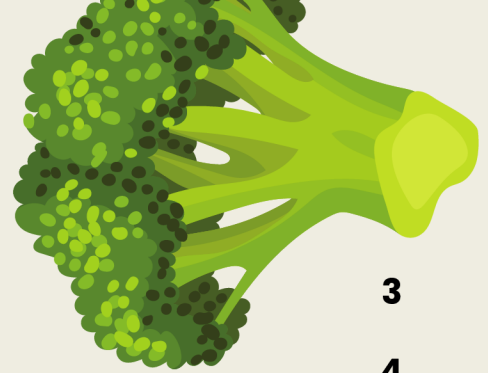




SAY YUMMY!

by Victoria Bricks

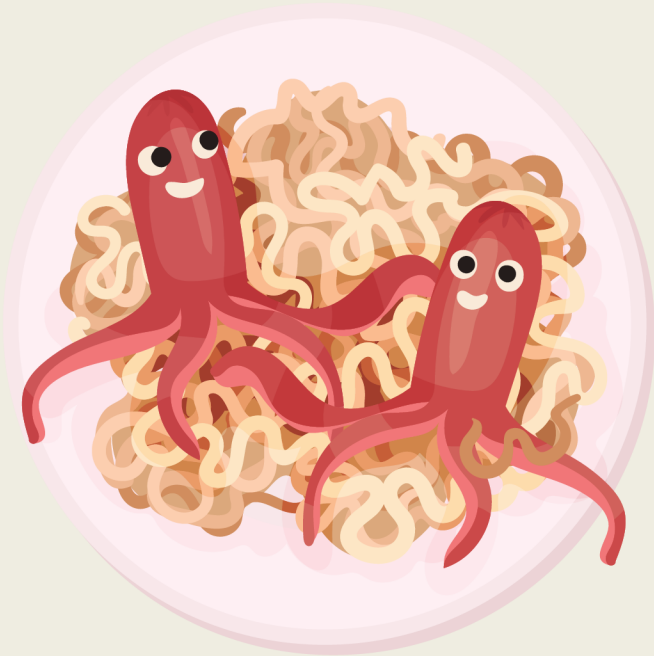
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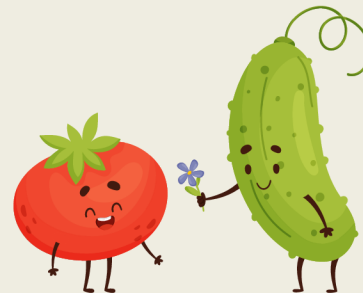
SAY YUMMY! A PARENT'S GUIDE TO RAISING HEALTHY, HAPPY EATERS

A Note from Victoria



To every parent who's ever whispered, "Please, just try one bite," while serving dino nuggets with a side of hope.

You're not failing. You're not alone. Mealtimes don't have to be battles — let's trade the stress for silly songs, snack monsters, and small wins. You're doing your best, and that's more than enough. This book is for you, your child, and the joy waiting at the table.





CHAPTER 1

You're Not Alone – Why So Many Kids Struggle with Food

Hi, I'm Victoria Bricks – a mom of two energetic boys, ages 11 and 4. Our house is usually full of building blocks, basketballs, snack crumbs, and... strong opinions about food.

If you're holding this book, chances are you've said things like:

"Just try one bite!"

"Please don't lick the table..."

"Wait – you liked that yesterday!"

Yep. I've been there too. And I want to tell you something right from the start:

You are absolutely not alone. ..



The Truth Behind Picky Eating (and Why It's Not Just "Being Difficult")

Did you know that up to 50% of kids between ages 2 and 6 go through a picky eating stage? It's completely normal — and often tied to how children explore their world and protect themselves from unfamiliar sensations.

My younger son has sensory processing challenges, which means the way food looks, feels, smells, or moves around on his plate can be overwhelming. What might look like stubbornness is often just his brain saying:



"This is too much for me right now."

For a while, meals at our house felt like a mini game show:

Would he touch the broccoli?

Would the cheese be the right kind of melty?

Would he spot the speck of green in the pasta?

There were days I felt defeated — wondering,

“Why is this so hard?”



I’ve cried after dinner.

I’ve served the same three meals on repeat to avoid meltdowns.

If you’re doing the same, you’re not failing.
You’re surviving.



The Emotional Side of Mealtimes



Food is deeply emotional - for our kids and for us.

We want to nourish our children.
We want peaceful meals.

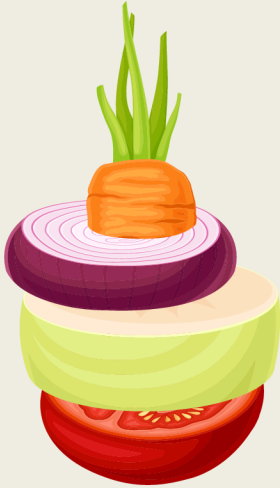
And when we spend 30 minutes cooking something "healthy" only to hear "Yuck!" – it stings.

But here's what I've learned:

- Many kids go through this.
- Sensory struggles are real (and way more common than we think).
- Gentle, playful food exposure actually works — for all kids, not just the “picky” ones.



Let's Get Real (and a Little Silly)



This isn't a "perfect parent" kind of book.
This is a "Hey, I tried this and it worked for us
– maybe it'll work for you too" kind of book.

*I'm not here to shame the chicken nuggets (we've
had many nugget nights).*

And I'm definitely not asking you to serve
Pinterest-level snack plates at 6 a.m.

What I am here to do is give you:

- Encouragement (you're doing better than you think)
- Creative tools to make food less stressful
- Songs and sensory games that helped us go from
"NO WAY" to "I'll try it!"
 - Simple recipes your kids can help with (no fancy skills
needed)



It's Not About Fixing – It's About Exploring

When I stopped trying to “fix” my son’s eating and started inviting him to explore food — on his terms — everything shifted.

Not overnight.

Not perfectly.

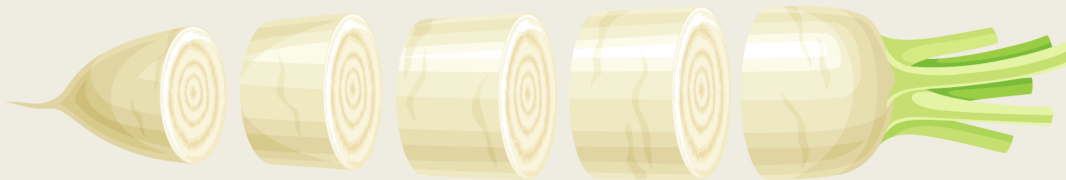
But slowly, with lots of patience and play, we made progress.

Some days that progress looked like poking a grape with a toothpick.

Some days it was licking a carrot and yelling, “Ew!”

Other days, it was singing a silly song while making snack monsters out of toast.

Every tiny step counted.



YUM!

Why I Wrote Say Yummy!



I created this book because I couldn't find one like it — one that combines:

- Music and rhythm
- Sensory play
- Simple food activities
- Real, honest stories from a messy, loving kitchen

Whether your toddler only eats yellow foods, or your preschooler cries when spaghetti touches sauce (been there), I want you to know:

There's no perfect eater.

There's no one-size-fits-all fix.

But there is a way to make food feel fun, safe, and exciting again.



You've Got This (Even If Dinner Was Cereal Last Night)

This book isn't about raising mini gourmet chefs.
It's about helping your child build
curiosity,

confidence, and

connection

- one bite (or sniff, or touch) at a time.



So let's jump in.

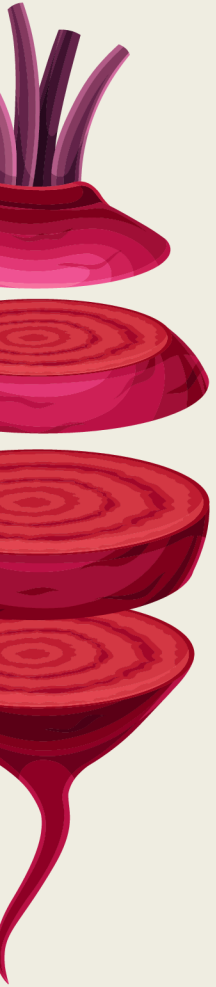
Let's make silly snacks, sing silly songs,
and say "Yummy!" together.

Because showing up, even when it's hard
— that's the real magic.

Love,

Victoria Bricks

Mom of Two / Snack Maker / Food Explorer



*"A little progress each day adds up
to big results." - Satya Nani.*



✨ CHAPTER 2



Why Does My Kid Freak Out About Spaghetti? (A Quick, Gentle Intro to Sensory Processing)

If you've ever watched your child scream at a banana with a tiny brown dot, or act like melted cheese is some kind of monster slime — I want you to know:

You're not alone, and you're not raising a dramatic weirdo.

There's actually a name for what's happening: sensory processing. And for many kids, especially those with sensory sensitivities like my younger son, eating can feel overwhelming in ways we adults totally forget.

What Is Sensory Processing Anyway?

Let's keep this light and simple (because this isn't a medical textbook — it's a parenting survival guide with songs and snacks).



For example:

- *Your child might gag at yogurt's slimy feel*
- *They might cry when food is too noisy to bite (like raw carrots!)*
- *Or they might reject a whole plate just because two foods touched*

Some kids are *sensory seekers*

- they love bold flavors and crunchy textures.

Others are *sensory avoiders*

- they prefer bland, smooth, familiar things.

And some kids bounce between the two
(hello, mystery behavior!)



My Son's Story

My youngest was always sensitive to textures, sounds, and smells. As a baby, he refused purees. As a toddler, he loved dry crackers but melted down at anything wet or sticky. At first, I thought it was just a “phase” — but as time went on, I saw patterns.

He wasn't being difficult. He was trying to protect his nervous system.

And once I started working with his sensitivities instead of pushing against them, our meals became more peaceful — and more successful.

We started playing with food before eating it.

We explored textures with our fingers first.

We used silly songs (like our original, “I Like What I Like”) to make things feel less scary.



