods. Instead of a food reward, let the winner choose a silly dance that everyone must do together or something else that will get a big laugh! The focus should always be on the fun of playing together, not a food or other tangible reward at the end. Sticker charts are an option, but research shows that kids respond best to an immediate consequence and "silly" is always the best reinforcer at this age!
4. Lay out the cards to play "memory". Each player turns over two cards and tries to get a matching set. Every time they turn over a card, they also get to lick or take a taste of the tiny bit of food that is next to that creature on their individual adventure map. With so many attempts to find a match, this is a fun way to get lots repetitive licks or tastes of various foods.
5. Print several copies of the Food Adventure Map and laminate, making placemats for everyone at the table. Use the map as a visual aid to help spark the conversations noted in the appendix at the end of the book. Mealtime conversation has been shown to boost vocabulary and reading skills in young children. Plus, research shows that family mealtimes is the best way to raise healthy, happy eaters and kids that make safe life decisions in the teenage years. Starting a consistent family mealtime routine with good conversation is the best way to get on the path to adventurous eating!

You are Not an Otter: The Story of How Kids Become Adventurous Eaters is available on Amazon and through local book sellers. Copyright 2019 Melanie Potock/My Munch Bug, LLC

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