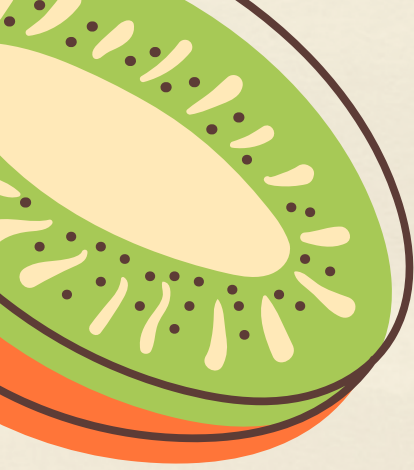
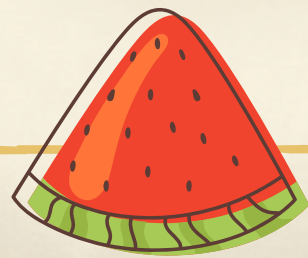


Fun with Food

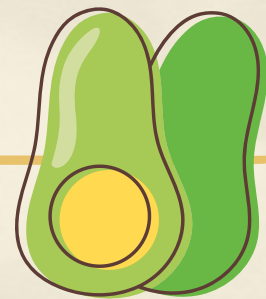


Introducing Food to Your Child



Finger Foods

Once your child begins solid foods, the first step is finger foods. These are foods they can eat with their hands and/or fingers. This includes: puffs, pancakes, eggs, avocado, banana, raspberries, shredded chicken, salmon, squash, and the list goes on! Your child can eat what you eat as long as it is cut and served safely.



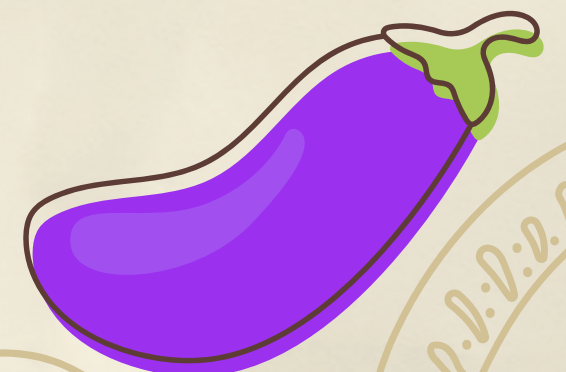
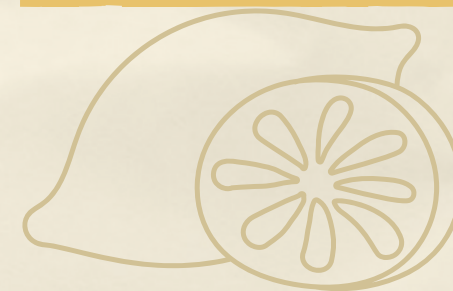
Using Preloaded Utensils

Using preloaded utensils can begin around the same time you introduce finger foods, just prepare for a mess! When introducing a spoon to your child, scoop it for them (aka preload) to improve success and prevent frustration. Start with "stickier" foods like mashed potatoes or yogurt.



Independent Utensils

If your child is beginning to master self-feeding with utensils, let them try to scoop or poke for themselves. Though it may take time and be frustrating and/or messy, it is important to encourage this independent feeding skill. Let them try to poke the chicken or scoop the sweet potatoes! Encourage them it is okay to try again.



Your Toddler + Food

Your toddler may be entering their picky or cautious eater stage. As frustrating as this can be, don't get discouraged! Let's discuss some fun ways to explore food with your child.



Food Play

Food play is allowing your child to explore food through play. This can be touching, smelling, squishing, drawing with, and even cooking food! It allows your child to explore the food with all senses before being prompted to eat or taste it. Food play does not always require the pressure of eating or tasting, it should be lots of fun!

Modeling

Modeling requires an adult showing the child what to do or expect during a mealtime. This can include eating your food while discussing the way the food looks, tastes, smells, and sounds. You can even model what is expected if you do not like the food. While you are modeling, your child is soaking it in and learning more about that food through you!

Feeding Toys

Allowing your child to pretend to feed a toy is another way to encourage food exploration. In this form of play, they are smelling, touching, and experimenting with the food. This will increase their comfort level with foods and encourage them to explore the taste as well! For added fun at the table, allow your child to feed you and give them feedback on the food!



Fun (and Easy) Meal Ideas

Breakfast



Snack Plate

Snack plates are a fun and simple way to ensure your child gets nutrients and fuel. Place some cereal, fruit, yogurt, or cottage cheese on a plate and done!



Muffins + Fruits

Whether the muffins are store bought or homemade, these are a quick and easy way to fuel up before a busy day. Change up the flavor and fruit to introduce new flavors.



Whole Grain Pancakes or Waffles

These can be frozen or homemade. . . or frozen homemade if you bake ahead! Add some fruit on top or to the side for some added yum!



Breakfast Bars

You can make these at home in bulk or buy them from the store, either way, they are sure to fill your child's tummy. These are high in fiber, protein, and flavor!



