

Top Five Tips

for Picky Eaters

Every kid is a picky eater at some point or another. It's not only a challenge for parents at home but it's also a struggle for child care providers. While we can't promise your kids will be jumping at the chance to try brussel sprouts or liver and onions, we can offer some strategies that may help.

1 Try & try again. Introducing new foods takes a lot of patience with picky eaters. Don't try to force it. Implement the, "one bite to be polite" rule. It's okay for children to not like certain foods but they won't know unless they try it first. They just might surprise themselves and find a new favorite.

2 Get them involved. Children are more likely to try something they are involved in creating. Have your kids help with the meal planning. Create new, fun names for classic dishes such as Monster Meatloaf. Then have them help with meal preparation. Give each child a job that is age appropriate such as washing vegetables, cutting fruit with plastic knives or stirring noodles.

3 Explain the why. Talk to picky eaters as you offer healthy choices. Ask them, "Why are you eating carrots?" Teaching children about the food they're eating and where it came from, encourages them to try it.

4 Ask parents for help. Parents know their children best. Ask them what their children's favorite foods are and what tricks may work at home? Working together, you can conquer the walls of a picky eater. Give parents a copy of your weekly menu to help them avoid serving the same dish at home.

5 Make it fun. Mealtime should be a fun and engaging experience. Add color to foods. Who doesn't like to eat green eggs and ham on Dr. Seuss Day? Cut sandwiches into shapes, make up imaginative names for fruits and vegetables, and introduce different ways to eat food, like using chopsticks.

Kitchen Helpers Age Appropriate Tasks

2 YEAR OLDS

- ✓ scrub, wash & clean vegetables & fruit
- ✓ carry unbreakable items to the table
- ✓ wash and tear lettuce & salad greens
- ✓ break bread into pieces

3 YEAR OLDS

- ✓ pour pre-measured liquids into batter
- ✓ knead dough
- ✓ mix dry ingredients
- ✓ spread butters or spreads
- ✓ serve food, clear table & care for trash

4 YEAR OLDS

- ✓ peel, mash, scrub fruit & vegetables
- ✓ crack open/beat eggs
- ✓ cut soft foods with plastic knife
- ✓ set and clear table
- ✓ measure dry ingredients
- ✓ clean up after cooking

