

Making Mealtime Memories

Build Your Own Pizza Bar

Ingredients:

- 1 (14- to 16-ounce) ball of pizza dough (or a crust of your choice. For example you can make homemade dough, or use a flatbread or even an English muffin! You can find the premade dough balls usually by the cheese section at the grocery store!
- 1½ cups easy homemade marinara sauce (or your favorite pizza sauce)
- 6 ounces mozzarella, Jack, Colby, or cheddar cheese, grated or cut into ½-inch cubes
- Toppings of your choice (sliced bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, olives, roasted red peppers; blanched broccoli or cauliflower florets; chopped artichokes, cooked bacon, cooked chicken; cooked and crumbled sausage; sliced pepperoni or other cured meats; sun-dried tomatoes; etc.) Give your child the option to choose!
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



1. Preheat oven to 500 degrees F. Lightly grease a baking sheet with a little olive oil
2. Prep your toppings while the oven preheats and place them in separate bowls which will allow your child the freedom to choose what they want to put on top!
3. Cut the ball into 4 each pieces. Let your child help you stretch and roll it into a 6-8 inch circle. Don't overwork the dough.
4. Place dough on the baking sheets and let each person design their own pizza! Note: 2-3 spoonful's of sauce is usually enough, but there are no limits for toppings! Try making faces or other fun patterns!
5. Transfer to baking sheet and bake for 10 to 15 minutes, rotating halfway through until the crust is golden. **Note:** if you are using something smaller for your crust like an English Muffin, this may take less bake time, just watch for melted cheese and a golden looking crust!

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Healthy Living With Head Start

Addressing "Choosey Eaters"

Did your child who once ate everything recently start rejecting certain (or most) foods? 'Picky Eating' can stem from various reasons, but in many cases, it may happen once a child realizes they can assert control over situations. It is very common, so know you are not alone! Consider these tips when addressing your "choosey eater!"

Try, Try Again: It can take as many as 10 times tasting a new food before a child's taste bud accepts it. Scheduled meals and snacks can help ensure your child is hungry during mealtime.

Break From Bribes: Try to avoid bribes, especially special treats for eating other foods. This can make the "prize" food exciting, and the food you want them to try feel like a chore.

Variety: Offer a variety of healthy foods, especially vegetables and fruits, and include higher protein foods like meat and fish at least 2 times per week. Help your child explore new flavors and textures in food. Try adding different herbs and spices to simple meals to make them tastier and discover what they enjoy. To minimize waste, offer new foods in small amounts and wait at least a week or two before reintroducing the same food.

Crossing Bridges: Once a food is accepted, use what nutritionists call "food bridges." Introduce other foods with similar color, flavor and texture to help expand variety. If your child likes pumpkin pie, for example, try mashed sweet potatoes and then mashed carrots.

Avoid food fights: If your toddler refuses a meal, avoid fussing over it. It's good for children to learn to listen to their bodies and use hunger as a guide. If they ate a big breakfast or lunch, they may not be interested in eating much the rest of the day. Pressuring kids to eat, or punishing them if they don't, can make them dislike foods they may otherwise like.

Pairing: Try serving unfamiliar foods, or flavors young children tend to dislike at first (sour and bitter), with familiar foods toddlers naturally prefer (sweet and salty). Pairing broccoli (bitter) with grated cheese (salty), for example, is a great combination for toddler taste buds.



Fun in the Kitchen

Involving children in growing, selecting and preparing food may make them more apt to try new things in the kitchen!

Involve kids in meal planning. Toddler's have a growing interest in being in control, so let them pick which fruit and vegetable to make for dinner or during visits to the grocery store or farmer's market. Read kid-friendly cookbooks together and let your child pick out new recipes to try.

Create a Tiny chef. Some cooking tasks are perfect for toddlers (with lots of supervision, of course):

⇒ **At 2 years,** children can help wipe tables, tear lettuce greens or snap green beans, help "read" the cookbook by turning pages, make faces out of pieces of fruits and veggies (check out the next page!), or can hand items to adults after grocery shopping.

⇒ **At 3 years,** children can help by adding ingredients, scooping or mashing potatoes or other veggies, squeezing citrus fruits, stirring batter, kneading and shaping dough, naming and counting foods, and can help assembling a pizza! Check out the recipe on the last page for a homemade pizza recipe.

⇒ **At 4 years:** All the above plus, peeling eggs and some fruits (clementine's or oranges!), help setting the table, cracking eggs, measuring dry ingredients and can help making sandwiches or salads!

⇒ **At 5 years:** Measuring liquids, cutting soft fruits with a dull knife, and using an egg beater (plus all the above!)

Create family Style meals. At Head Start/Early Head Start, we encourage Family Style meals, so children can practice choosing what they want and working on fine motor skills by serving themselves. Serve bowls of food, kind of like a buffet, with kid friendly serving utensils.

Let them choose what and how much they want to eat, and let them serve themselves!

Make food fun! Let your child make funny faces, explore different colors and textures and allow them to just be silly. Meal times are a great space for you and your child to bond over food.



DIY Gardening

Starting an indoor or outdoor garden is a great way to get your children interested in eating healthy foods! For this activity, you can use items around the house such as tin cans, toilet paper rolls, or old yogurt containers to plant in. All you need is a bag of potting soil, seeds and creativity and you are good to go!

What you will need:

- Children-friendly gardening tools
- Bag of potting soil
- Something to grow the plants in. This can be cans, toilet paper, or even empty yogurt container. Make sure that water can drain through your container by poking or drilling holes in the bottom of whatever you choose.
- Seeds. Radish, lettuce, onions or herbs are great options to start inside. They grow relatively fast so your child can quickly see the results! You can always move them or start them outdoors if you have the space. Feel free to try other vegetables or flowers if you choose!
- Watering can
- Paint and stickers (optional)



Instructions

1. Prepare your container. Whether this be cleaning out the yogurt container, painting your tin can (make sure to let it dry) or using all the toilet paper, make sure your planter is ready to collect dirt and seeds to grow!
2. Fill your container 3/4 full of potting soil.
3. Plant 1-2 seeds in each container, depending on the size. Poke a hole and cover them with a little bit of soil. For a toilet paper roll, one seed should be enough. For a tin can, two may work! If you are planting something like lettuce, sowing a couple seeds for a fuller look is fine too! You can always transfer to a bigger space if you need more room. (contact the Dental/ Nutrition Specialist if you need more information!)
4. Create a tray for the pots using a shallow plastic container, such as an empty salad or fruit container. This will collect any excess water after watering your seeds.
5. Place in a space with a lot of natural sunlight and be sure to check every 1-3 days to make sure the soil is moist!

