

# 10 Tips for Raising Adventurous Eaters



How to help your picky eater  
expand their palate

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## 1. There Are No "Bad" Foods



Let your child know that there are no "bad" or "good" foods. Children tend to internalize labels and if they eat a "bad" food, they might feel as if they are bad themselves.

All foods can fit into a healthy, balanced diet. Some foods might be everyday foods, while others are sometimes foods, but taking away the good and bad labels can help your child develop a healthy relationship with food.

## 2. Stick to a Schedule



Set an eating schedule for meals and snacks each day. This sets up the expectation of regular eating opportunities throughout the day. Young children should have a meal or snack every 2 to 3 hours during the day.

This might look like 3 meals per day with 2 to 3 snacks in between. Find what works for your family and try to stick with it.

### 3. Don't Be a Short-Order Cook



No one wants to spend all day in the kitchen preparing different meals for everyone in the family. Make one meal or snack for the entire family.

If someone chooses not to eat, that is fine. But it's important that they know that is what is being served and they won't be offered other food to eat until the next snack or meal is served.

### 4. Offer a Choice



Children want to display their autonomy. Allowing them a choice in what they eat can help them feel validated.

For example, for snack time you might ask if they want sliced apples or bananas to dip in their peanut butter. You are still in charge of providing the food options, but giving a choice to your child can go a long way in encouraging them to try a food.

## 5. Allow Them to Decide If and How Much They Eat



Do not force your child to eat their food or bribe them with dessert to eat. Your responsibility as the parent is to provide healthy foods for your child. It is your child's responsibility to decide if they eat and how much they eat.

## 6. Stay Neutral



Keep a neutral attitude about what they eat (or don't eat). Try not to comment on whether your child eats certain foods.

While it may seem natural to cheer for your child when they eat their broccoli or say how good of an eater they are when they finish their meal, aim to be impartial about their eating. All foods, from cauliflower to ice cream, should receive the same attitude and reaction.

## 7. Include Your Child in Food Selection and Preparation



Take your child with you to go grocery shopping. Let them choose a new food to try, such as a new fruit or vegetable. When you are in the kitchen, find an age-appropriate task they can help with.

Allowing them to choose and prepare foods will help them get excited to learn about, explore, and taste new foods.

## 8. Offer New Foods Regularly



Keep variety in your diets! This can look different for each family. It might be trying one new recipe a week, cooking a familiar food in a different way, picking out a new fruit or vegetable at the store, or trying a new spice or herb to flavor your foods.

Regularly introducing new foods and flavors in your meal plan can be fun and something the whole family looks forward to.

## 9. Always Offer a Safe Food



When meal planning, keep in mind those who you'll be serving. If you are trying a new recipe for dinner, offer a "safe" food you know your child will eat. This might be as simple as a dinner roll or a side of sliced strawberries.

This way your child is exposed to a new food, but still has a familiar food on their plate, as well.

## 10. Be a Model of Adventurous Eating



Children often mimic what they see - this includes with eating! Creating a positive feeding environment, turning off distractions, and trying new foods yourself can help your child feel confident in expanding their palate.

If you are willing to give a new food or flavor a try, your child may be more likely to try it, too.

## **BONUS TIP 1: Watch Portion Sizes**



Sometimes children can become overwhelmed with a plate full of food. Be mindful to give your child appropriate portion sizes for their age and not to overfill their plate.

Use starter portions. If they want more after they have eaten some, then you can serve them additional food.

## **BONUS TIP 2: Don't Let Them Fill Up On Liquids**



Provide liquids, mainly water, throughout the day. During meals, offer liquids occasionally or reserve for the end of the meal.

This way they aren't filling up their tummy with liquids and will have the opportunity to feel hungry and eat.