



Raising Courageous Eaters

EATING is one of life's great pleasures. We all want children to grow up enjoying a wide variety of healthy food. You may well be surprised at how brave and competent children can be with eating when the adults in their lives are supportive, consistent and positive with feeding. We hope that you will consider some of these strategies to raise courageous eaters offered by experts in the field of child health and nutrition.

Safe Foods. There should always be a safe food at each meal, which is a food

that your child generally accepts. Examples can be bread and butter, cheese and bread, yogurt, hummus and carrots, etc. If your child goes through a meal and only eats their safe food, that is their choice and that is fine. The fact that it is on the table lets the child know that their needs have been considered. This may eventually give them the confidence to try something new, although, as mentioned, they may stick to their safe food for a while. Balanced nutrition happens over a few days, not at each meal. This is being considerate without catering.

– Yaffi Lvova, RDN,
BabyBloomNutrition.com and author of Stage-By-Stage Baby Food Cookbook and Beyond a Bite, Activities for a Mindful Mealtime.

Create a garden; bring children to farms for field trips. I think it's important that parents and teachers get together to do one or two things they can accomplish well—a teaching garden, connecting with farms nearby, weave food onto the curriculum.

– Alice Waters, Chef-activist,
author and pioneer in the farm-to-table movement.

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Farmer Fran's Fun Facts



Kumquats

- Kumquats are believed to have originated in China, with earliest historical mention in 12th century literature. The English name "kumquat" derives from the Cantonese, kamkwat, meaning golden mandarin orange.
- The citrus fruit looks like an orange in shape and color, but it is about the size of an olive. Kumquats are generally eaten whole; the outer, sweet rind is edible and offers a contrast to the tangy, inner flesh. They have small edible seeds that can be eaten or discarded. The fruit is also often candied or preserved in salt or sugar.
- Kumquats are commonly used in marmalade, jellies and in baking. Try slicing them thin to add a tart finish to salads or make them into a chutney served alongside a savory dish such as chicken or seafood. Pop straight into your mouth for a burst of yumminess.
- Look for fruit that is shiny with good color. Avoid fruits with blemishes or soft spots. Store in a cool location up to seven days or refrigerate, unwashed, in a plastic bag for up to two weeks.
- Kumquats are high in vitamin C and offer some vitamin A. The skin is full of fiber and antioxidants, helpful substances that can protect your cells.

Raising Courageous Eaters

— Continued from front page

WISDOM FROM COCOKIDS CHILD HEALTH AND NUTRITION TEAM

I always offer and eat a variety of foods. If I don't set an example for my children that eating different "strange" foods is safe, I can't expect them to do the same. When I serve food my children don't want to try, I leave it on their plate. If I remove it, it seems I'm saying the food was indeed unsafe to eat. They usually end up trying at least a bit. It is their choice to try and like the food, I never force them to eat it.

— *Cecilia Sequeira*

I used to cater to my picky child. My son loves the classic "white diet" of breads, pasta and cheese, so when feeding him I would not serve him what he didn't like. I learned to stop doing this and began placing the entire meal on his plate as it was intended. At first, he would frustratingly pick through it, but soon he was willing to try things. Witnessing me eating them and seeing them over and over made them more familiar; now I can happily say greens sautéed in garlic is one of his favorites.

— *Rachel O'Neal*

A successful strategy to encourage my son to eat vegetables and other foods was to use our imagination; we pretended to be dinosaurs eating small (broccoli) trees, wood logs (baby carrots), or soil (ground meat). On the more challenging days, we discussed how tasting foods could help you decide if you liked it or not. I suggested

we close our eyes as we tasted any new foods to focus on the textures and flavors. He felt he could confidently "explore" new foods this way.

— *Alejandra Marin Santos*

Caregivers who model good eating habits and love to explore a variety of foods stir curiosity in children. The interest and excitement they show about the meal can encourage enthusiasm in children. Family style meal service is a time to explore new menus, colors and textures of food while teaching children to serve themselves without pressure. This also helps grow courageous eaters.