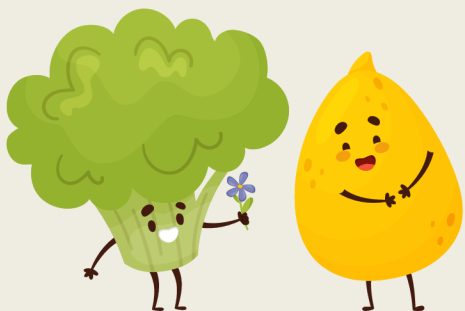


Red Flags to Notice (But No Need to Panic)

Not every kid who's picky has a sensory disorder — but these signs might mean your child's sensory system is driving the show:

- *Strong reactions to textures (spits out mushy or mixed foods)*
- *Refusal to try new foods, especially by sight or smell*
- *Overwhelmed in noisy or smelly mealtime environments*
- *Loves crunchy, dry foods but avoids soft or wet ones*
- *Sensitive to how food looks arranged on the plate*
- *Craves control and sameness at meals*

If that's sounding familiar, you're in the right place. This book is built for all kids — but especially for those who need extra time and extra creativity to explore food safely.



Here's the good news:

You don't need to "fix" your child.

You just need to give them tools to feel safe and curious about food — and keep things playful.

- Fun sensory play activities that help kids get comfortable with textures
- A “Yummy or Yucky?” game that lets kids explore without pressure
- Songs like “I Like What I Like” to help them express their preferences
- Easy recipes where they can touch, stir, and decorate food themselves


Sensory challenges don't go away with pressure — but they can soften and shift with time, exposure, and love.

Final Thoughts

If your child prefers dry toast 10 days in a row, that's okay.
If they still lick broccoli but won't bite it, that's still progress.

If they scream at mashed potatoes like it's a swamp monster, you're not failing. You're learning – together.

Some kids need more patience, more play, and more repetition.

This book is for all of them. And for you. 

In the next chapter, I'll show you how sensory play helped my son go from panic to participation - and how you can try it too, even if you're not a "crafty parent."



Let's keep going. You've got this.



CHAPTER 3

Food Exposure Through Fun Sensory Play Tips That Actually Work

Here's the big secret I wish someone had told me earlier:
Kids don't have to eat new foods right away to start building a healthy relationship with them.

They can:

- *Touch them* 🖐️
- *Smell them* 👃
- *Smush them* 😊
- *Paint with them (yes, really!)* 🎨
- *Pretend with them* 🐻



This is called food play or food exposure — and it's the magic bridge between fear and curiosity.

Especially for kids with sensory sensitivities (like my younger son), removing the pressure to eat can open up space to explore safely.



But...

Isn't Playing With Food "Bad Manners"?

Sure, at a fancy restaurant. But in your own kitchen or sensory corner? Let them go wild (within reason - no applesauce on the ceiling, please 😊).

Think of it like this: food becomes familiar through fun.

Kids learn by using their senses. If broccoli has always been “yuck” on a plate, imagine how different it feels to use it as a paintbrush or build a “broccoli tree forest” for dinosaurs.

This isn't just play. It's neurological permission to trust food.

•••

My Son's First Food Play Win

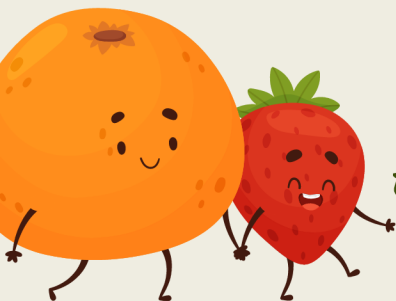
I'll never forget the day my son smeared hummus on the table.

Not ideal? Maybe.

But for a kid who used to cry at the smell of hummus, that moment was HUGE.

He wasn't afraid anymore. And a few weeks later... he dipped a cracker in it!





Easy Sensory Food Play Ideas (Mess Welcome!)

Here are some of our go-to food activities for toddlers and preschoolers — all tested and loved by my boys:

1. Rainbow Oats Bin

- Dye dry oats with food coloring.
- Let kids scoop, pour, and bury toy animals.
- Add dried fruit or small snacks for surprise “treasures.”

Sensory benefit: texture tolerance, color exposure



2. Fruit Face Plating

- Offer a variety of sliced fruits (banana, berries, kiwi, apple).
- Give them a plate and let them design silly fruit faces.
- Bonus: Take a picture before eating (or licking 😊).



Sensory benefit: visual variety, creative control



3. Dip Station Tasting

- Set out different dips (yogurt, guac, hummus, jam).
- Give them spoons, crackers, or veggie sticks.
- Let them “test” each dip and vote Yummy or Yucky.



Sensory benefit: smell + taste exposure without full bites

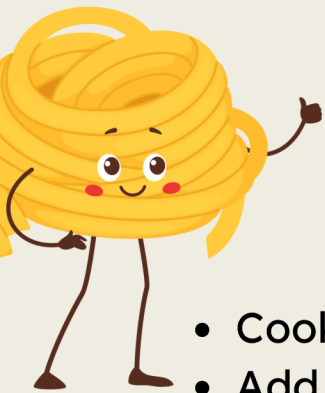


4. No-Peek Smell Jars

- Hide familiar foods in small cups or jars (banana, cinnamon, peanut butter).
- Let kids sniff and guess what’s inside.
- Turn it into a guessing game with blindfolds!



Sensory benefit: strengthens sense of smell and builds trust



5. Spaghetti Sensory Play

- Cook spaghetti, drain, cool, toss with a little oil.
- Add food coloring if desired.
- Let them squeeze, stretch, and sort the noodles.

Sensory benefit: tackling “wet/slimy” textures in a playful way

Pro Tips for Parents Who Hate Mess

- Use a plastic tablecloth or baking tray to contain chaos.
- Keep a damp towel nearby and say, “Mess is okay, and clean-up is part of the fun!”
- If your child hates getting messy, offer spoons, tongs, or gloves at first.
- Be their calm coach — your reaction teaches them how to feel about messiness.



When to Try Food Play

- ✓ *Before meals (to reduce pressure)*
- ✓ *During calm times (not rushed mornings)*
- ✓ *As a structured activity with music, toys, or a story theme*

What to Say Instead of "Just Try It!"

We're replacing pressure with play. Try phrases like:

- *"Let's see what it smells like!"*
- *"Can you give it a squish with one finger?"*
- *"Wanna feed it to your stuffed animal first?"*
- *"Let's play scientist. What happens when we mix these?"*



You're showing them that food is safe — and maybe even silly.

Final Thoughts

Sensory food play is one of the biggest breakthroughs I had as a mom.

It helped my son rebuild trust with food... without the battles. And it made our kitchen a happier place.

Next up, we'll take things a step further with our first game-based approach to food trying:

The “Yummy or Yucky?” Game — a fun way for kids to test foods without pressure and start building their own food confidence.

Ready to play? 🎲 🍎





CHAPTER 4



The "Yummy or Yucky?" Game A Fun, Pressure-Free Way to Explore Food

When it comes to food, toddlers and preschoolers love to feel in control.

That's why saying "Take a bite" can make them freeze... But saying "Want to play a game?" gets them excited!

That's where the Yummy or Yucky? Game comes in.

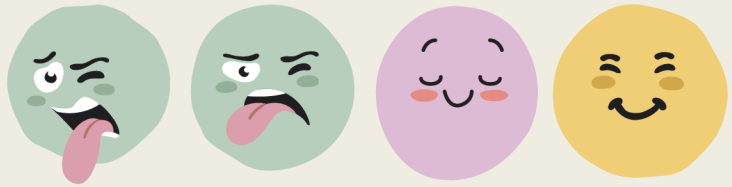
This simple, silly activity has been a game-changer in our home - especially for my youngest son with sensory sensitivities.

It gives kids the power to decide how they feel about food...

while gently exposing them to new smells, textures, and flavors.



Why It Works



- No pressure to eat. Kids are allowed to explore food without expectations.
- Play-based exploration. It taps into their natural curiosity and love of games.
- Encourages language. They learn words to describe what they like (or don't!).
- Normalizes preferences. They see that it's OK not to love everything — but still try!

How to Play

Here's how we do it at home or with friends (great for picky eaters and curious ones!):

You'll Need:

- 3-6 small foods (familiar + new ones)
- A large sheet of paper or board
- Two sections labeled: “Yummy” and “Yucky” (you can draw silly faces)
- Optional: Stickers, stamps, or smiley markers



Step-by-Step:

1 Introduce the Game:

“Today we’re scientists! We’re going to test food and sort it into Yummy or Yucky.”



2 Start with the Eyes:

Let your child look at each item. “What color is it? What does it look like?”

3 Move to Smell:

“What does it smell like? Fruity? Stinky? Like grass?”

4 Touch It (Optional):

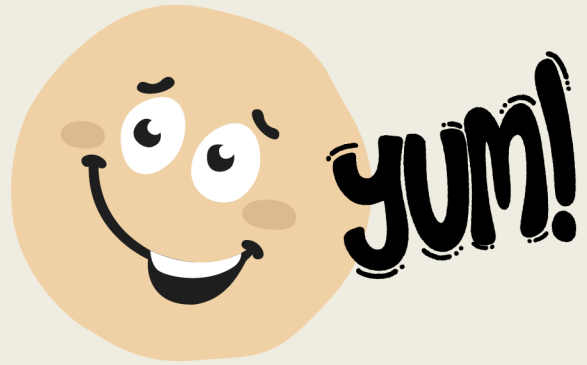
“Is it bumpy? Wet? Soft like a pillow? Hard like a rock?”



Step-by-Step:

5 Taste (Only If Ready):

Just a lick or nibble — no pressure.
“Want to give it a tiny try?”



6 Place It on the Board:

After each step, your child gets to decide: “Is it yummy or yucky today?”

7 Celebrate Honesty:

Even if they say “Yucky!” — that’s okay! Say:
“Good job trying. Our taste buds change every day!”

