



Keeping Food Fun

Providing children with positive and fun food experiences can help them feel good about themselves and gradually learn to like new foods.

Think about your child's past experience

- An unpleasant food experience from the past can make children not want to eat certain foods in the future. Keep experiences positive and fun to help make *good* memories with food and eating.

Take your time

- Learning to like a new food takes time and practice. Children use all of their senses to learn about food. This includes the look, the feel, the smell, the sound and the taste of the food. Even if a child appears to not like a new food the first time, plan to offer it in the future. It can take 12 or more times before a child will taste or eat something new.

Involve children in activities

- Involve children in fun food activities that are right for their age like gardening, planning a menu, shopping for groceries, cooking, serving and even cleaning up after a meal.

Help children feel good about themselves

- Make the same meal for everyone so no one is singled out.
- Offer a variety of food choices at each meal or snack so everyone can choose which foods to eat.
- Pair a new food with a familiar food so children feel like they have a “safe” option.
- Serve a napkin. If a child chooses to taste a new food but then discovers that they don't like it, they can use the napkin to politely get rid of the food.
- Avoid any pressure or bribery for children to taste or eat certain foods; this can make mealtimes stressful and unpleasant.
- Allow children to decide how much and even whether to eat from what is offered.

Be a role model

- Children learn to eat how their families eat.
- Eating together as a family gives children the chance to try new and different foods.
- Make mealtimes a time to talk to each other. Shut off all distractions like TVs and phones.