

25 Ways to Encourage Eating

1. Make a sundae using yogurt and cut-up fruit or berries.
2. For dinner, put each food item into a separate container that are numbered. The children eat all the food in container number 1 before number 2, etc.
3. Children love to dip! Serve raw vegetables and salad dressing while you are fixing dinner.
4. Make sandwiches using bagel chips, waffles, or peeled apple slices instead of bread.
5. Introduce a variety of one type of food by exploring the items and noting differences and similarities. For example: buy enriched white, rye, English muffin, cocktail pumpernickel breads. Compare a slice of each by color, texture, smell, taste, size, speckles, and whatever else they notice. Have a chart where you record what type each person likes best, second, not at all. Begin using more than just "white" bread. Some other foods to use are apples, berries, citrus fruits, lettuces, peppers, and beans/lentils.
6. Let your child help add ingredients to dishes, such as certain vegetables to soups.
7. Have breakfast for dinner or vice versa! Make mini English muffin pizzas for breakfast and waffles or eggs for dinner.
English muffin pizzas:
 - * Toast English muffins
 - * Spread tablespoon of pizza sauce on it
 - * Sprinkle it with shredded mozzarella cheese
 - * Top with cooked sausage or ham, pineapple or vegetables
 - * Broil for less than 5 minutes and serve.
8. Make a meal with foods that all share the same shape. For example: serve meatballs, pasta circles and peas. Or using small cookie cutters, cut the food into star or oval shapes to serve.
9. Make a rainbow colored meal and serve each item in separate small bowl lined up on the table in "rainbow" fashion. For example: red grapes, orange carrots, yellow pasta, green beans, and blueberries.
10. Keep foods soft so they are easy to chew.

11. Serve sauces in small pitchers so the child can pour them over the food by him/herself.
12. Offer foods in separate courses with the food least liked first. Put the vegetables out and say, "The chicken will be done soon." Then wait to serve it.
13. Melt cheese over broccoli or cauliflower, then serve.
14. Serve vegetables as a snack instead of during dinner.
15. Wrap foods in tortillas for an easy, quick pick-up meal.
16. Keep portion sizes small. Offer seconds.
17. Plant a vegetable garden (or if that sounds too ambitious), plant one vegetable in a pot. Have your child help with the planting, tending, and picking.
18. Serve food in mini portions: make mini meatloaves, mini waffles, and mini muffins.
19. Wrap vegetables in biscuit dough. Bake and serve.
20. Talk with and create a food pyramid. Show the child what types of foods fit into the categories and have him/her pick favorites. Then, have your child cut out pictures from the grocery store ads in newspapers and glue them to the chart. From this chart have your child select items to include on the menu that they like. Go to www.mypyramid.com for more information.
21. Change the setting. Have a picnic on the floor in the family room for a change.
22. Pour juice into a cup and put in the freezer. As it solidifies, add a stick to it for the handle.
23. Use fun dishes from which to eat: plates shaped like animals; plates/bowls with pictures on the bottom; divided dishes.
24. Use dishes and utensils that are child-sized. They will more easily meet with success in feeding themselves. Make sure the furniture allows them to comfortably sit at the table (or highchair) and reach their food.
25. Have your child help with preparing the meal (washing vegetables, tearing up lettuce); setting the table (placing silverware and napkins at each place); and cleaning up (as soon as he/she is able, clear own dishes from table to counter).