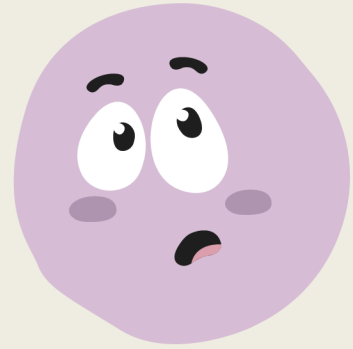
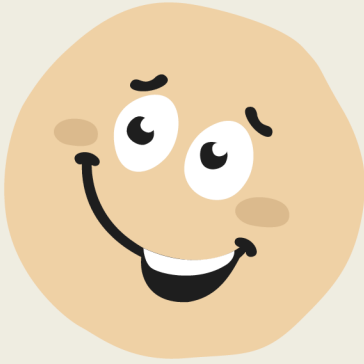


Parent Tips

- Use variety: Include at least 1 safe food, 1 neutral food, and 1 new or challenging one.
- Let them lead: If they don't want to taste — no problem! Smelling or touching is still a win.
- Track favorites: Create a little “Food Explorer Journal” to record new wins.



Variation: "Yummy, Yucky, Maybe!"

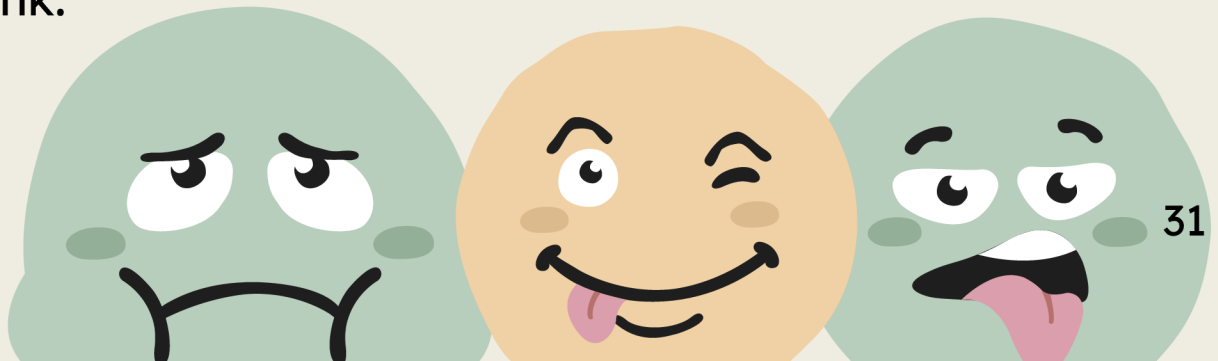


Some kids don't want to commit - and that's okay!

Add a "Maybe" zone for foods they're not sure about yet.

You can say:

- "You're still deciding - that's awesome!"
- "Your taste buds are learning new things!"
- "Let's try it again next week and see what you think."





Why My Son Loved It

My younger son used to panic if something new appeared on his plate.

But when we started calling it “food science” and giving him the power to say ‘yucky’, it changed everything.

He felt safe.

He laughed.

He learned how to explore food with all his senses.

And the biggest surprise?

A food in the Yucky pile today... sometimes moves to the Yummy pile next week. 🌟



Bonus: Printable Game Mat

In the back of this book, you'll find a printable

"Yummy or Yucky?"

mat you can laminate and reuse.

Or draw your own with silly faces — let your child decorate it!

Coming up next in Chapter 5, we'll turn your kitchen into a playground with safe, age-appropriate cooking tasks your little ones can actually help with. Spoiler: you don't need to be a chef — just a patient helper with a towel nearby 😊

Ready to cook, play, and connect?





CHAPTER 5

Getting Kids Involved: Safe Kitchen Tasks for Ages 2–6

“Can I help?” — Yes, yes, yes!

One of the biggest mindset shifts I had as a mom was realizing this:

Kids don't just want to eat — they want to participate.

Even before they're old enough to use a knife or stove, they can be a part of the kitchen fun. And when they help make the food? They're way more likely to try it.

This chapter is all about safe, age-appropriate kitchen tasks your toddler or preschooler can actually do — without making you lose your mind.

(Okay... maybe a little mess. But it's worth it!)



Why Involving Kids Helps

- Builds food curiosity

They see what goes into the food and feel proud of the process.

- Encourages ownership

"I made this!" often leads to "I want to taste it!"

- Supports sensory growth

Touching oats, peeling bananas, squishing dough – all great sensory work.

- Teaches real-life skills

Bonus: you're helping raise a confident, independent human!

Kitchen Prep Tips First!

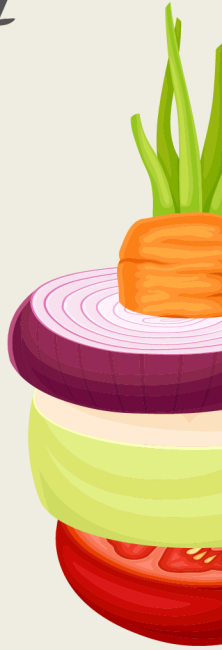
Before we get messy – here's what I recommend to set the stage:

- Use a low stool or helper tower (or sit them at the table)
- Put down a wipeable mat or tablecloth
- Give them their own apron (or just an old T-shirt)
- Use child-safe utensils: plastic knives, small mixing bowls, silicone tools
- Have a "mess towel" ready – always!



“Cooking with kids is not just about ingredients, recipes, and cooking. It's about harnessing imagination, empowerment, and creativity”. -

Guy Fieri





Safe Kitchen Tasks by Age

Here's a list I've used for my own boys – these grow with your child and their confidence!

Ages 2–3: Little Helpers

- Wash fruits and veggies in a bowl of water
- Tear lettuce, spinach, herbs
- Add pre-measured ingredients to a bowl
- Stir soft mixtures (like yogurt or pudding)
- Place toppings (like berries on pancakes)
- Smash soft foods (bananas, cooked potatoes)



Ages 4–5: Kitchen Explorers

- Crack eggs into a bowl
- Mix pancake or muffin batter
- Cut soft foods with a child-safe knife (bananas, boiled carrots)
- Roll dough into balls
- Use cookie cutters
- Spread nut butter or cream cheese (with supervision)

Age 6 and Up: Confident Cooks

- Grate cheese (carefully)
- Measure dry ingredients
- Make their own sandwich or wrap
- Peel hard-boiled eggs
- Use a toaster (with your help)
- Assemble snack plates or bento boxes



Real-Life Tip from Me (Victoria)

There were days when letting my younger son “help” felt like an exercise in patience... but when I gave him his own bowl and spoon, something magical happened:

He started sneaking bites of things he swore he hated!

One time, while helping mix muffin batter, he actually licked the spoon... and now? Blueberry muffins are his absolute favorite.

It's messy. It's imperfect.

But it's connection.
And it works. 🍷

Turn It Into a Game!

- “Top Chef Jr.” — Pretend you’re on a cooking show.
- “Mystery Ingredient” — Let your child choose a secret item (and taste-test it).
- “Snack Artist” — Have them decorate their plate with silly food faces.



Celebrate Small Wins

Even helping for 2 minutes deserves praise!

Say things like:

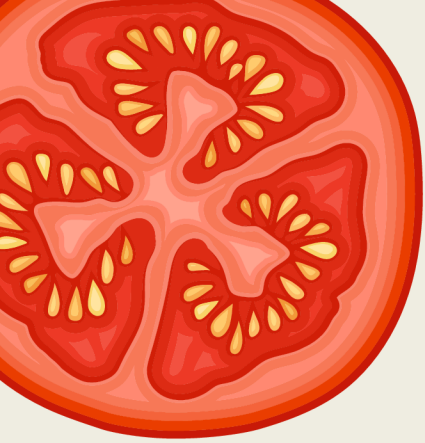
- *“Wow, you were such a great mixer today!”*
- *“You peeled that banana like a pro!”*
- *“Thanks for being my kitchen helper — let’s do it again soon.”*

Next up in Chapter 6, we’ll bring music to the table - literally - with fun food-themed songs that make mealtimes feel like playtime.

Spoiler: There’s a QR code waiting for you 🎵

Shall we keep going?





✨ CHAPTER 6

Using Music & Songs to Make Mealtime Fun Turn the table into a stage!

One of the unexpected parenting superpowers I discovered?
Music.

It lifts moods, distracts picky eaters, and turns boring routines into moments of joy. And if you're here because your little one has sensory sensitivities -

songs can be a gentle, playful bridge into new food experiences.

Trust me, I've sung through many broccoli battles!

Why Songs Work So Well



- They reduce pressure

Singing is playful — it takes the focus off “eat this now” and puts it on fun.

- They support sensory regulation

Rhythm and melody can soothe kids with food anxiety or texture sensitivity.



- They help with memory & routines
- Songs make food names and steps stick. "Wash, wash, wash your hands..." – we all know how that one goes!*



Scan and Subscribe

 *Meet: "I Like What I Like"*

A fun, affirming song to help kids explore food choices with confidence.

This song was born at my kitchen table, when my younger son was struggling with textures and tastes.

I wanted a way to say:
"It's okay to not like everything – just try."

So we made it into a song!





🎵 *"I Like What I Like" Lyrics*

I like apples, they're so sweet,
Crunchy snacks I love to eat!
I like pasta, warm and round,
Twirl it up — no noodles on the ground!

I don't like pickles, they're too sour,
I tried a bite and made a face for an hour!
I don't like mustard on my bread,
I'd rather have some cheese instead.

But guess what? I'll still give it a try,
A tiny nibble, not too shy!
Sometimes foods surprise me, wow!
I didn't like it then — but I like it now!

You like carrots, I like peas,
You like honey, I like cheese!
Different tastes are A-OK,
Let's try new things every day!

I like what I like, and that's just fine,
You like your food, and I like mine!
Trying new things is fun to do,
You never know — you might like it too!



Scan the QR code to hear
the song on YouTube and
sing along with Tim &
Robbie!

Or visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gfn87Cl2chl>



Fun Ideas to Use This Song



- Sing it while prepping meals

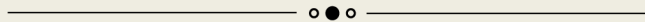
Let your child choose which verses match what's on the plate today.

- Use it with food charts

Color in foods they've tried after singing the song!

- Act it out!

Pretend to be surprised by a new food. "Whoa! I didn't like it then — but I like it now!"



