



## **Robin Miller's FUNDamentals of Finger Foods**

*Tips for Building a Mealtime Foundation by Getting Your "Nuggets" to Enjoy New Foods*

For most parents, finding ways to encourage their picky eaters to try and enjoy new foods is a top priority. Whether it's choosing the right finger foods to build fundamental skills or finding the perfect picks for finicky ones, moms want to feel good about what they're serving to their kids. As a nutrition expert, chef and mom of two boys, Robin Miller understands the challenge of preparing meals that her boys will try, enjoy and ask for again. That's why she's developed the following "nuggets" of mealtime wisdom to help please picky eaters and build a foundation for balanced eating habits.

### **Hands-on Food**

Let's face it -- kids prefer to eat with their hands. Finger foods make ideal meals for kids since you can combine a variety of small portions on one plate. Try partnering protein-packed *Tyson® 100% All Natural Chicken Nuggets* with vitamin-rich green beans and complex carbohydrate-rich pasta for a mouth-watering, nutritious meal that's easy to eat with little hands. What looks like fun to your child is a well-balanced meal that you can feel good about serving.

### **Name Games**

Giving fun, creative names to everyday nutritious foods may have kids asking for more. According to a 2009 Cornell University study, when kids were offered "X-ray vision carrots" instead of plain carrots, they ate 62 percent more carrots<sup>1</sup>. Try adopting this approach in your own house by giving silly names to a variety of foods, such as "cloud fluff" for mashed potatoes or "cheese in the trees" for broccoli florets topped with cheese.

### **Follow the Leader**

Kids learn by example, so it's important to be a great role model from the beginning. When children see their older siblings, parents, other adults and friends eating a variety of foods, they are more likely to try them. For example, share a bite of *Tyson® 100% All Natural Chicken Nuggets* with your child, and then share a bite of a new food that you want them to try. If they see you enjoying both foods, chances are they will enjoy them, too!

### **Muffin Tin Meals**

Kids love to get their hands into everything, big or small. Set up a "finger food buffet" and have your kids pick the items they'd like eat. They'll feel included in the process, which will increase their interest in trying a little bit of everything. Start with a muffin tin (or any small container with compartments) and customize the meal by filling the sections with bite-size portions of colorful, nutritious foods. Some great food ideas include: cubed cheese, whole grain cereals, grapes, sugar snap peas, baby carrots, cherry tomatoes and *Tyson® 100% All Natural Chicken Nuggets*. Once you've filled the compartments, let them pick their items, allowing them to be hands-on with their meals.

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<sup>1</sup> *Getting kids to eat veggies: Try 'X-ray vision carrots' study by Cornell Chronicle, December 2009*



### **Smoothie Switch**

If your child is being extra picky and refusing to eat any foods, don't fret! Switch to a smoothie—which can be packed with vitamins and nutrients for a well-balanced meal. Start with a base of low-fat milk or yogurt; add fresh or frozen fruit, like berries and bananas, and puree in a blender until smooth and thick. Add orange juice for a thinner consistency and load up on added vitamins. To supplement the smoothie with more nutrients, blend in peanut or almond butter. Now, grab a straw and serve to a smiling face!

### **Flip Flop the Clock**

The time on the clock has little meaning to your child and their food tastes. He wants grilled cheese or chicken nuggets at 7 a.m.? She's hungry for cereal at 5 p.m.? No worries—just roll with it! Serve a grilled cheese sandwich made with low-fat cheese and whole wheat bread or *Tyson® 100% All Natural Chicken Nuggets* for breakfast. For dinner, serve whole grain cereal with low-fat milk and fresh fruit, like bananas or berries. Nutrients are nutrients – it doesn't matter when your child consumes them. It also will teach them to follow hunger "cues" and eat *what* they want, *when* they want. These are valuable life lessons that any parent can foster from an early age.

For more information on *Tyson® 100% All Natural Chicken Nuggets*, or to learn more about Robin Miller's "nuggets" of mealtime wisdom, please visit [www.yourlittlenugget.com](http://www.yourlittlenugget.com).

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