

# TABLETALK

MAY, 2010 ❁ CHILD FOOD PROGRAM OF TEXAS ❁ P.O. BOX 5465 ❁ KATY, TX 77491 ❁ 281-395-7000, TOLL-FREE: 877-395-6560, Fax: 281-395-7002

## Cultural Foods

Children eat according to the eating traditions of their family. These traditions are a valued aspect of their culture. Many foods we might eat occasionally, such as sweet potatoes, bok choy and buckwheat, are enjoyed regularly by different cultures. Different cultures also use common foods such as chicken and fish in recipes that show their cultural heritage.

Learning to appreciate food as prepared and enjoyed by other cultures can add to the interest children already have in food and eating. For example, by offering a staple food such as bread in its many forms (pita, bannock, focaccia, bagels, chapattis, tortillas) and discussing the origins of the food, children can begin to appreciate the cultural diversity that food choices reflect.

## How to introduce new foods

Parents and caregivers can help preschoolers accept a wider selection of foods by:

- Being role models. Children are more eager to eat foods that they see family and friends enjoying;
- Presenting food in appealing ways by combining different colours, textures and shapes of food; offering small quantities of a new food alongside a familiar one, without pressure to eat the new food;
- Serving a new food when children are with their peers;
- Encouraging them to become familiar with different foods by helping to grow, buy, prepare or serve them;
- Being patient. If an unfamiliar food is not accepted the first time, it can be offered again later. The more often children are exposed to new foods, the more likely they will taste them and learn to accept them;
- Not using foods as rewards. For example, withholding a sweet dessert until all the vegetables are eaten may establish a preference for the dessert and a dislike for the vegetables;
- Respecting individual food preferences. Every child has different likes and dislikes.

## Looking For Recipes

We're running out of recipes. Please send us your favorites and you might get published in this newsletter and become world famous.

## Summer Vacation Time

Summer vacations are coming. Please let our office know if and when you are taking vacation and will be closed. If you are taking the kids on a field trip during a meal or a snack, please let us know in advance in case our monitor wants to do a review. If you're taking an exotic vacation let us know where you are going. We need a vacation, too!



## Tips from Chef Bob

### CHICKEN & TATOR TOTS CASSEROLE

**Ingredients:** 1 bag (24 oz) frozen broccoli, carrots, cauliflower and cheese-flavored sauce; 2 cups diced cooked chicken; 4 medium green onions, chopped (1/4 cup); 4 cups frozen potato nuggets (from 2-lb bag); 1/2 cup finely shredded Cheddar cheese (2 oz). **Directions:** Heat oven to 375°F. In ungreased 11x7-inch (2-qt) glass baking dish, place broccoli, carrots, cauliflower and cheese sauce. Microwave uncovered on High 3 to 5 minutes, stirring once, until thawed. Stir well until cheese sauce is melted. Stir chicken and 3 tbs of the onions into vegetable-cheese mixture. Top with frozen potato nuggets. Bake uncovered 40 to 45 minutes or until bubbly around edges and potato nuggets are golden brown. Sprinkle with cheese and remaining 1 tablespoon onion. Bake 5 to 10 minutes longer or until cheese is melted.