



# Tips to help your child conquer picky eating

## “I don’t want it!”

This is a plea often heard around the family dinner table. Mealtimes are stressful for many parents because a child who is a picky eater can make everyone miserable with her battle over what foods she will and won’t eat.

Picky eating is rare in babies but more common as a child approaches the age of 2. Children (and adults) of all ages have food preferences, but it’s common for preschoolers to refuse new food automatically. According to early childhood experts at Parents as Teachers, expect to offer a vegetable 15-25 times before your child tastes it. Here’s how you can get started in overcoming the mealtime family feud.



### **It starts with you**

You are the most important model for your child’s good eating habits. Fill your plate with a variety of nutritious foods, including vegetables, and encourage your child to taste the vegetables on your plate. Young children often want a taste of what you are eating.

### **Begin early**

- Make it your goal to introduce your child to many different foods before age 2.
- Start with small portions. Give your child a little taste at first and be patient.
- Let your child smell, touch and taste veggies.
- As your child is able to eat solid foods safely, present him with a variety of textures. Cooked green beans are crunchy and mashed sweet potatoes are smooth. Expose your child to both.

### **Make food fun!**

The more creative the food is, the greater the variety of foods children will eat. Try:

- Adding chopped fruits and vegetables to dishes your child already likes. Shredded carrots can mix into spaghetti. Add thawed frozen chopped broccoli to meatloaf. Mix fruit into yogurt and freeze into popsicles.
- Getting your child involved in the kitchen. Allow him to help with age-appropriate meal planning, preparation and clean up. Great jobs for kids include: helping to find foods at the grocery store, setting the table, washing, pouring and stirring. Children will often try a meal that they helped to prepare. ❖