From My Kitchen to Yours

But when we bring joy, music, and patience to the table, things really do change. The goal isn't to raise a gourmet.

It's to raise a child who's curious, brave, and proud of every small food adventure.

➡ In Chapter 7, it's time to roll up those sleeves — we're making food together! Get ready for 25 simple, sensory-friendly recipes that your little one can help with (and might even eat!).

Shall we dive into the recipes next?

✨ CHAPTER 7

25 Easy Snacks & Meals Kids Can Help With



*Hands-on food fun to build confidence, skills,
and curious taste buds*

One of the best ways to encourage adventurous eating?

Let your child get involved in the kitchen.

When they mix, mash, and sprinkle, they feel proud — and more likely to taste what they helped make.

As a mom of two boys (with very different food preferences!), I learned early that cooking together made food less scary and a lot more fun.

This chapter includes 25 simple, kid-approved recipes, each designed with:

- Easy steps for little hands
- Fun presentation or activity element
- Optional sensory tip to support texture and touch exploration
- No-stress ingredients — most are pantry staples!



SECTION 1: BREAKFAST FUN

Banana Sushi

Ingredients: 3–4

- Banana
- Peanut butter or cream cheese
- Tortilla
- Optional: sprinkles or chia seeds

Steps:

1. Spread peanut butter on the tortilla.
2. Place banana on one edge and roll it up.
3. Slice into little “sushi” pieces.

Sensory Tip:

Smells sweet and feels squishy - let your child touch and roll it themselves!

Try this:

Decorate with edible “toppings” before slicing.





SECTION 1: BREAKFAST FUN

Rainbow Toast

Ingredients: 3–5

- Bread slices
- Cream cheese or plain yogurt
- Natural food coloring or crushed fruit
- Butter knife or spoon

Steps:

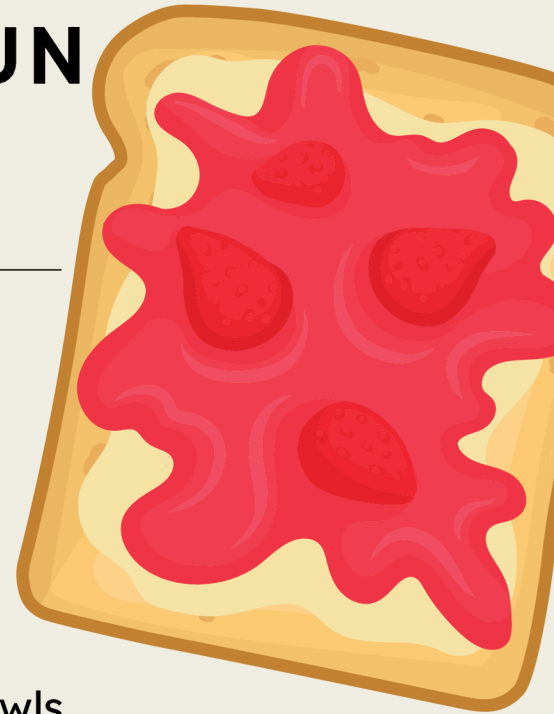
1. Mix cream cheese with colors in small bowls.
2. Let your child “paint” the toast using a spoon or their fingers.
3. Toast lightly if desired and eat!

Sensory Tip:

A great smearing activity that’s also edible.

Try this:

Make a smiley face or rainbow design!





SECTION 1: BREAKFAST FUN

Animal Face Pancakes

Ingredients: 4–6

- Small pancakes
- Banana slices
- Berries
- Yogurt or syrup
- Optional: mini chocolate chips

Steps:

1. Lay out toppings buffet-style.
2. Invite kids to decorate their pancake into a bear, cat, or silly creature.
3. Serve with a small side of yogurt or syrup for dipping.

Sensory Tip:

Visual play encourages interest in new textures.

Try this:

Ask, “What’s your pancake animal’s name?”





SECTION 1: BREAKFAST FUN

Eggy Muffin Cups



Ingredients: (Makes 6 Muffin Cups)

- 4 large eggs
- 1/4 cup milk (dairy or plant-based) – helps make it fluffy
- 1/2 cup chopped veggies (e.g., bell peppers, spinach, zucchini)
- 1/4 cup shredded cheese (cheddar, mozzarella, or whatever your child tolerates), 1/4 cup diced ham or tofu (optional)

Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F).
2. Whisk eggs and milk until combined.
3. Stir in chopped veggies, cheese, and ham/tofu (if using).
4. Grease a muffin tin (or use silicone liners).
5. Pour the mixture evenly into 6 muffin cups — about 3/4 full each.
6. Bake for 15–18 minutes, or until puffed up and set in the center. Let cool for a few minutes.

Sensory Tip:

Encourage cracking the eggs — it's messy but empowering.

Try this: "Let's choose a color to add to our muffins!"



SECTION 1: BREAKFAST FUN

Breakfast Banana Boats

Ingredients: 3-4

- Banana
- Yogurt
- Berries or granola
- Optional: drizzle of honey

Steps:

1. Peel and split banana lengthwise.
2. Add yogurt inside like a boat filling.
3. Top with berries or granola.

Sensory Tip:

Layers of soft, crunchy, and cold. Let them build their own!





SECTION 2: SNACK TIME STARS

Cheese Stick Pals

Ingredients: 4–6

- Mozzarella cheese sticks
- Black olives or mini carrots
- Optional: edible marker or small food picks

Steps:

1. Use food picks or edible markers to make faces on the cheese.
2. Add ears (carrots) or hats (olive slices).
3. Give each one a name!

Sensory Tip:

Holding cool cheese helps warm-up touch-avoidant fingers.

Try this:

“Let’s make a cheese superhero!”



SECTION 2: SNACK TIME STARS

Fruit Faces

Ingredients: 4–6

- Apple or pear slices
- Berries, banana slices
- Raisins or seeds
- Nut butter or cream cheese for “glue”

Steps:

1. Give your child a plate and variety of toppings.
2. Let them design a face!
3. Eat it together and talk about what expression it has.



Sensory Tip:

Smell the fruit, squish the banana, lick fingers—it's all allowed.

Try this:

“Make a happy face, then a grumpy one!”



SECTION 2: SNACK TIME STARS

Cracker Critters

Ingredients: 4–6

- Whole grain crackers
- Hummus or spread
- Sliced veggies (cucumber, radish, olives)

Steps:

1. Spread the base layer (hummus or cream cheese).
2. Add shapes to build bugs, animals, or funny monsters.
3. Name and eat your creation!



Sensory Tip:

Good for finger control and eye-hand coordination.

Try this:

“Let’s turn crackers into a puzzle!”

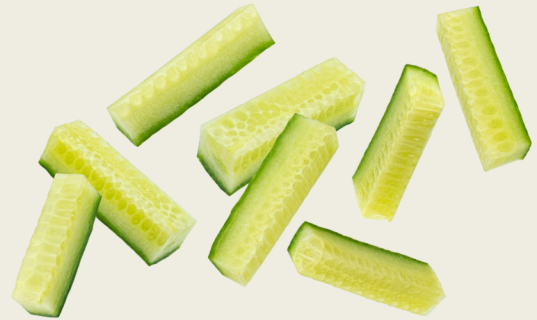


SECTION 2: SNACK TIME STARS

Veggie Dipper Cups

Ingredients: 4–6

- Carrot sticks
- Cucumber sticks
- Bell pepper strips
- Yogurt-based dip or hummus
- Small clear cups



Steps:

1. Place dip at the bottom of a clear cup.
2. Add veggie sticks upright like a bouquet.
3. Let them dip and crunch.

Sensory Tip:

Crunchy sounds can be satisfying! Let them explore the noise.





SECTION 2: SNACK TIME STARS

Apple Donuts

Ingredients: 3–5

- Apple rings (cored)
- Nut butter, yogurt, or cream cheese
- Toppings: granola, seeds, raisins, sprinkles

Steps:

1. Slice apples into thick rings and remove the core.
2. Spread your chosen “frosting.”
3. Decorate with toppings!

Sensory Tip:

Use fingers to smear, then sprinkle. Talk about textures: “Is it crunchy or soft?”





SECTION 3: BUILD-YOUR-OWN MEALS

Mini Pita Pizzas

Ingredients: 4

- Mini pita breads
- Tomato sauce
- Shredded cheese
- Toppings (e.g., olives, peppers, ham)

Steps:

1. Set up a “pizza bar.”
2. Let your child spread sauce with a spoon.
3. Sprinkle cheese and choose toppings.
4. Bake at 180°C (350°F) for 8–10 minutes.

Sensory Tip:

Let them touch the cheese and sauce — have a paper towel ready!

Try this:

“Design a silly pizza face!”





SECTION 3: BUILD-YOUR-OWN MEALS

Build-Your-Own Sandwich Skewers

Ingredients: 5-6

- Cubed bread
- Cheese cubes
- Turkey or ham squares
- Grape tomatoes
- Cucumber slices
- Skewers or straws

Steps:

1. Lay all ingredients out buffet-style.
2. Let your child slide pieces onto a skewer.
3. Make patterns — or random fun!

Sensory Tip:

Great for texture play — wet cucumber, soft bread, firm cheese.

Tip:

Use a paper straw for younger kids (safer than a skewer).





SECTION 3: BUILD-YOUR-OWN MEALS

Rainbow Pasta Bowl

Ingredients: 5-7

- Cooked pasta (fusilli or penne)
- Diced veggies (carrots, peas, corn, bell pepper)
- Olive oil or mild dressing
- Optional: shredded chicken or cheese

Steps:

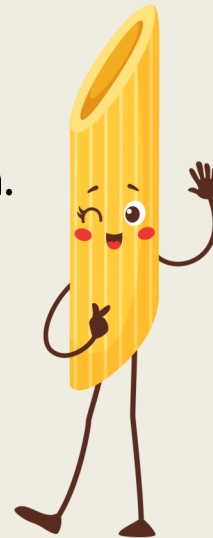
1. Cook pasta ahead of time.
2. Give kids bowls of toppings to mix in.
3. Add dressing and toss together.

Sensory Tip:

Let them mix with clean hands!