Fun (and Easy) Meal Ideas

Lunch

DIY Uncrustable

A basic PB&J can be upgraded with fun cookie cutter shapes! You can rotate out the peanut butter for nutella and change up the jelly flavor for more fun!



Pizza Quesadilla

Cheese, sauce, pepperoni, tortilla, and anything else you'd put on a pizza make for a quick lunch on a summer day! Try a new topping or dipping sauce with this meal.



Snack Lunch

Charcuterie boards are so popular for adults. . . and kids! Try making a fun snack board with your toddler and see what snacks they come up with.

Turkey Wraps

Skip the bread and try a wrap today! You can use turkey, cheese, lettuce, mayo . . . if it can go on a tortilla you can wrap it! Wraps are a fun change to the routine sandwich.



Fun (and Easy) Meal Ideas

Dinner



Pasta

You can use any shape of noodles and any sauce. . . the options are endless! You can place the sauce and meat to the side to decrease the pressure during mealtime. Just have fun!



Sandwich Night

Turn your kitchen into a Subway! Offer a variety of choices for sandwich prep and allow your child to make their very own dinner.



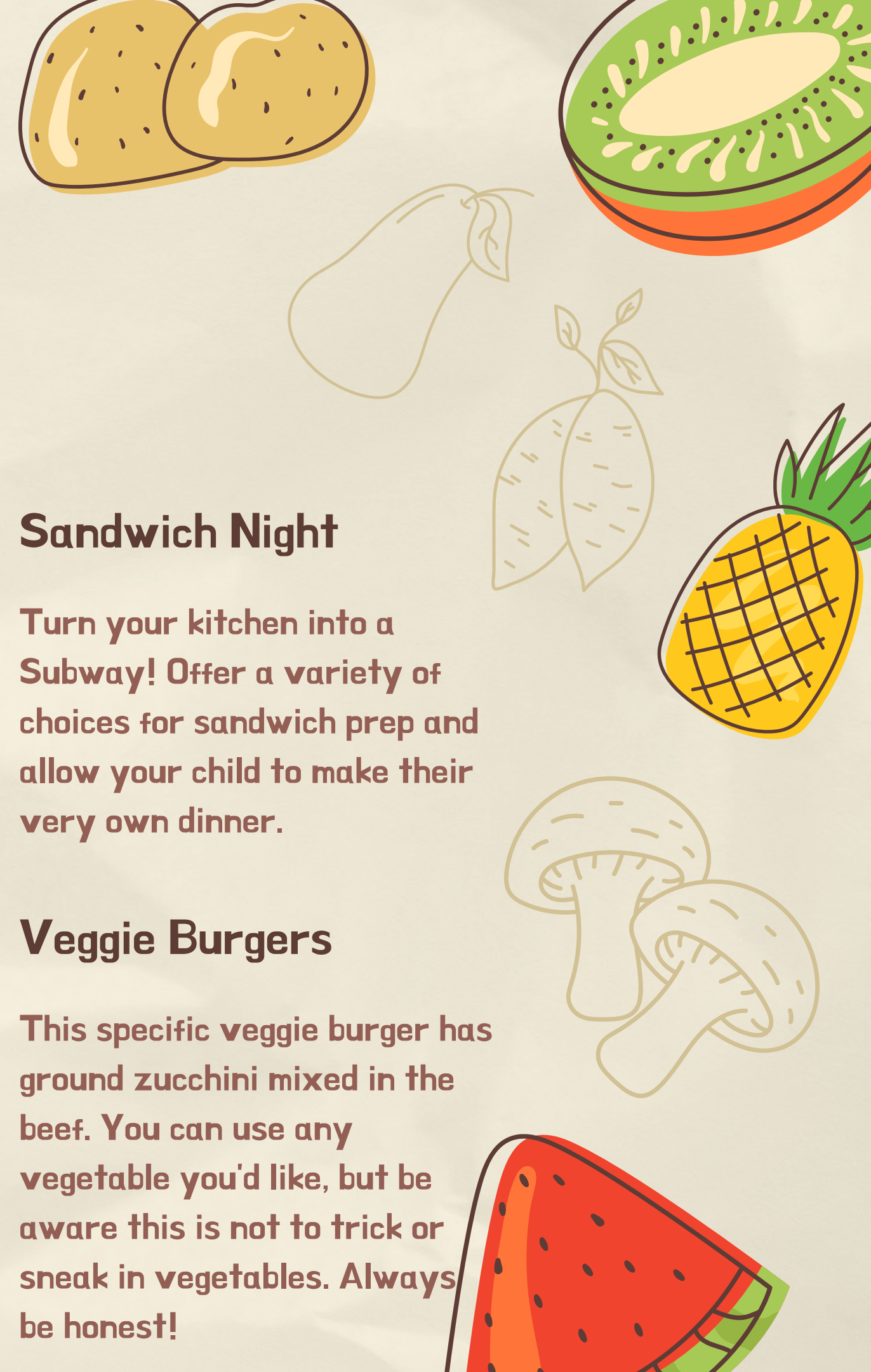
Deconstructed Taco

On the next taco night, try presenting it as a "make your own" taco. It's fun, new, and will encourage your toddler to explore the food in a different way! They may even taste it!



