

Is it Picky Eating or Something Else?

YOU KNOW THE DRILL...you prepare a tasty, nutritious meal and the kids sit down at the table with long faces. One child might make the most outrageous protests, “that is yucky!” while another will sadly say “I don’t eat that”. What’s a provider/mom to do? Many will simply grab the peanut butter and jelly and provide an acceptable substitute meal. Wouldn’t want the munchkins to go hungry! But this strategy misses the mark.

Refusing new foods is so common in youngsters that it has long been seen as a rite of passage. However, labeling children as “picky eaters” is counter productive and when we make this judgment, it can actually become a self-fulfilling prophesy. Most children go through a phase of fussy eating especially with new foods, however it is more likely to resolve quickly if we do not engage in a power struggle but consistently set limits.



Inborn and Learned Eating Capabilities

Children come with some inborn eating capabilities which we strive to preserve. They come programmed with a drive to eat, they know how much to eat and they can grow in the way nature intended for them. Some eating capabilities are learned and our job is to give children opportunities. Children learn to manage the mechanics of eating, remain relaxed while they eat and try new foods, learning to like a wide variety.

The Feeding Relationship

Ellyn Satter’s highly respected philosophy teaches that there is a clear division of responsibility in feeding children. Caregivers provide the structure, support and opportunities with regularly scheduled meals and snacks and then *trust* children to choose how much and what to eat

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did you know...

- ▶ Research indicates acceptance of new foods increases with repeated exposure—typically 10–20 exposures.
- ▶ Mothers usually decide their child dislikes an unfamiliar food after only 3 attempts.
- ▶ When children are **made** to swallow unfamiliar food, new food acceptance is decreased.
- ▶ In most cases, adult picky eating is based on childhood food coercion or lack of opportunities to learn.
- ▶ More than 11,600 children are hospitalized each year because of injuries sustained in unsafe cribs.
- ▶ Crib mattresses need to be covered with a well-fitted crib sheet (never use adult sheets).
- ▶ An infant should not be put to bed in a crib with pillows, comforters, bumper pads, stuffed animals or other soft items.

Sources: *Journal of American College of Nutrition, Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, Keepingbabysafe.org*

Quotable Quotes

“There is nothing like soup. It is by nature eccentric: no two are ever alike unless you get your soup in a can.”

— Laurie Colwin

INSIDE:

- ◆ Federal Safety Standards for Cribs
- ◆ Target Toss Activity

- ◆ Recipes
- ◆ Food Funny

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from the food provided. Children count on caregivers who exercise **leadership** in determining the foods to be served, preparation methods and the timing of meals. Meals, served at regular intervals ensures that children do not get overly hungry, but also come to the table ready to eat. Caregivers allow the child **autonomy** over what and how much they choose to eat based on the child's internal cues of hunger and satiety.

Eating is a Complex Skill

At a recent lecture, Doris Fredericks, MEd, RD, emphasized that eating is a complex skill. Doris explained that few parents who are teaching their preschooler to throw a ball or play soccer would show him the mechanics of the skill once and when he doesn't master it instantaneously, conclude "he can't throw a ball." Just as throwing and catching take practice, so does learning to eat a variety of foods. Giving



in to the child who only eats a few things, saying "Mikey doesn't eat vegetables," is as ridiculous as saying "Mikey can't catch a ball." If caregivers do their job with feeding, children will learn to do their job with eating.

I Do It Because I Care

Attempts to cater to children's likes and dislikes usually comes from a deep place of caring. It's true, children might become hungry when they refuse an entire meal, but they are learning that the natural consequence of refusing food is that their tummy feels empty. Teaching children that they can refuse foods in order to be served the one food they know and enjoy is not helpful. While children know **how much** to eat they can't possibly know **what** healthy foods they need in order to grow well. Introducing a variety of foods is simply providing the child "practice" in learning to accept new tastes.

Avoid Pressuring Children

Don't get overly involved in the child's decision to eat or not eat, simply serve the food without comment, without pressure. Choo-choo trains delivering mouthfuls of food and even "no thank you bites" are subtle forms of pressuring the child. Sit and eat with the children and make it a social time. When they choose not to eat, it won't be easy to let them go hungry, but you can relax knowing that they will have another opportunity to eat a meal or snack in a couple of hours.

Or is it something else?

I devote only one small paragraph to this, as it is exceedingly rare, but occasionally a child will be hypersensitive to smells, tastes, and textures. In these children the aversion to most foods and textures is extreme. These cases may require intervention by the child's physician, a nutritionist as well as a child development specialist and occupation therapist. This condition is so rare, that we caution you not to assume that a child has a food aversion disorder. Picky eating is more likely a passing phase which can be approached most effectively by honoring the division of responsibility and consistently serving the child a variety of healthy foods.

— Donna Green R.D.
 Child Health and Nutrition Specialist
 Contra Costa Child Care Council

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Federal Safety Standards for Cribs

MORE CHILDREN DIE OR ARE SERIOUSLY INJURED in unsafe cribs than by all other nursery product mishaps combined. In the last 20 years, 1,100 children have died from crib-related injuries.

