

# *Speaking of Speech....*

Dear Parents,

The approaching holidays bring many opportunities for dining in restaurants and in the homes of family and friends. A recent edition of the e-newsletter "Another View with Linda Hodgdon" offered the following advice for making dining out a more pleasant experience for you and your family. You can subscribe to this free newsletter by going to [www.UseVisualStrategies.com](http://www.UseVisualStrategies.com). It is full of useful information on a variety of topics related to special needs.

The holidays also offer many opportunities for entertaining and preparing special meals and treats. Your child participates in cooking activities in school; these lessons include cooking-related nouns (utensils, ingredients), verbs (pour, stir, measure, etc.), adjectives (wet, dry, sticky, etc.), following directions, and sensory experiences (taste, smell, touch). Children love the social closeness of cooking, and certainly enjoy the end product as well. You can reinforce these valuable skills and interactions by involving your child in cooking at home. Here are some Internet sources for kid-friendly recipes:

- <http://www.prairieorchid.com/index.html> -- some recipes online, book of symbol recipes available for \$14.99
- <http://www.bry-backmanor.org/> -- tremendous source of free recipes in text and picture versions
- <http://www.tinsnips.org/Pages/cooking.html> -- links to picture recipes
- <http://www.speakingofspeech.com/generic26.html> -- scroll down to near the bottom of the list to find symbol recipes for delicious snacks
- <http://www.hubbardscupboard.org/recipes.html> -- loads of recipes with photographs

Bon Appetit!

Speech/Language Pathologist

## ***Eleven Tips for Dining Delight***

*(from "Another View with Linda Hodgdon" free email newsletter.  
Subscribe at [www.UseVisualStrategies.com](http://www.UseVisualStrategies.com))*

### ***Tools for Success***

*Dining out provides a fabulous opportunity to learn social and communication skills. A little time spent planning ahead can make big changes in a student's behavior and his ability to participate.*

*Here are eleven ideas to create delightful dining.*

- 1 Collect photos or logos of your favorite restaurants** *Make a little book of favorite places to eat. This will be a fabulous tool to talk about where you are going.*
- 2 Ask restaurants for a menu to take home** *Look at the menu to choose what you want to order before you go out. Preparing ahead helps students anticipate and rehearse the event. Practice ordering so they will be ready when it is their turn. (I find restaurants are very gracious about sharing their menus when I tell them why I want one.)*
- 3 Write a little story about where you will go and what will happen** *Taking a few moments to do this before you go out will prepare the student for what will happen. Tell them what to expect when they go.*
- 4 Make a mini-schedule of your outing** *Go in car, stand in line, sit down, order, wait, eat, pay the bill, go shopping.*
- 5 Visually tell the child where you will go after eating** *You can put that information in the mini-schedule. Knowing what comes next can help students handle what is happening now.*
- 6 Create some visual rules for going out to eat** *Stay in your seat, keep your food on your plate, use a quiet voice, etc. Not too many rules. Just pick a couple of important ones to work on.*
- 7 Bring something to do if you have to wait** *Make sure that you bring something appropriate for the environment you will be in. Sometimes giving the student more than one choice works best. Of course, the choices are visual!*
- 8 Bring a watch or timer** *Measure time waiting for food or time in the restaurant.*
- 9 Bring home a visual memory** *A napkin, placemat, brochure, sales slip, etc. can promote conversation after going out. Put it in your little book. (See number 11)*
- 10 Bring a camera** *Take a photo of something to remember. Try a photo of the food or someone sitting at the table. Perhaps the front of the restaurant or something interesting inside like a fish tank or play equipment will be memorable.*
- 11 Write a story** *Write about where you went and what you did. Reviewing after an event is a great way to build communication skills. You can do this for students who are verbal. But it can also be effective for students who do not talk. Just make it simple. Create a little book with a photo and your visual memory items. Read it over & over. Use the book you made to tell someone else about what you did.*

*You may already do some of these things verbally. Just remember that when you make things more visual, students respond and remember better.*

*You don't have to do everything on the list. Choose the activities that will be most meaningful for your child. But for students who have more difficulty dining out, use more things on the list. Taking a little extra time to help students prepare and review can make all the difference.*