

Nutrition for Early Learning and Child Care

HEALTHY KIDS | HEALTHY SCHOOLS | HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Tips for Feeding “Picky” Eaters

1. BE A POSITIVE ROLE-MODEL
 - Children are more likely to enjoy a variety of food if they see you doing it too
 - Enjoy family meals often
2. CREATE A PLEASANT MEAL/SNACK ENVIRONMENT
 - Set regular times for meals and/or snacks
 - Provide a pleasant and relaxing environment (engage in conversation, do not rush)
 - Remove distractions (TV, electronics or toys)
3. GET CHILDREN INVOLVED
 - Let children help with simple tasks like gardening, shopping, menu planning, simple cooking tasks and cleaning up afterwards
 - Preparing food gives children a feeling of accomplishment and encourages them to try new foods
4. BE SURE CHILDREN ARE HUNGRY WHEN THEY COME TO THE TABLE
 - Offer only small snacks halfway between meals and only water between meals and snacks
 - Incorporate physical activity into every day
5. LET CHILDREN DECIDE IF AND HOW MUCH TO EAT FROM THE HEALTHY CHOICES YOU SERVE
 - Children’s appetites will vary, depending on many things including growth, activity level, excitement and sickness
 - Trust that children know when they are hungry or full
6. INTRODUCE NEW FOODS
 - Children will not learn to eat a variety of food if you only serve them what they like to eat
 - *Serve new foods:*
 - In small amounts, with familiar foods
 - When children are hungry and healthy
 - In different ways (such as carrots mashed, soft cooked or grated into muffins or meatloaf)
 - Do not try to hide or disguise vegetables or other ingredients. This can cause children not to trust you.
 - **Never force children to try new foods.**
 - It can take 8-10 introductions (or more) before a child will try a new food
 - If a child refuses a food, don’t give up. Try again next time
 - There may be some foods they truly do not like and that’s okay
7. BE PATIENT!
 - If you follow these tips, in time, children will learn to eat a variety of healthy foods
 - Patience can make mealtime less stressful and more enjoyable