Annually, more than 11,600 children are hospitalized because of injuries sustained in unsafe cribs.

Beginning **December 28, 2012**, any crib provided by child care facilities and family child care homes must meet new and improved federal safety standards. The new standards took effect for manufacturers, retailers, importers and distributors on June 28, 2011. The standards address the deadly hazards previously seen with traditional drop-side rails, requiring more durable hardware and parts and mandating more rigorous testing.

New Federal Crib Manufacturing Requirements

- Traditional drop side cribs cannot be made or sold; immobilizers and repair kits are not allowed.
- Wood slats must be made of stronger wood to prevent breakage.
- Crib hardware must have anti-loosening devices to keep it from coming loose or falling off.
- Mattress supports must be more durable.
- Safety testing must be more rigorous.

What You Should Know...

- This is more than a drop side issue.
- Immobilizing your current crib will not make it compliant.
- You can not determine compliance by looking at the product.
- The new standards apply to all full-size cribs including wood, metal and stackable cribs.

If you purchased a crib **prior to the June 28, 2011** effective date and you are unsure it meets the new federal

standard, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that you verify the crib meets the standard by asking for proof.



- Ask the manufacturer, retailer, importer or distributor to show a Certificate of Compliance.
- The document must describe the product:
 - Give name address and telephone number of the importer or domestic manufacturer
 - Identify the rule for which it complies (16CFR 1219 or 1220)
 - Give the name, address and telephone number of the records keeper and location of testing lab
 - State the date and location of the manufacturer and testing
- The crib must also have a label attached with the date of manufacture.

What You Should Do...

All child care facilities, family child care homes and places of public accommodation:

- Must prepare to replace their current cribs with new compliant cribs before December 28, 2012
- Should not resell, donate or give away a crib that does not meet the new crib standards
- Dispose of older, noncompliant cribs in a manner that the cribs cannot be reassembled and used
- Noncompliant cribs should not be resold through online auction sites or donated to local thrift stores. CPSC recommends disassembling the crib before discarding it

For more information, go to www.keepingbabiesafe.org or U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission www.cpsc.gov

BBQ Chicken Fingers

BBQ Sauce (bottled).....	1 cup	Pepper.....	½ tsp
Dijon mustard.....	2 Tbsp	Eggs.....	2
Honey.....	2 Tbsp	Dry, coarse bread crumbs or panko.....	1¾ cups
Chicken tenders.....	1½ lb	Olive oil spray	
Flour.....	½ cup		
Salt.....	½ tsp		

1. Combine BBQ sauce, mustard and honey in a large bowl. Set aside ½ cup of the mixture for a dipping sauce. Cut any large chicken tenders in half lengthwise. Add chicken tenders to the large bowl of sauce and marinate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
2. Preheat oven to 450°F. Spray large, rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. Mix flour with salt and pepper in a bowl. In another bowl, beat the eggs. Pour the bread crumbs into a shallow dish.
3. Coat each tender in the flour mixture, shaking off the excess. Dip in egg and let any excess drip off, then roll in breadcrumbs, shaking off any excess. Generously coat both sides of each tender with cooking spray.
4. Place tenders on prepared baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes. Turn tenders over and continue baking 10 minutes. Serve with reserved sauce.

Yield 8 servings

Meets requirement for protein/meat alternate

Chopped Apple Nut Squares

Whole wheat flour.....	½ cup	Apples, chopped.....	1½ cups
All purpose flour.....	½ cup	Pecans, or walnuts, chopped..	1 cup
Sugar.....	½ cup	Butter, melted.....	3 Tbsp
Salt.....	½ tsp	Egg, beaten.....	1
Cinnamon.....	½ tsp	Vanilla.....	1 tsp
Baking soda.....	1 tsp		

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9x9 pan with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl, mix together flours, sugar, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. Mix in apples and pecans.
3. Add the egg, butter and vanilla and mix well. Batter will be very thick. Spread in prepared pan and bake for 30 minutes.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for grains/breads

Activity Corner

TARGET TOSS

Balls can be used to practice throwing, catching, collecting, kicking and striking. All of these skills help children move in new ways and improve coordination. This simple game of *Target Toss* helps children feel successful in throwing a ball.

- Hang a large target such as a bed sheet or blanket on a wall indoors or out. Using balls appropriate to the child's size and age, have the children work on throwing the balls in the direction of the target (no hard balls).
- Children will start to develop basic throwing techniques and hand-eye coordination. This activity can be performed over a number of weeks and elements can be changed to enhance skill development.
- Try using balls of differing circumferences and weights. The bed sheet or target can be shifted higher or lower and its size can be decreased or increased, by folding or unfolding the sheet.
- Continued practice can fine tune step and follow-through pitching techniques. Allow older children to help with the set up process, gather stray balls and participate in assisting the younger children.

This Nutrition Edition is brought to you by:

and is produced by:

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Child Health & Nutrition Program**

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Food Funny Q: Why did the fisherman put peanut butter into the sea?
A: To go with the jellyfish.