

Help Kids Learn to Enjoy a Variety of Foods

Learning to enjoy a variety of foods takes patience and practice. What we tend to label as “picky eating” is often very normal behavior. Adults can help kids feel safe and supported as they learn by following these tips:

Adults decide what foods to offer at meal and snack times

- This is where adults have a big impact on what children will learn to like

Let children and youth decide what to eat from the foods you offer

Involve children and youth in meal planning and preparation

- When they have a say, they are more likely to enjoy it

Don't limit meals to their favourite foods

- Offer a variety of foods

Offer unaccepted or new foods regularly

- Learning new tastes and textures can take many tries
- Let kids see, smell and touch foods, even if they don't eat it at first
- Include 1 or 2 foods they usually enjoy at each meal so they feel safe and comfortable

Remove pressure around eating

- Kids do better when they can learn at their own pace
- Pressure can include: praise for eating certain foods like vegetables; “clean your plate” or “take one bite” rules; “if you eat two more bites of this, then you can have that”; Etc.

Model healthy eating and healthy eating behaviours

- Eat meals together as often as you are able and remove distractions at the table including tablets, phones, TV, toys, etc.
- *Over time* kids will learn to eat most of *what* and *how* you eat

Trust that over several days children and youth will eat what their bodies need if healthy choices are offered to them with no pressure. Over time they will become happy, confident and balanced eaters, which is an important life skill.

For more information visit: [Solve your child's feeding problems \(ellynsatterinstitute.org\)](https://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org)



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Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

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