

TURN  
YOUR

PICKY  
EATER

INTO

A  
FOODIE

Is your child a selective eater? You are not alone, it is common for children to have picky eating behaviors. As a parent, you can help make healthy food fun and expose your child to new foods early on to expand their palate.

Getting them involved in meal preparation can help make them excited to try new foods. This guide will discuss proper child feeding practices and how to get your child more involved in the kitchen.

Watch them turn into a foodie before your very eyes!



Included in this document:

1) Feeding  
Your Future  
Foodie

2) Making  
Fruits and  
Veggies Fun!

3) Getting  
Kids in the  
Kitchen



HOW  
TO

FEED

YOUR

FUTURE  
FOODIE

## Typical Eating Behaviors

- ◆ Your child will eat what you eat! Role modeling is key.
- ◆ It's all about repetition: it can take **15-20 exposures** before your child accepts a new food. **Do not make a fuss** if your child refuses and continue to offer at other meals.
- ◆ Your child eats as much as she needs based on her body's cues. **Do not force** her to finish her plate.
- ◆ It's normal for your child to go through **food jags** - periods of wanting only certain foods. Make sure to offer a **Variety of foods!**
- ◆ **Children eat small quantities** at a time; small frequent meals are best.
- ◆ **Intake can vary day to day.** To determine if your child is getting enough nutrition, monitor her intake over 1 week.
- ◆ If your child **has energy and is growing**, they are probably eating enough; always **talk to your pediatrician** if you have concerns!



**IMPORTANT:** Do not use food as a reward or reward your child for eating their vegetables! This teaches them that dessert is more desirable than healthy food.

## Make Nutrition Count!

If your child is underweight, choose high calorie & high protein foods to optimize their intake such as:

Nuts & nut butters	Meat
Avocado	Beans/Legumes
Whole fat dairy	Eggs
Butter/oils	Seeds (flax, chia, sunflower)



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## Division of Responsibility

Help your child develop a healthy feeding relationship by following these defined feeding roles

### Parents responsible for:

- ◆ Determining **when** and **where** meals and snacks will be served
- ◆ Deciding **what** foods will be served
- ◆ Making meal times pleasant
- ◆ Eating with their child

### Children responsible for:

- ◆ Deciding **whether or not** to eat
- ◆ Selecting **which foods** they will eat
- ◆ Choosing **how much** to eat
- ◆ Learning to behave well at meals



## Helpful Tips

- ◆ Do not be a short order cook and make special meals for your child!
- ◆ Instead of asking your child whether they want a certain food (eg. broccoli), **offer them a choice** (eg. broccoli or carrots)
- ◆ Only offer one new food at a time and offer it at the start of the meal

## Overcoming Texture Aversion

Phases of liking only certain textures are common in toddlers

- ◆ If your child only likes soft foods:
  - Puree/mince food so that your child doesn't miss out on important nutrients
  - Slowly increase amount of chunks in food
  - Play with dry pasta or other hard foods to familiarize them with crunchy textures
- ◆ If your child only likes crunchy foods:
  - Try dipping favorite foods or drizzling with melted cheese or sauce
  - Play with playdough or finger paint to familiarize them with soft textures

HOW  
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MAKE

FRUIT &  
VEGGIES

FUN!



## General Tips

- ◆ Take your child grocery shopping - challenge them to pick produce of every color!
- ◆ Plant a garden with your child. They will be proud of the fruits and veggies it produces!
- ◆ Cut fun shapes out of meats, cheese, fruits & veggies with cookie cutters- there are endless possibilities!
- ◆ Give vegetables creative names. Example: "X-ray Vision Carrots".

## Include more fruits & veggies!

### With Breakfast:

- ◆ Smoothies with fruits and veggies (avocado makes them extra creamy!)
- ◆ Pumpkin/carrot/zucchini pancakes or muffins (or add your favorite fruit!)
- ◆ Add fruit to cereal or yogurt
- ◆ Scrambled eggs with lots of veggies
- ◆ Toast with sliced fruit or avocado
- ◆ Baked oatmeal with fruit - or try the Carrot Cake version!
- ◆ Sweet potato hash or veggie breakfast burritos



Apple & Granola Sandwiches



Strawberry Baked Oatmeal



Veggie Breakfast Burrito



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## Include more fruits & veggies!