Tip:

Talk about colors and smells — “What does this orange pepper remind you of?”





SECTION 3: BUILD-YOUR-OWN MEALS

DIY Quesadillas

Ingredients: 3-5

- Tortillas
- Cheese
- Optional fillings: beans, chicken, avocado, veggies

Steps:

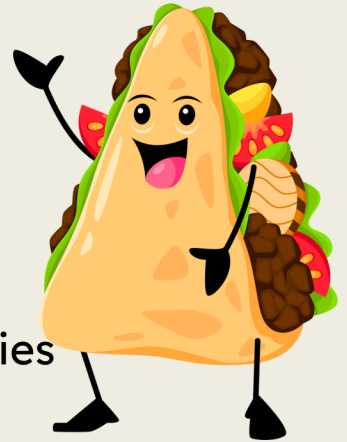
1. Let kids sprinkle cheese and toppings on half a tortilla.
2. Fold it and heat in a skillet or microwave.

Sensory Tip:

Folding and pressing is great for motor skills!

Try this:

Ask your child to “name” their quesadilla — “Dragon Cheese Wrap?”





SECTION 3: BUILD-YOUR-OWN MEALS

Breakfast-for-Dinner Wraps

Ingredients: 3-5

- Tortilla wraps
- Scrambled eggs
- Shredded cheese
- Optional: cooked veggies, chopped sausage, ketchup

Steps:

1. Lay ingredients out in bowls.
2. Help your child add fillings and roll it up like a burrito.

Sensory Tip:

Offer warm and cool options for contrast.

Tip:

Encourage your child to narrate what they're adding: "First eggs, then cheese..."





SECTION 4: SWEET TREATS

Because dessert can be fun and interactive! These ideas are low in sugar but high in joy – and they're all “little-hands friendly.”

Frozen Banana Pops

Ingredients: 3-5

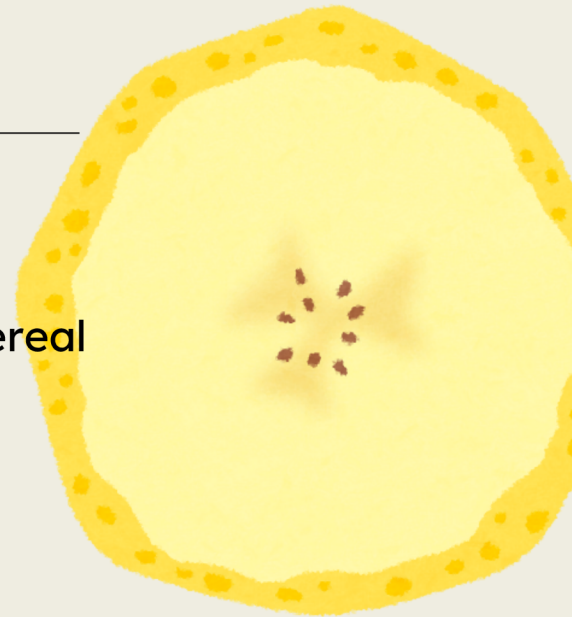
- Bananas
- Yogurt or melted chocolate
- Toppings: sprinkles, coconut, crushed cereal
- Popsicle sticks

Steps:

1. Cut banana in half, insert stick.
2. Dip in yogurt or chocolate.
3. Roll in toppings and freeze.

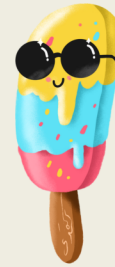
Sensory Tip:

Cold + creamy - some kids love this, others not so much. Try a mini one first!





SECTION 4: SWEET TREATS



No-Bake Oat Bites

Ingredients: 4

- Rolled oats
- Peanut butter or sunbutter
- Honey or syrup
- Optional: mini chocolate chips or raisins

Steps:

1. Mix all in a bowl (kids can help!)
2. Roll into balls, chill for 15 minutes.

Sensory Tip:

Squishy, sticky fun — messy in the best way!





SECTION 4: SWEET TREATS

Fruity Ice Cubes

Ingredients: 2-4

- Small fruit pieces (berries, kiwi)
- Water or juice
- Ice tray

Steps:

1. Drop fruit into trays.
2. Fill with water or juice and freeze.
3. Use in drinks or as a cold snack.

Sensory Tip:

Cold and fun to touch or suck





SECTION 4: SWEET TREATS

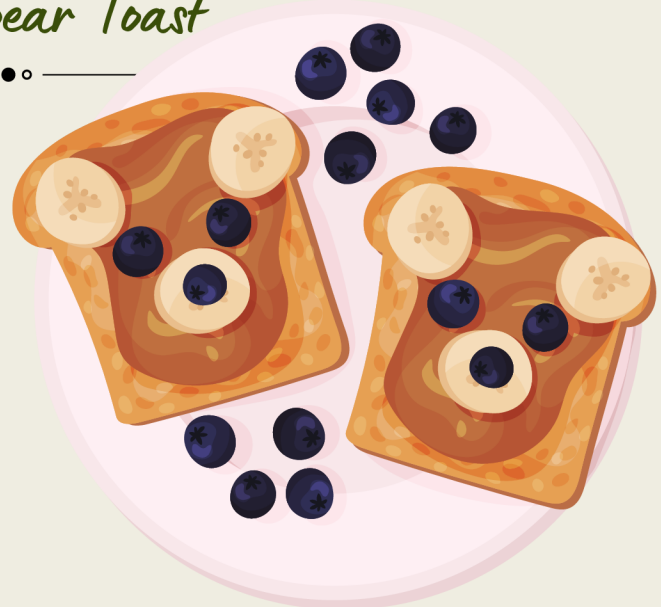
Teddy Bear Toast

Ingredients: 4

- Bread
- Nut butter or cream cheese
- Banana slices
- Blueberries or raisins

Steps:

1. Spread base.
2. Add banana ears and nose, blueberries for eyes.



Sensory Tip:

A gentle way to introduce “mushy + soft” textures.



SECTION 4: SWEET TREATS

Yogurt Cones

Ingredients: 3-4

- Ice cream cones
- Yogurt
- Fruit
- Optional: sprinkles

Steps:

1. Fill cone with yogurt.
2. Let your child top with fruit and sprinkles.



Tip:

Much cleaner than ice cream, and great for pretend play.



SECTION 4: SWEET TREATS

Stuffed Dates with a Twist



Ingredients: 3-4

- Pitted dates
- Cream cheese, nut butter, or sunflower seed butter
- Optional: shredded coconut or dark chocolate chips

Steps:

1. Open up the dates gently.
2. Stuff with chosen filling.
3. Decorate or dip the ends in toppings.

Sensory Tip:

Chewy texture helps oral motor skills. Ask, “What does it feel like when you bite it?”

Try this:

“Let’s call these candy caterpillars!”





SECTION 4: SWEET TREATS

Yogurt Bark

Ingredients: 3-4

- Greek yogurt
- Honey or maple syrup (optional)
- Mixed fruit or granola
- Baking sheet + parchment paper



Steps:

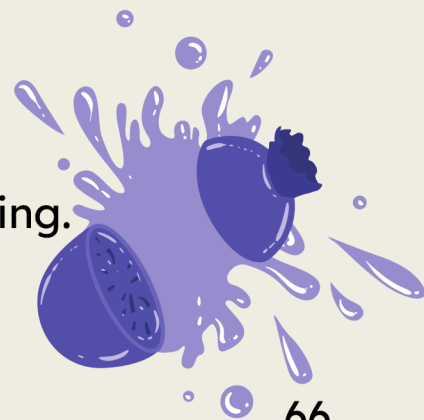
1. Spread yogurt on lined baking sheet.
2. Sprinkle with fruit and crunchy bits.
3. Freeze for 2-3 hours, then break into pieces.

Sensory Tip:

Let kids squish berries onto the bark before freezing.

Try this:

“Can you snap a piece that looks like a star?”





SECTION 4: SWEET TREATS

Apple Nachos

Ingredients: 4-5

- Thin apple slices
- Drizzle: nut butter or melted chocolate
- Toppings: granola, raisins, coconut flakes

Steps:

1. Arrange apple slices like chips on a plate.
2. Let your child drizzle sauce over them.
3. Add crunchy or chewy toppings.

Sensory Tip:

Warm up your child's senses with the smell of cinnamon or vanilla.

Try this:

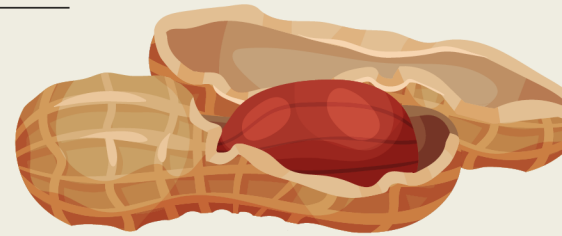
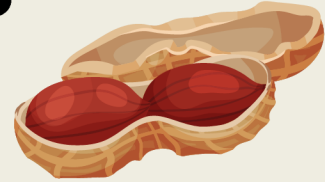
Use a spoon to “paint” the drizzle in zigzags!





SECTION 4: SWEET TREATS

No-Bake Oat Balls



Ingredients: 4-5

- Rolled oats
- Peanut butter or sunflower seed butter
- Honey or maple syrup
- Optional add-ins: chocolate chips, shredded coconut, chia seeds

Steps:

1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl.
2. Let your child roll small balls with their hands.
3. Chill in the fridge for 15-30 minutes.

Sensory Tip:

Sticky and squishy — great for finger strength and sensory bravery.

Try this:

“Let’s count how many balls we can roll!”



