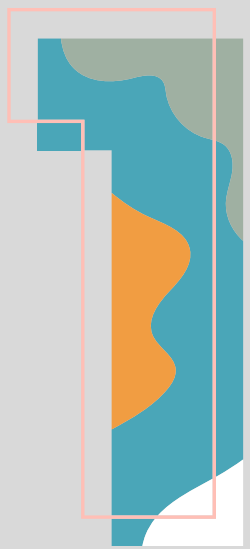


SIX SIMPLE

VERBAL LANGUAGE STRATEGIES



AVOID YES/NO QUESTIONS

If you ask a yes/no question, be prepared to have your child respond with "no". That's an appropriate response! We also want to avoid commands such as "take a bite" or "eat some broccoli. This can create resistance. We want our children to *want* to interact with new food. How? Phrase your questions or choices like this: "You can add some broccoli to your plate or I can do it for you."



CONSTANT REASSURANCE

Provide constant reassurance! "**You don't have to eat anything**, but we will learn about it together". Why? You're flipping the narrative. Previously, your child was required to eat or take a bite, and now we're throwing that rule out the window. Providing that reassurance will ease your child's anxiety about the new food.



DESCRIBE FOOD

Describing what a food looks, feels, and smells like will give your child the vocabulary to verbalize what they like and aren't so sure about regarding new food. It also helps decrease anxiety because they'll know what to expect!



NO NEGATIVE LANGUAGE

This applies to **everyone** at the table. Avoid using words like "yuck, gross, disgusting" to describe food or any food combinations your child may explore. I like to redirect this language by saying, "You're not sure about (food). That's okay!"



PRAISE

Be sure you're providing appropriate praise for **your** child. Some children prefer dance parties, a polite golf clap, or no comments at all. Try all of these options! A picky eater may thrive with no comments about their progress.



SHIFT THE FOCUS

The focus of the entire meal should not be on your picky eater. Talk about what other family members are doing! Provide praise to siblings for touching a new food (even if it's a preferred food for them!).