

“Help Your Child Become a Better Eater”
(based on information from Ellyn Satter workshop)

Even as toddlers, children learn to become picky eaters, a real concern for many parents. However, it need not be so. By understanding the Division of Responsibility, the task may be easier.

Parent’s Responsibility: Decide what food to serve, when it will be eaten, and where.

Child’s Responsibility: Decide how much to eat, and whether or not to eat.

For children to become better eaters, they must have proper adult support.

Adults must:

- **Choose and prepare the food.**
- **Have regular meals and snack times.**
- **Join the child by sitting and eating with him/her.**
- **Make eating time pleasant.**
- **Not let the child “graze” for food or beverages between eating times.**
- **Accept the child’s natural growth inclinations.**

Children:

- **Will eat when hungry.**
- **Know how much to eat.**
- **Will eat a variety of food over time if offered.**
- **Will mature with their eating.**
- **Will experiment with new foods and eventually learn to like them.**
- **Must experiment with different textured foods.**
- **May try something 15 times before liking it.**
- **May eat more one day than another.**

For children to have the greatest food acceptance:

- They must have family meals and structured snacks.
- They must get their emotional needs met (happy time together).

Typical Meal Should Include:

- **Protein Source**
- **2 complex Carbohydrates**
 - **rice, potatoes, noodles, etc.**
 - **bread (always bread)**
- **Fruit or Vegetable or both**
- **Milk**
- **Butter, margarine, salad dressing, gravy, etc.**

Healthy Snack Ideas:

- Give beginners simple snacks. Finger foods, such as cut-up steamed vegetables; o-shaped cereal; small fruit chunks.
- Serve little animal crackers and Fig Newtons.
- Spread fat free cream cheese on graham crackers, top with fruit slices.
- Make frozen pops by freezing 100% fruit juice in 5 oz. Paper cups. Insert craft sticks when almost frozen.
- Push fruit chunks onto a pretzel stick for a fruity kabob.
- Make a veggie wrap by spreading soft tortillas with fat free cream cheese and sprinkling on chopped raw veggies. Roll up.

Remember to eat as a family – if the joy goes out of eating, nutrition suffers!!