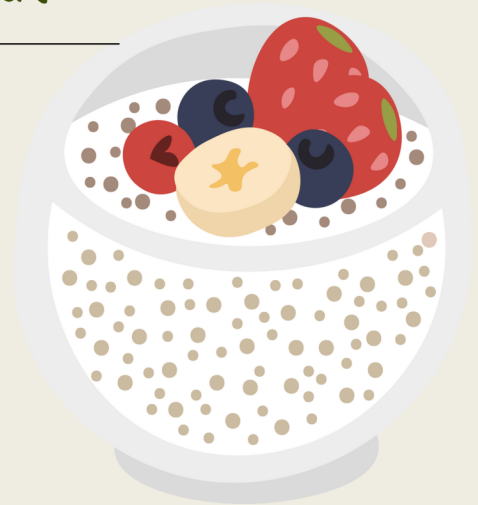


SECTION 4: SWEET TREATS

Chia Pudding Parfaits

Ingredients: 4-5

- 1/4 cup chia seeds
- 1 cup milk (or plant-based)
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tbsp maple syrup
- Layers: fruit purée, granola, or yogurt



Steps:

1. Mix chia, milk, syrup, and vanilla. Chill for 2-3 hours until it thickens.
2. Layer with fruit or yogurt for color and variety.

Sensory Tip:

Let your child explore one layer at a time with their spoon or fingers!



CHAPTER 8



Meet the Plate Rule – Your Mealtime Superpower

If mealtimes with your child feel like a high-stakes standoff - complete with suspicious stares, strategic food dodging, and dramatic exits - welcome to the club. Kids with sensory sensitivities often treat new foods like aliens landing on their dinner plate. But don't worry, we have a gentle, practical system that works:

The Plate Rule.

This rule isn't about forcing bites or finishing plates. It's about helping your child feel safe enough to explore food at their own pace — with structure, confidence, and a dash of humor.

Why It Works

Many sensory-sensitive kids react to food through *touch, smell, sound, and texture just as much as (or more than!) taste.*

If something smells weird, looks unfamiliar, or feels mushy or lumpy, their brain might label it “Danger” even before it reaches their lips.

What helps? Giving them control, clear expectations, and a way to interact with food without pressure.



The Plate Rule: 3 Simple Zones

This isn't just a plate — it's a tool for peaceful progress. Divide your child's plate into three invisible (or real!) sections:

The "Yay Spot!" – Safe Zone

What goes here: Foods your child already knows and loves. The MVPs. The classics.

Why it matters: This zone builds comfort and trust. When something familiar is always on the plate, the rest feels less scary.

Example:

Toast, plain pasta, crackers, apple slices.

The "Hmm Spot!" – Try-Me Zone

What goes here: A food they've seen or tasted before but haven't fully accepted yet. Maybe it got a cautious sniff last time or a tiny lick followed by a dramatic gag.

Why it matters: This zone encourages gentle exposure without pressure. Even seeing and tolerating a food on their plate is progress.

Example:

A small piece of cooked carrot, a spoon of mashed potatoes, a slice of cucumber (with the skin peeled just right).

The “Brave Spot!” – Adventure Zone

What goes here: A tiny portion of something brand-new. Not a heaping pile. Not the whole entrée. Just a friendly little taste that says, “Hey, I’m here, no pressure.”

Why it matters: This zone gently builds curiosity and reduces food anxiety. The goal is exposure, not eating.

Example:

A single blueberry, one roasted chickpea, a tiny forkful of avocado.

The Secret Ingredient: Zero Pressure

Your job? **Offer. Don’t insist.**

Their job? **Explore. Don’t perform.**

Even if the Brave Spot food is poked with a spoon, squished with fingers, or completely ignored – they’re still winning by simply sharing the table with it.



PLATE RULE

Your Mealtime Superpower

SAMPLE PLATE LAYOUT

You can use a plate with dividers, a lunchbox with compartments, or even place small silicone cups right on a regular plate. The idea is to make the zones visible and consistent.

FOOD EXAMPLE

Yay Spot - Buttered noodles - Comfort and trust

Hmm Spot - Steamed green bean - Familiar, but still "iffy"

Brave Spot - Tiny bit of mango salsa - New adventure, no pressure



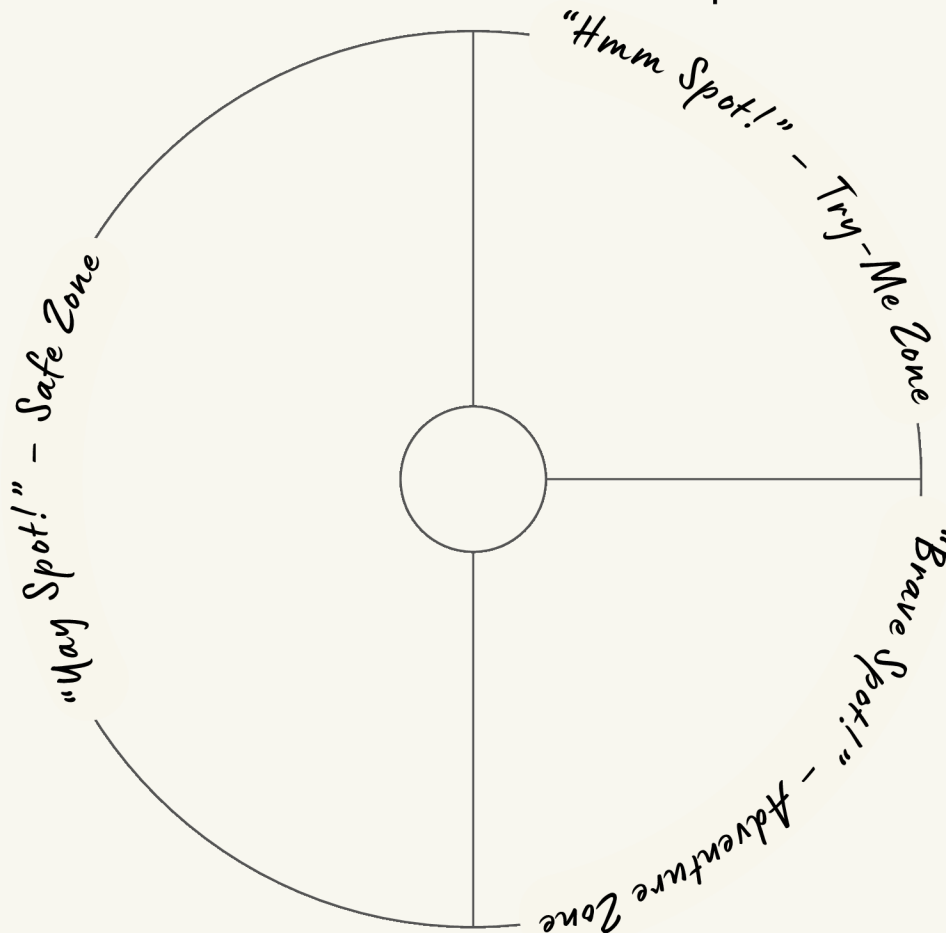
CUT & PASTE PLATE FUN

Customize It!

Let your child name the zones:

- The “No Worries Zone,” “The Thinking Spot,” and “The Explorer Zone.”
- Or keep it totally silly — “Yum Town,” “Hmmville,” and “Planet Brave.”

Decorate the plate together. Add stickers under each section. Use their favorite cartoon character utensils. Involve them in building the plate so they feel ownership - not surprise.



✨ CHAPTER 9

Printable Interactive Pages for Kids

These pages are designed to empower your child to explore food in a no-pressure, creative way.

◦•◦

"Yummy or Yucky?" Food Chart

Let kids color in, draw, or sticker foods they tried and decide: Was it Yummy 😊, Yucky 🤢, or Maybe?



Would I Try It Again? Yes or No?



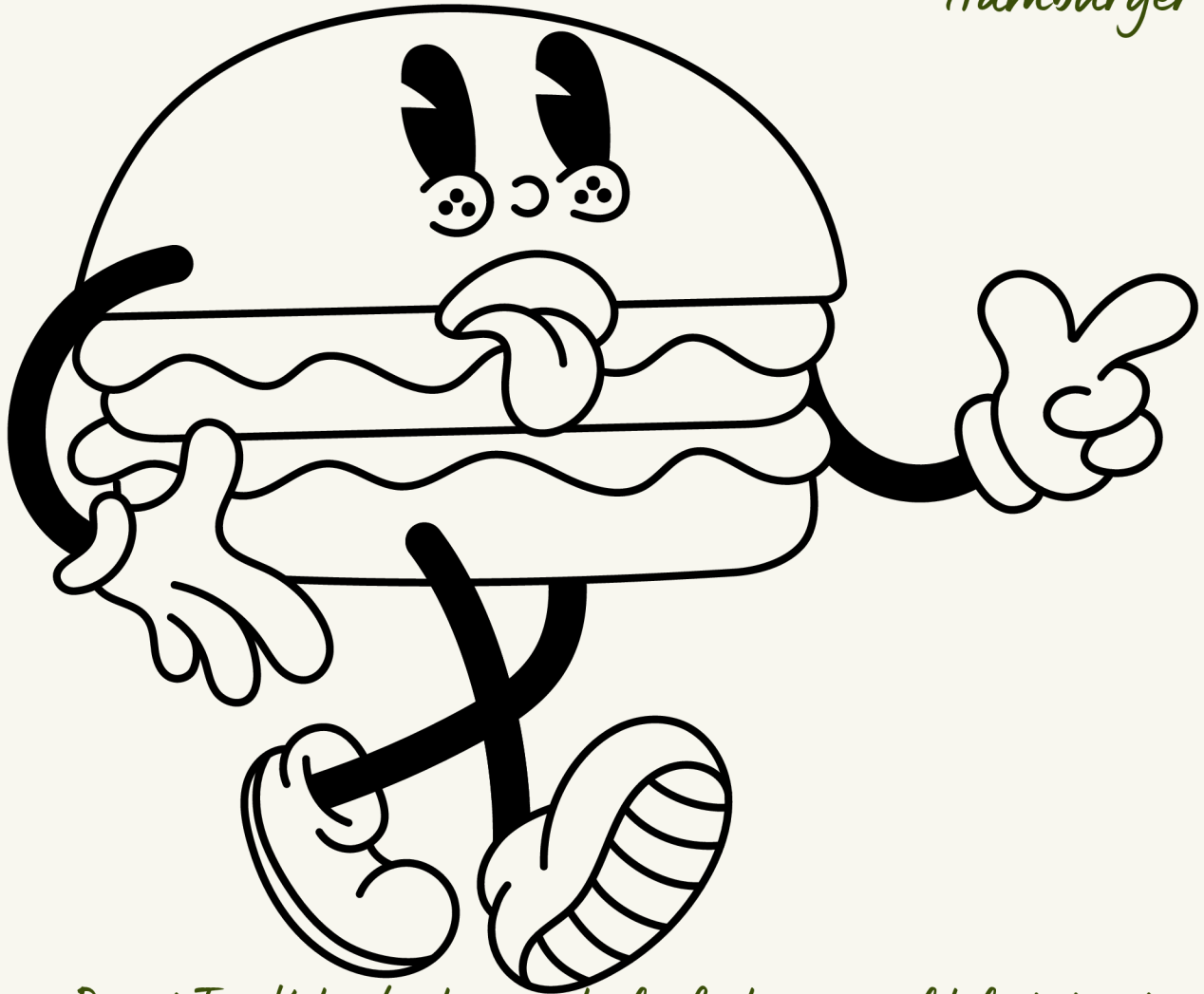
Parent Tip:

This is a fun way to build food vocabulary, reduce pressure, and spark conversation. Try using a different colored crayon for each family member!

