

Picky Eating 101

Preschoolers
3-4 years



I'm a preschooler. At meals, you may notice that I:

- Refuse foods because of their color or shape
- Say I'm full after only a few bites
- Decide not to eat at all
- Change my favorite foods

This behavior is normal for me. As long as I am growing and have plenty of energy, I am eating what I need, even if I skip meals sometimes.



Remember the responsibilities you and I have at meals

You Decide

- *What* to eat at meals
- *Where* the meal will be eaten
- *When* meals are served

I Decide

- *How much* to eat from the food you offer
- *Whether or not* to eat

Trust me to eat when I'm hungry and stop when I'm satisfied.

Top 10: Tips For Parents of Preschoolers

1. Feed me at scheduled meals and snacks at the table instead of letting me graze or run around with sippy cups or pouches.
2. Offer the same foods for the whole family. Don't be a short-order cook by making a different meal for me. If I choose not to eat, be okay with my choice. I'll get a chance to eat again at the next meal or snack.
3. Make mealtimes pleasant. Teach me good manners and expect me to obey.
4. Have family meals. This will teach me to eat the foods the family eats.
5. Offer 1-2 foods I generally like as part of the family meal. Only introduce one new food at a time.
6. Let me eat and try new foods without comment. It's best if I don't receive pressure, bribes or praise while eating.
7. Let me pick out vegetables and fruits at the store. I'll be more likely to eat it.
8. Let me help you prepare meals and snacks. This will get me excited to taste the meals I help make. Let me add ingredients, wash veggies, or stir.
9. Offer choices. Rather than ask "Do you want carrots for lunch?" ask "Which would you like for lunch, carrots or broccoli?"
10. Don't give up on me! You may have to offer me a food 20 times or more before I accept it, but that's how I'll learn to like it.

