

Get Kids To Clean Their Plates With Fun, Creative Mealtime Tips

(NAPSA)—Keeping kids at the table for family meals is challenging, but getting them to eat everything on their plates can be nearly impossible. According to Family Fun magazine, the number-one reason for disruptions during dinner is children showing dislike for what they are being served. If cranky moods and fussy eaters are making mealtime unbearable, try these fun tips:

- **Let kids help choose ingredients and prepare the meal.** They like having a part in planning family meals. Doing so not only makes children more apt to eat, but it also encourages them to feel comfortable in the kitchen, which makes dinner more enjoyable.



Create a flower by using baked pierogies for petals, celery sticks for stems and lettuce for leaves, and watch a delicious meal blossom.

- **Arrange finger foods in kid-friendly shapes.** Children taste with their eyes before their mouths, and arranging foods in festive shapes keeps their attention on the meal at hand. Mrs. T's Pierogies—the perfect pairing of pasta and potatoes—is an excel-



A beautiful butterfly can be made by using pierogies for wings, a carrot for the body and cabbage for the antennae.

lent food for making fun creations. For example, create a flower by using baked pierogies for petals, celery sticks for stems and lettuce for leaves, and watch a delicious meal blossom. Make dinner even more fun by allowing kids to decide on special-occasion and seasonal shapes.

- **Let kids use their hands.** No matter how much time is spent discouraging children from eating with their hands, they are naturally inclined to grab and eat. Try serving fun finger foods, such as pierogies, from time to time to liven up family meals. This will give kids something to look forward to and make eating more enjoyable for the whole family.

New foods can make kids impulsively decide that they do not like what is being served—without even trying them first. When introducing unfamiliar foods to kids, try pairing them with other foods you know they enjoy that will encourage them to clean their plates. And allow some creativity to creep in as well—it will make for a deliciously pleasant mealtime for everyone.