"Yummy or Yucky?" Food Chart

| Food Tried | Was it Yummy 😊, Yucky 🤢, or Maybe? | Would I Try It Again? ✓✗ |
|------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
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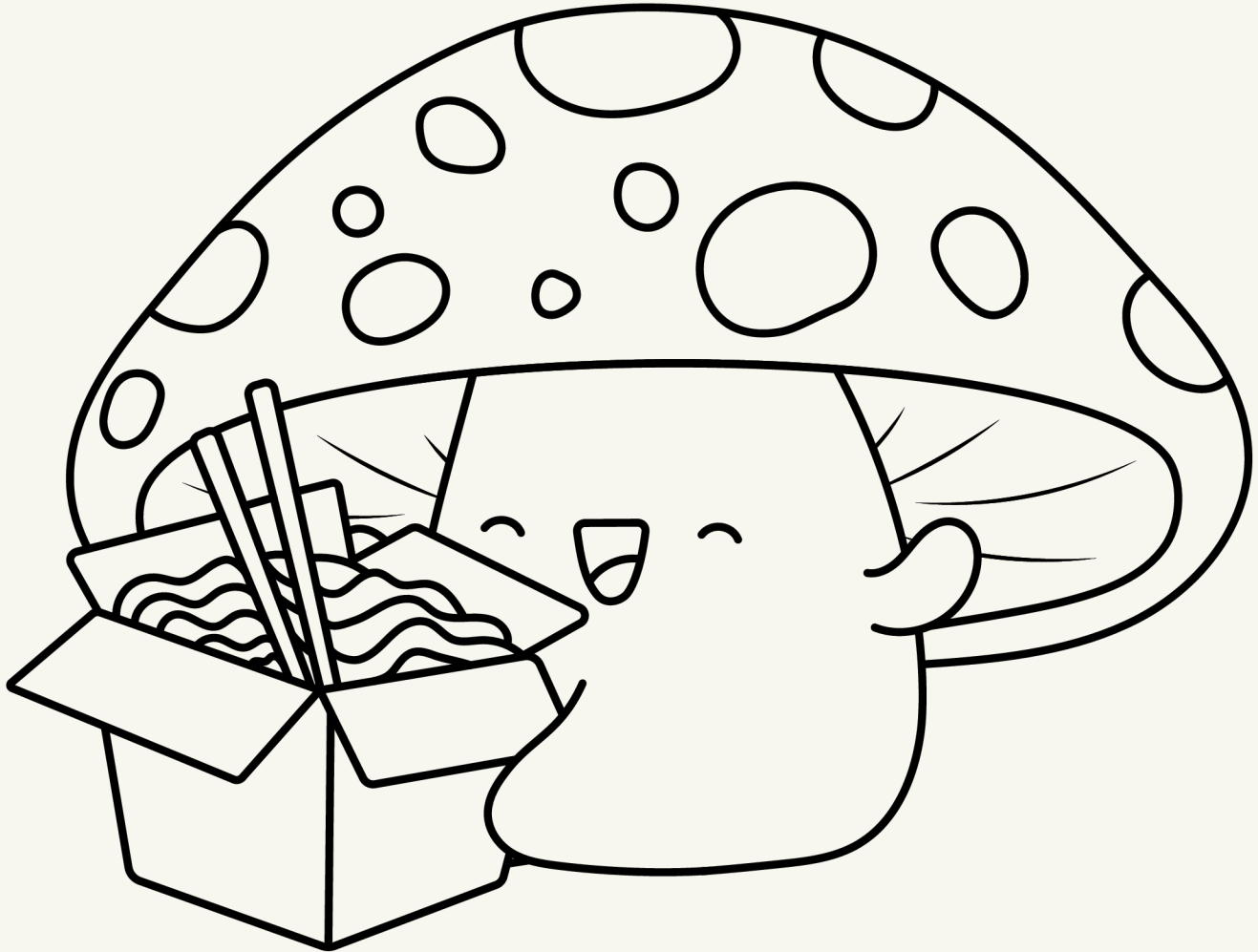
*Food Coloring Pages
"Hamburger"*



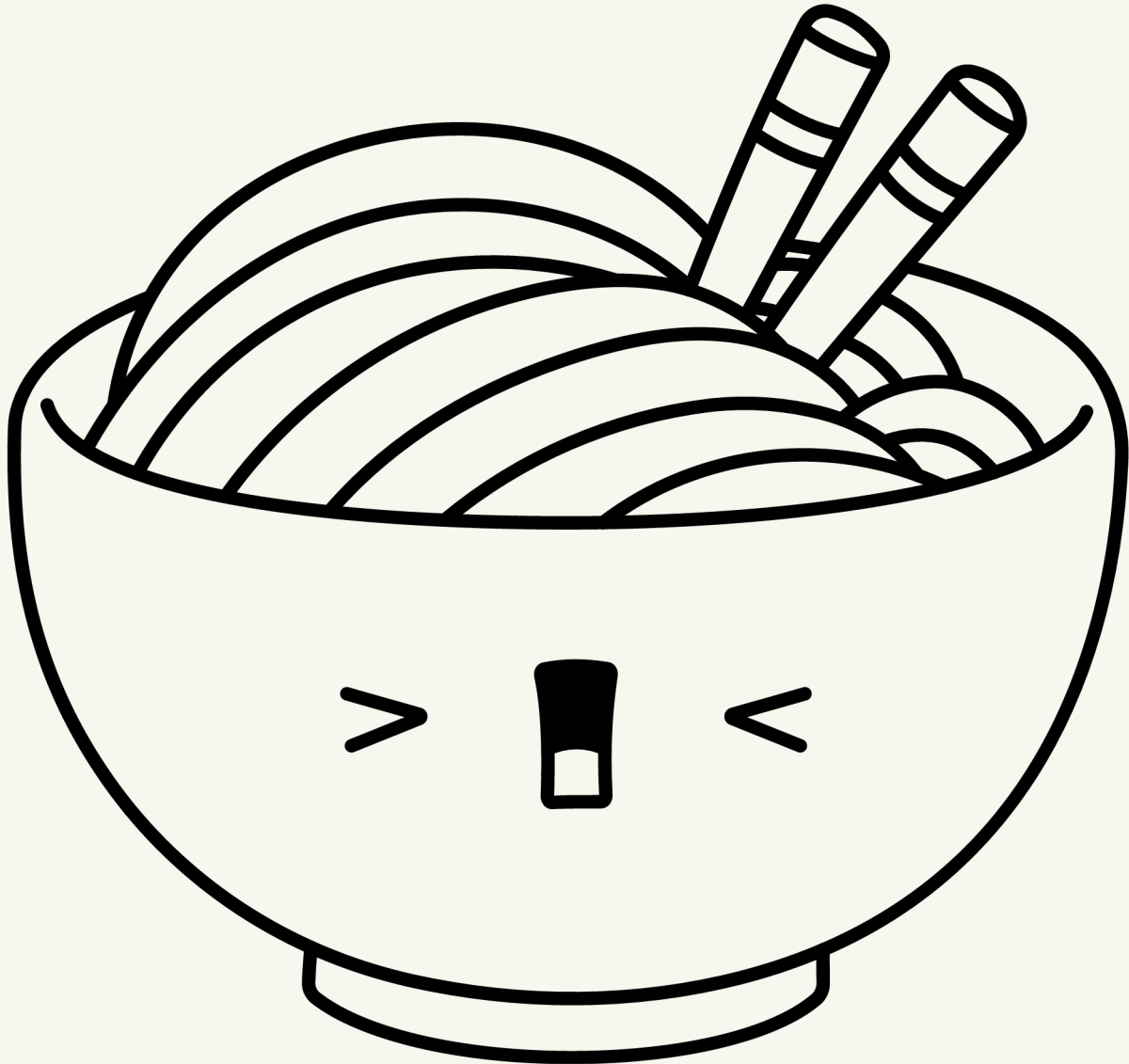
Parent Tip: Kids who draw and color food are more likely to try it — especially if they “meet it” through play first.