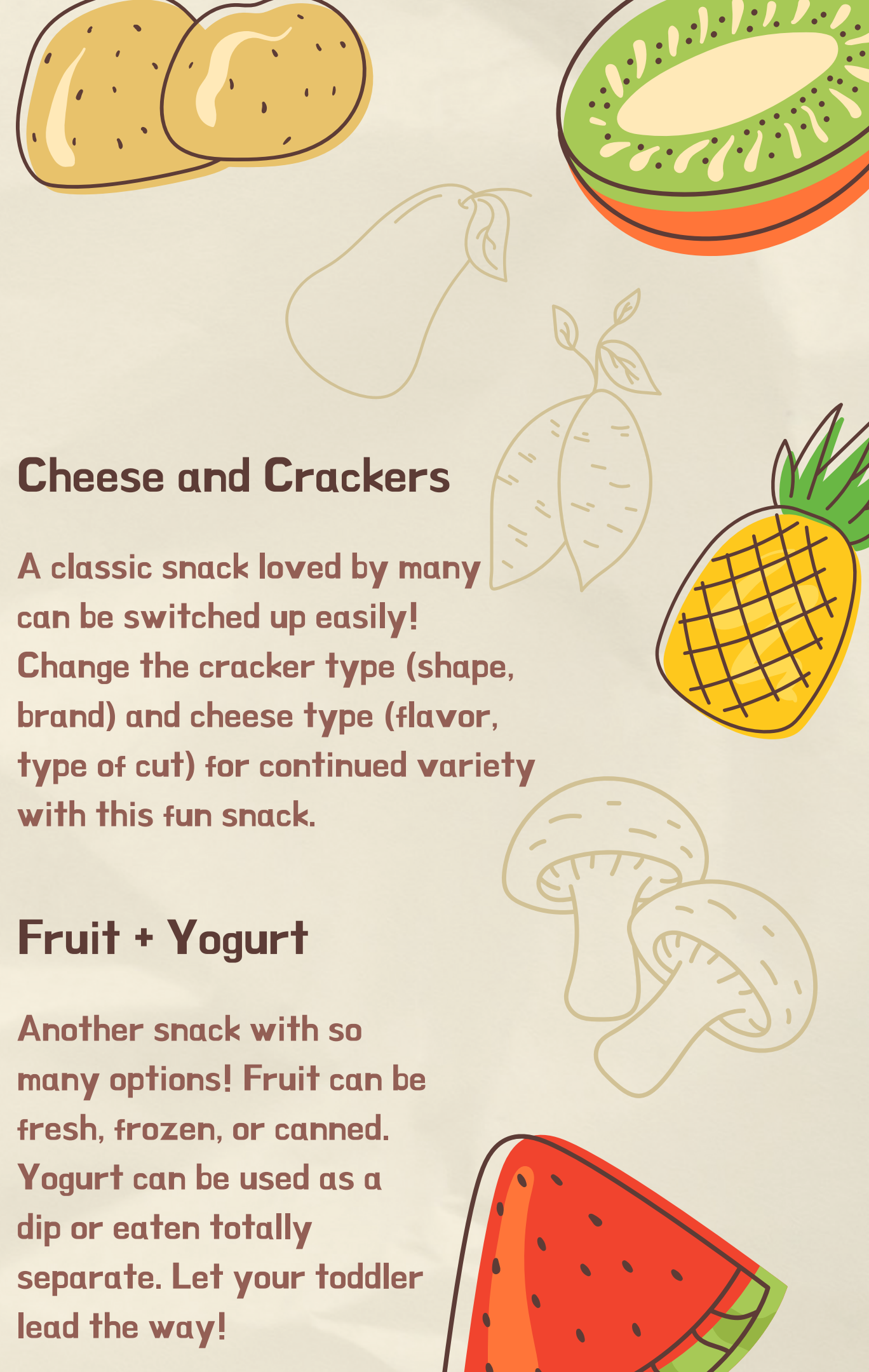
Veggie Burgers

This specific veggie burger has ground zucchini mixed in the beef. You can use any vegetable you'd like, but be aware this is not to trick or sneak in vegetables. Always be honest!



Fun (and Easy) Meal Ideas

Snacks



Freeze Dried Fruit

Looking for a healthy and crunchy snack? Freeze dried fruits are the best "chips" around! They can be eaten plain or dipped in yogurt/peanut butter.



Cheese and Crackers

A classic snack loved by many can be switched up easily! Change the cracker type (shape, brand) and cheese type (flavor, type of cut) for continued variety with this fun snack.



Smoothies

Smoothies have such an endless opportunity for trying new things. Use whatever fruit (and vegetables) available and let your toddler get creative!



Fruit + Yogurt

Another snack with so many options! Fruit can be fresh, frozen, or canned. Yogurt can be used as a dip or eaten totally separate. Let your toddler lead the way!

If your child is experiencing picky, cautious, or problem eating routines, please reach out to Pediatric Learning Center. We would be glad to talk with you more in depth and assist your family.



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Pediatric Learning Center, Inc.
Therapy, Education, & Support