Shake up some tasty snacks and lunches!

Children love to be active and help with the process of making things. Try the following recipes with children, to shake up some learning, some active participation, and some tasty food!

**Shaky vegetable tacos**

**Ingredients:**
1–2 tomatoes, chopped
1 head of lettuce, chopped or shredded
1 onion, chopped (if desired)
1 (12-ounce) bag of low-fat shredded cheese
1 (6-oz.) can black beans, rinsed
1 (6-oz.) can chick peas, rinsed
1 (6-oz.) can corn, or frozen cooked corn
1 container of mild salsa
1 small container of low-fat sour cream
1 avocado, chopped (if desired)
4–6 taco shells, bowls, or tortillas

**What to do:**
Spoon chopped tomatoes, lettuce, onion, cheese, beans (black beans, chick peas, pinto beans or any other cooked beans), and corn into a zipper-lock style bag for each child. Add small amount of mild salsa, sour cream, and avocado, if desired.

Close bag and shake! Pour into taco bowls, shells, or tortillas. Adults can warm and melt cheese in taco prior to adding other ingredients, if desired.

Tip: Play some festive music to accompany the shaking!

**Butter in a jar**

(takes 10–20 minutes)

**Ingredients:**
1–2 cups heavy whipping cream
Dash of salt
Crackers or bread
Container with lid (preferably clear so children can see what’s going on)

**What to do:**
Talk about butter before making this. See what the children already know or don’t know. It’s fun to talk about how liquids can turn into solids, too. Pour cream into container. Place lid on tightly and allow the shaking to begin. Be prepared for children to leave the shaking and come back; this takes a long time. Shake about once a second. Add a pinch of salt after the butter has formed into a solid. The butter can be eaten immediately or cooled in the refrigerator, or even formed into a molded shape. Spread onto whole wheat bread, whole wheat crackers, or multi-grain bagels. Add some low-sugar jam to jazz it up!
Dietary cautions

- Be aware of choking risks and food allergies when preparing and serving meals and snacks. Think about the size, shape, and consistency when choosing foods due to the potential choking risks in children. Food cut in large chunks, small hard foods, and soft and sticky foods should be avoided. The top choking hazards for children include: hotdogs, meats, sausages, fish with bones, spoonfuls of peanut butter, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, raisins, whole grapes, raw carrots, fruits and vegetables with skins, and marshmallows. Be sure that food is cut in small pieces (no larger than ½ inch), grated, or finely chopped. Be sure that children are closely supervised when they are eating.
- Do not give honey to children under 12 months of age. Honey contains spores that can cause infant botulism.
- Many children have food allergies or sensitivities to food. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 90% of children’s food allergies are from milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts (pecan/walnuts), fish, shellfish, strawberries, soy, wheat, and gluten. Carefully read food labels for potential risks and be sure to ask the parents if children have a known allergy or sensitivity.
- Dental health is a growing concern with young children, so it is important to keep in mind that starchy, sticky, and sugary foods can cause tooth decay. Children should brush their teeth after any meal or snack, but particularly when you serve these foods.

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Salad in a bag

What to do:

Place greens and other cut vegetables in a zipper-lock style bag. Add shredded cheese and small amount of salad dressing and croutons, raisins, or any other desired ingredients. Zip close and shake! Children can eat the salad out of the bag with a fork.

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“Mixed-up” yogurt

Ingredients:

- Individual vanilla or plain yogurt (around 6 oz., with lids)
- Whole grain cereal or granola
- Fresh or thawed frozen fruit

What to do:

Remove half of yogurt from container (save for later). Have children spoon in small amounts of whole grain cereal, granola, dried fruit, or fresh fruit. Replace lid and give a few gentle shakes. Remove lid and eat with a spoon.

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Yum-spun apples

Makes 3–4 snack-size servings

Ingredients:

- 1 apple
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- Zipper-lock style bags

What to do:

Cut apples into thin slices (remove seeds, core, and skin). Combine sugar and cinnamon in small bowl. Place apple slices in bag, spoon sugar/cinnamon mixture over apples, seal bag, and spin and shake apple slices gently.

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Paper bag snack mix

(not for children under three)

What to do:

Have children scoop small cups of popcorn, pretzels, dried fruit pieces, wheat crackers, nuts, and small chocolates pieces or carob pieces into a paper bag. Close the top of the bag and let the children shake the bag until the snack is properly mixed. Shake again every few bites.