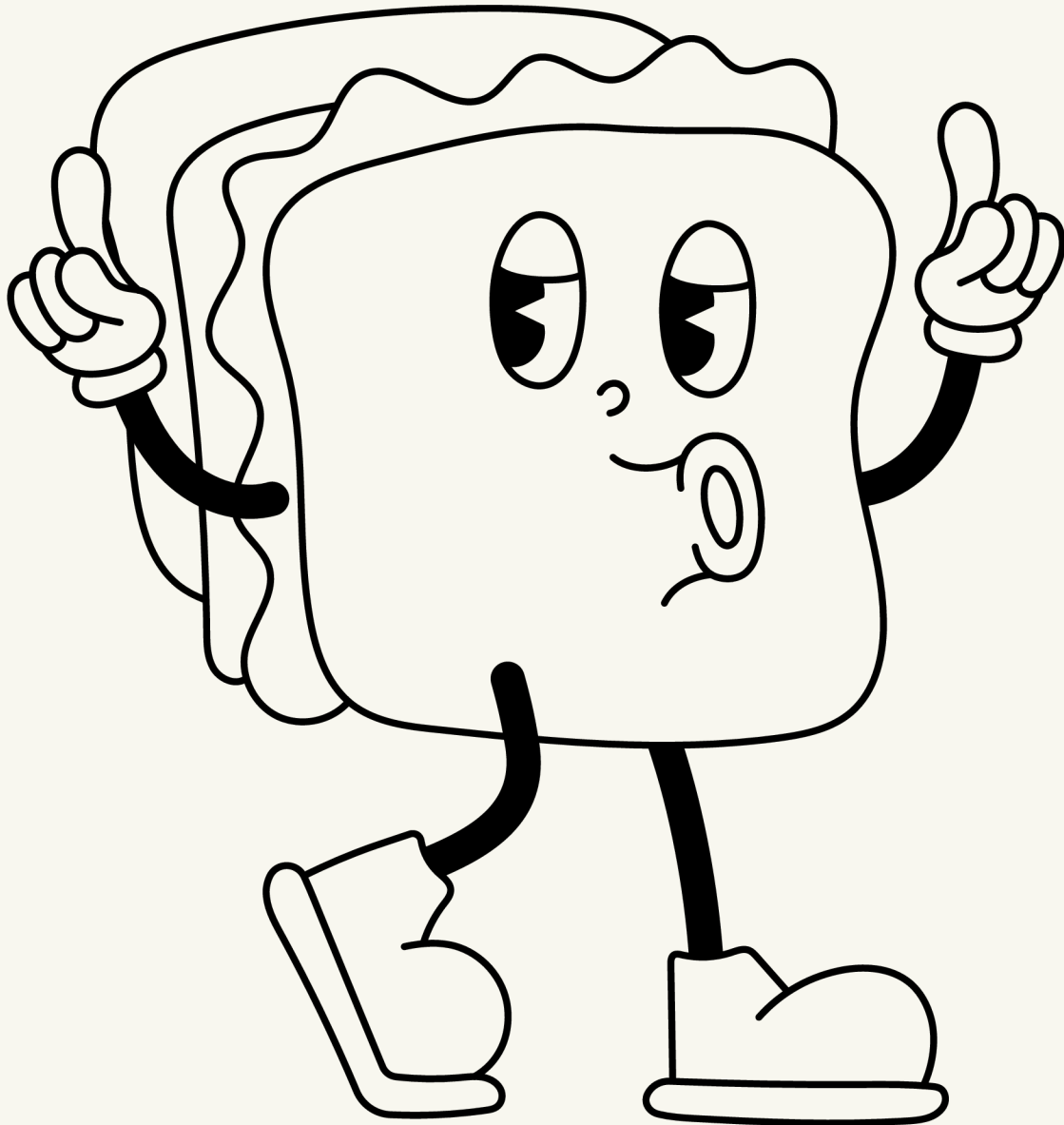
Food Coloring Page "Mushroom"



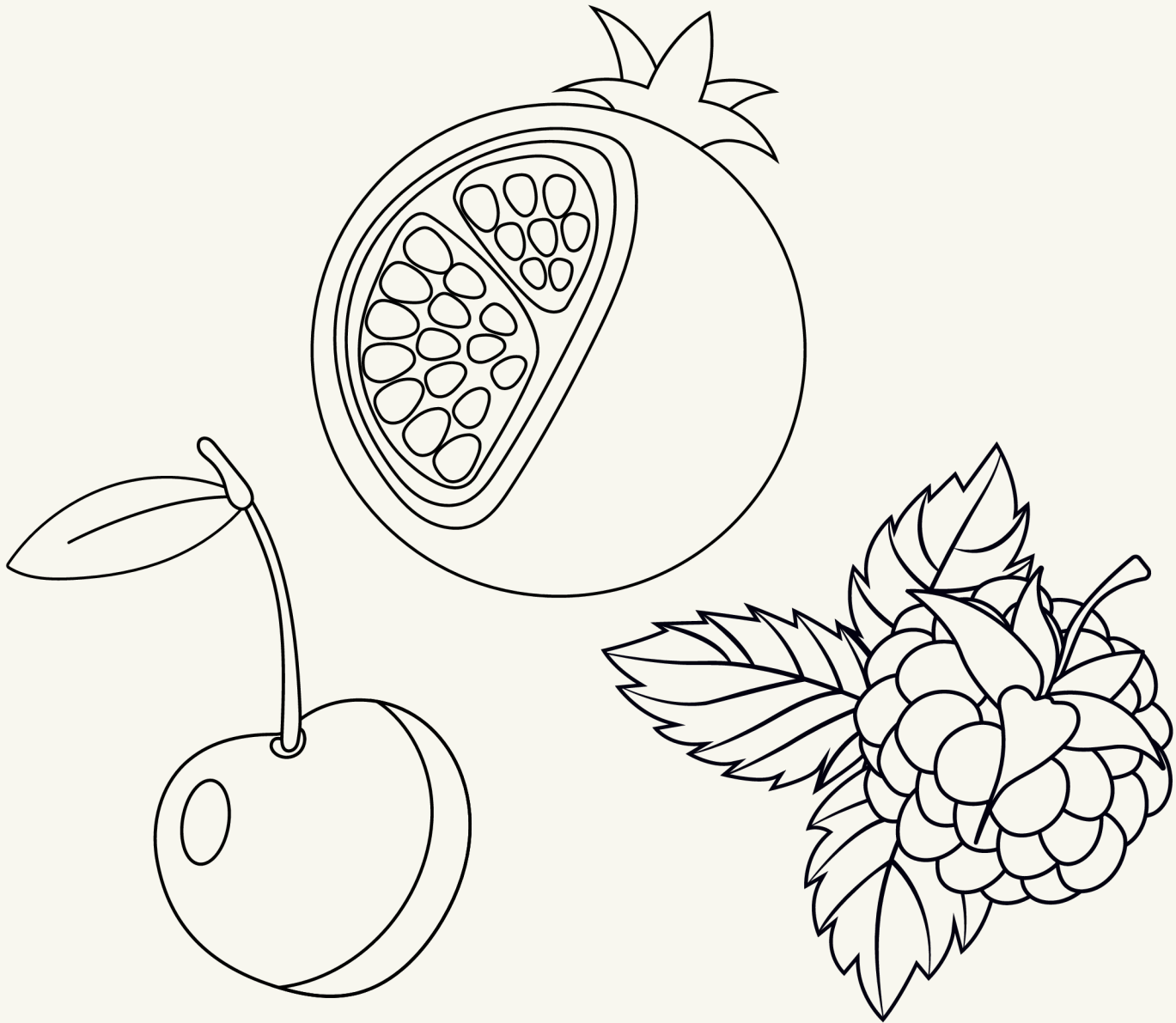
Food Coloring Page "Noodles"



Food Coloring Page "Sandwich"



Food Coloring Page "Fruits,





"MAKE YOUR OWN SNACK" PLANNER



*Let kids design their perfect plate -
example*

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|---------|---------------|-------|
| FRUIT | VEGGIE | CRUNCHY | DIP OR SPREAD | DRINK |
| | | | | |

Then: Draw your snack here



Name your snack creation: Green Monster Toast and Strawberino Chokolatino

Parent Tip:

Use this before grocery shopping to get kids involved and boost excitement.



"MAKE YOUR OWN SNACK" PLANNER



Let kids design their perfect plate!

| FRUIT | VEGGIE | CRUNCHY | DIP OR SPREAD | DRINK |
|-------|--------|---------|---------------|-------|
| | | | | |

Then: Draw your snack here

Name your snack creation: _____

Parent Tip:

Use this before grocery shopping to get kids involved and boost excitement.

My Favorite Snack Journal (Repeatable Page)

A simple worksheet they can do again and again:

Today I ate: _____

I liked it because: _____

It tasted: sweet salty crunchy soft new

I would eat it again: Yes! Maybe. No thanks.

My Snack Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ (circle how many!)

Sensory Prompt:

"Did it smell funny? Was it warm or cold?"



"TODAY I TRIED SOMETHING NEW" CERTIFICATE

Award for Bravery in Tasting!



This certificate goes to:

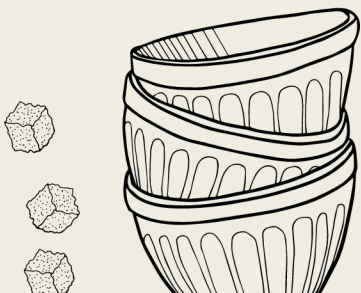


For bravely trying:



Signed: 🧑🍳 Chef (Parent)

GREAT!



*Frame it on the fridge, snap a photo,
and celebrate!*

✨ CHAPTER 10

You've Got This

Dear Parent,

If you've made it to the end of this book — high five! That means you're showing up, trying new things, and doing your best to raise a happy, healthy eater.

I know it's not always easy. As a mom of two boys (one of whom has sensory challenges), I've had my fair share of dinnertime meltdowns, snack stand-offs, and days when toast was the only thing on the menu. But I've also had wins — and this book is full of the playful ideas that helped me get there.

Remember:

- 🍏 Every tiny bite is a step forward.
- 🎨 Play is powerful.
- 🔔 Sensory experiences build confidence.
- 🎵 Songs, smiles, and silly faces go a long way.



You've Got This

Some days will be easier than others - and that's okay. Just keep offering, keep modeling, and keep the joy at the center of your table.

You're not alone. You've got this — and I'm cheering for you!
With love,

Victoria Bricks

Mom, food explorer, and author of **Say Yummy!**



♥ Thank You for Reading!

If "Say Yummy!" made your mealtimes easier, your child more curious, or just brought a smile — I'd love to hear from you!

☀ Your feedback helps other families with sensory eaters feel seen, supported, and inspired. Even a few words can make a big difference.

👉 Visit my Author Page to follow, explore more books, and leave a review once it's available:



Scan and Review

Let's help more kids say "Yummy!" together.
With appreciation,

Victoria Bricks

Mom, food explorer, and author of **Say Yummy!**



*"Kids don't remember what you try
to teach them.*

They remember what you are." -

*Jim Henson (Creator of The
Muppets)*

