

Raising a well-rounded eater

Tips for caregivers feeding picky eaters!

Picky eating is a **normal** part of child development. As children grow, they're learning about new foods and their preferences may change from day to day. Stay positive, be patient and get creative when introducing and reintroducing different foods. Here are 9 tips to help!

1 Center mealtimes around positive attitudes and conversations. Try talking about your day. What good things happened? What upcoming activities can you participate in together as a family? Keep the conversations positive and avoid putting pressure on your child to try or eat more of any particular food.

2 Practice the division of responsibility. Caregivers are responsible for what is offered at mealtimes, when the meal will take place and where the meal takes place. The child is responsible for what they choose to eat (from what is offered) and if they choose to eat at all. Keep in mind that it is normal for children's appetites to change from day to day.

3 Serve the same meals to everyone. Avoid preparing special meals and use this as an opportunity to model positive eating behaviors. It can be helpful to serve a food you know your child enjoys next to a new or less accepted food.

4 Deconstruct food. Deconstructing a meal into individual components can make it less intimidating and more appealing. For example, instead of serving a bowl of spaghetti with the sauce and meatballs mixed together, serve each ingredient separately.

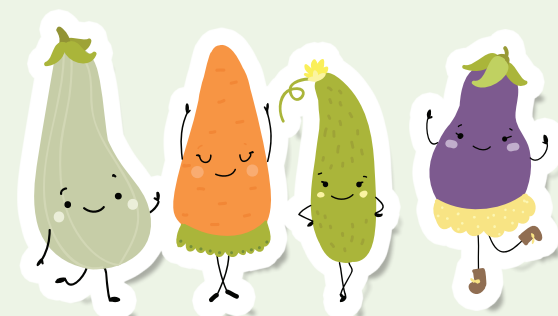
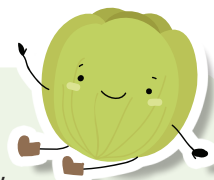
5 Offer simple, but realistic choices with meals. Involving children in decision-making can empower them to try new foods. Offer clear and specific choices. For example, instead of asking "Do you want green beans for dinner or something else?" try "Do you want green beans or carrots for dinner tonight?".

6 Involve children as much as possible. Giving choices, as mentioned in tip 5, is a great start! Allowing children to be actively involved in grocery shopping and food preparation are additional ways to get them involved and invested. Children are more likely to try a food they were involved in selecting or preparing.

7 Encourage food exploration. What does the food look, smell and feel like? Studies show that it may take up to 15+ exposures to a food before a child accepts it. Touching and exploring a food counts as an exposure, so allow your child to have fun with mealtimes!

8 Start with smaller portions. Smaller portions can be less intimidating and lead to less food waste. And children can ask for more if they enjoy the food!

9 Try, try again. Don't give up! It may take multiple attempts at a new tactic for it to be successful. Remember to stay positive throughout the journey and have fun!



 **registered
dietitian team**

Kitchen activities

For children of all ages

Young children are full of curiosity and love to learn. Around the age of 2, children can start to help in the kitchen. Studies have shown that children who are involved in the food preparation process are more likely to try new foods. As children get older, they can build on their current kitchen knowledge and skills. Below are some suggestions as to how you can engage your children in the kitchen at any age.

Age 2

- Identify foods by their name
- Identify colors of foods
- Wipe down tables
- Assist with handing items to an adult to be put away after shopping
- Bring things to the trash
- Assist with a cook book by turning the pages (when asked 😊)
- Create fun creatures and faces with fruits and vegetables
- Wash fruits and vegetables under running water

Age 3} Everything a 2-year-old can do, plus:

- Add ingredients to a recipe
- Have conversations about cooking
- Scoop or mash ingredients (graham crackers, mashed potatoes, etc.)
- Stir batter
- Knead dough
- Count foods and ingredients
- Help assemble foods (such as pizza, sandwiches, etc)

Age 4} Everything a 3-year-old can do, plus:

- Peel foods such as hard-boiled eggs, bananas, cuties, etc.
- Set the table
- Crack an egg
- Measure dry ingredients
- Assemble more complex foods, such as larger salads, help with lasagna, etc

Age 5} Everything a 4-year-old can do, plus:

- Measure out liquid ingredients
- Cut soft fruits and vegetables, (such as bananas) with kid-friendly utensils.
- Help push buttons on a food processor
- Scoop batter into muffin tins
- Help meal plan
- Help pack their lunch for school

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