

## Top 10 Tips for Food Preparation for Toddlers and Preschoolers

1. **Keep it Fun**--- make shapes with fruits, veggies, breads and meats.
2. **Keep it Varied**--- adding different ways to prepare the same food can increase your child's exposure to a variety of textures
3. **Keep it Social**-- Toddlers love having picnics (even indoor ones), pretend tea parties, etc. This can help encourage a reluctant eater to try a few bites (or hopefully more!)
4. **Learn Your Child's Schedule**-- Some little ones are more successful with several small meals throughout the day. Meal time doesn't have to be only breakfast/lunch/dinner. Helping your child choose healthy and safe snacks now can develop needed skills for later in life.
5. **Get Your Little One Involved!**-- They can set the table, they can “help” to cook foods that are safe for them, they can help you to “shop” for safe ingredients with image-based lists
6. **Change it Up!** -- Change the serving dishes; change the shape of the food (instead of pancakes, try waffles).
7. **Play Games!** -- No food fights, of course, but you can play taste-testing games, color matching games with fruits/veggies, etc. Introducing appropriate play can encourage reluctant eaters.
8. **Sticking to the Safe Stuff!**-- Labeling safe foods with special, easily identifiable stickers can help little ones learn what foods are safe for them to eat
9. **Pack a Sack!** -- Your little one may go to preschool or daycare and need to provide safe food. Laptop lunches, bento boxes and other fun lunch containers can help the child to easily identify his/her food and make it more attractive for eating.
10. **If you have concerns that your child is experiencing food aversions or has a medical issue that is interfering with his/her ability to eat** in an age-appropriate way, it is very important to inform all of his/her doctors (Allergist, pediatrician, gastroenterologist) in case evaluation is warranted.