**Pantry Staple Meal Ideas for Toddlers**

It’s lunch or dinner time and you may be starting to panic about what you’re going to feed your toddler. You’re stocked with all the staples but not sure how they can come together into a meal. Or you’ve been relying on feeding them the same meal over and over again and need some ways to mix things up!

Sometimes all you need to do is add in a new flavor or texture to a food. Or all you may need to do is change the shape or how you’re presenting food to your child. Here are a few ideas for new things to try with foods you likely already have at home. Many of these start with a simple base and then go from there and can be easily customized!

Bread

-Grilled cheese sandwich

-Nut butter and jelly roll-up

-Spread the toppings onto the slice of bread and roll it up!

-Use a cookie cutter to cut sandwich into different shapes; have your child help you!

-Slice into thin strips to make “fries” and offer different dips/sauces to go with it

-Yogurt, jelly, mashed avocado, nut butter, etc

-Bread or english muffin mini pizzas

Tortillas

-Bean and cheese quesadilla= slightly mash the beans to help give it an even texture

-Mini pizzas

-Add whatever toppings you and child enjoys and put in microwave or oven until cheese is melted

-Your child can help “decorate” their own

Pasta or boxed mac and cheese

-Add in veggies such as peas or broccoli

-Mix in canned tuna or cut up hotdogs

-Canned white beans are a way to add protein to mac and cheese

-Simple butter sauce with plain noodles and add veggies

-Make spaghetti pizza= mix together sauce and noodles, top with cheese and pepperoni and bake until warm and cheese melted

Rice

-Make homemade fried rice by adding in vegetables (canned or frozen) and scrambled egg

-Simple dish of rice and beans

-Cheesy broccoli rice

Oatmeal

-Make oatmeal bars= use oats as the base and add in whatever ingredients you have on hand (shredded coconut, chocolate chips, nut butter, frozen berries)

-Oatmeal “sundae” bar= add toppings to oatmeal including nut butter, jelly, canned/ frozen fruit

Other simple ideas using pantry staples include:

-Breakfast for dinner

-Pancakes, waffles, eggs

-Eat dry cereal with yogurt instead of milk

-Use crackers as a “vehicle” for toppings

-Cream cheese, jelly, sliced cheese, pepperoni, nut butter with mini chocolate chips

-Use black beans instead of ground beef to make burgers or meatballs

-Switch out bread crumbs for crushed Ritz crackers or potato chips to make “fried” chicken”

-Try different dips/sauces with chicken nuggets

-Ranch, bbq, honey mustard, ketchup, hummus, guacamole

-Add in fresh, canned or frozen fruits and veggies to supplement meals

Once you start thinking outside the box, you can find all kinds of ways to change up your regular meals. It doesn’t have to add a lot more time and effort, you just need some creative thinking :)