### For a Snack:

- ◆ Baked sweet potato or kale Chips
- ◆ Fruit or veggie kabobs - help your child assemble them!
- ◆ Breaded zucchini or avocado 'fries'
- ◆ Cheesy cauliflower breadsticks
- ◆ Salsa, guacamole, or hummus with your favorite dippers
- ◆ Roasted chickpeas
- ◆ Fruit sushi



Sweet Potato & Kale Chips



Fruit Sushi

## Include more fruits & veggies!

### With Lunch or Dinner:

- ◆ Substitute pasta with veggie noodles or spaghetti squash
- ◆ Finely shred carrots or mushrooms in your casseroles or ground meat
- ◆ Make cauliflower into rice, pizza dough, tots and more!
- ◆ Add sweet potato or squash to mac & cheese sauce
- ◆ Add pumpkin puree or chopped spinach to pasta sauce

### Even Dessert:

- ◆ Black bean brownies
- ◆ Zucchini chocolate chip cookies
- ◆ Butternut squash-apple cake



Cauliflower Fried "Rice"



Black Bean Brownies

\*These are just a few ideas,  
you can find many recipes  
online!

Try: [www.thekitchn.com](http://www.thekitchn.com)

HOW  
TO

GET  
YOUR

CHILD  
IN

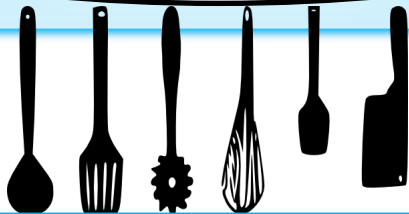
THE  
KITCHEN

- ◆ Cooking with your child is a family activity that can help develop fine motor & math skills as well as teach more about nutrition and cooking. f
- ◆ Help your child develop tastes for new ingredients and become a real foodie.
- ◆ You can get kids of all ages involved in the kitchen by following the age-appropriate guidelines below.
- ◆ Start now to make memories that last a lifetime!



Kids are less likely to reject food that they've helped make!

## THINGS TO REMEMBER



- ◆ Follow proper food safety guidelines
- ◆ Wash hands and tie back long hair
- ◆ Cooking should be a fun experience!
- ◆ Have patience, do not cook on a time crunch
- ◆ Expect spills to happen
- ◆ Thank and praise your child for their hard work



Cook different cuisines to teach your child about geography and culture!



Kids can practice reading recipes and use math skills to measure ingredients!



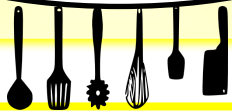
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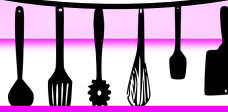
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## 2 Year Olds



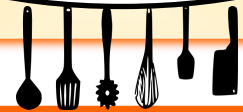
- ◆ Gather and count ingredients
- ◆ Learn colors and shapes of fruits & veggies
- ◆ Pour out measured ingredients
- ◆ Stir batters, combine ingredients
- ◆ Tear lettuce, broccoli, etc.
- ◆ Sweep or wipe counters
- ◆ Put things away

## Preschoolers



- ◆ Measure ingredients
- ◆ Learn to level dry measurements and read liquid measurements at eye level
- ◆ Wash ingredients
- ◆ Peel oranges or cooked eggs
- ◆ Beat & whisk, scraping sides of bowl
- ◆ Knead and shape dough
- ◆ Set the table

## School Aged



- ◆ Teach fractions and conversions
- ◆ Use electric beaters and other equipment
- ◆ Learn how to fold in ingredients or other delicate techniques
- ◆ Learn knife safety and cutting techniques
- ◆ Pick out serving utensils and serve food
- ◆ Load dishwasher, clean

### References

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