



Strategies to Avoid Fussy Eating

- **Schedule mealtimes.** Plan for 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks at consistent times each day. This helps to ensure your child is hungry when it's time to eat, making it more likely they'll try new foods that are offered.
- **Don't fill up on fluids.** Avoid letting your child fill up on milk or juice; this can make them less hungry for food at mealtimes.
- **Food prep is fun – give children a way to help out.** The more your child touches and helps prepare foods, the more likely they are to eat the food later.
- **Plan for a flavour explosion.** Research has shown that children's taste preferences remain steady after the age of 4 years; so introduce young children to as many flavours as possible from the time they start weaning.
- **Adults set the menu.** Parents decide what food is served (each person at the table decides for themselves how much to eat).
- **Avoid using food as a reward.** "Reward" foods automatically are more interesting to children than "regular" foods.
- **Make mealtime a positive, social experience.** Eat as a family and turn off screens and other distractions.
- **Everyone has the same food.** Food is food. Giving your child something different than the rest of the family sends the message that certain food is for your child and certain food is for everyone else.
- **Little kids, little tummies:** keep serving sizes right for your child's age.
- **Nobody likes to be forced to eat.** If your child doesn't want to eat the food, don't push it.

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- **Talk positively about food and your child's food interactions.** –“I like the way you are chewing.” “Wow, this carrot is orange like my jumper.”
- **Don't worry about table manners at the start.** Children need to play with and explore their food to learn how to eat it. Adding the pressure of table manners to the learning stage of eating limits exploration and food learning.
- **Let it end.** Children's mealtimes shouldn't be longer than 20 minutes. Let your child play nearby if you are still finishing up.
- **Remove uneaten food without comment and offer everyone dessert, regardless of how much food was left on their plate.**

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