— *Vicki Leslie*

When I was a family childcare provider, I often let the children get involved with the cooking. We would make personal pizzas together; they really enjoyed it and wanted to eat all that they made. During snack time, I often included counting to make it fun. I would ask the children how many they would like of a food item and together we would count them out. This activity empowered them to choose the amount they wanted and if they ate it all they could always have more.

— *Xuiling Goble*

One of the ways I helped my children and day care children to eat well, without any pressure, was by having a routine with regular sit-down meals and snacks. They were not "grazing" between meals so when they came to the table, hands scrubbed, for the next meal or snack,

they were genuinely hungry. In addition, meals were served with the TV off to reduce distractions and allow for conversation and a pleasant environment.

— *Catherine Stafford*

Mealtime shouldn't be a battleground but an adventure land. Embrace the opportunity to introduce children to the wonderful world of food and broaden their culinary horizons. ■

Satter's Division of Responsibility

Parent's responsibilities

- What foods are offered
- When food is offered
- Where food is offered (no distractions)



Child's responsibilities

- How much to eat (as many servings as they like)
- If they will eat (they may choose not to eat)

According to the Ellyn Satter Institute, "Children have natural ability with eating. They eat as much as they need, they grow in the way that is right for them, and they learn to eat the food their parents eat. Step-by-step, throughout their growing-up years, they build on their natural ability and become eating-competent. Parents let them learn and grow with eating when they follow the Division of Responsibility in Feeding."

— *EllynSatterInstitute.org*

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Supporting Children's Needs in Challenging Times

APRIL IS WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH.

How can we support children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), other special needs, or children who display anxious feelings during these challenging times? Transitions and changes in routine can be particularly difficult to navigate for children with ASD, and more so during a pandemic. Creating a predictable and consistent routine can offer children the support they need. A consistent routine is helpful for children at home or in a childcare program. One technique is to use visual aids, such as a visual schedule, a visual timer or pictures of emotions to help children label and identify their feelings. According to northstarpaths.com, visuals help ALL children and are important to use because they:

- are permanent
- allow time for language processing
- prepare children for transitions
- help kids see what you mean
- help build independence
- help reduce anxious feelings



Visual schedules set clear expectations and help prepare children for what is coming next. You can create a visual schedule by using clipart images or taking pictures of children during each part of the daily routine (see image for an example of a visual schedule). Before each transition, point to the visual schedule or use a clip/arrow to show where you are in the routine. Then, show the children what they will do next.

What do you do if an unexpected change occurs in the day? Simply write the new activity or event on paper or a sticky note and place it on the schedule where it will take place in the day. This needs to be paired with a clear, simple explanation of the change, while giving as much notice as possible. Allowing children to be part of the process can give them feelings of control and independence, which can relieve some anxiety.

Transitions can be difficult for some children and there can be a lot of them throughout their day. Visual timers are a proven tool to help support children during transitions. Time is abstract for young children. Using a visual timer, such as a Time Timer or an app on your phone, helps children understand time in a more physical sense. They will still need reminders that the transition is coming, but the visual timer helps them plan and prepare with more ease.

There may be some **big feelings** that come up for children during these uncertain times. It is important to allow children time to process and calm before trying to reason with them. This is because we want to avoid triggering the fight, flight or freeze state and give the child time to process, allowing him to access reasoning skills in a calm state.

STRATEGIES TO HELP A CHILD CALM AND RE-CENTER

- Label and validate feelings: “I see that you’re mad. It’s okay to be mad.” Being heard and seen helps to calm the body better than being told to “calm down.” Use pictures of emotions to help children identify their feelings.
- Give concrete ideas to calm their body. Print out pictures of calming strategies that the children can choose from, 2–4 choices. For example, take 5 deep breathes, color, listen to music, go to a quiet space, play with play dough, read a book, drink some water, hug a stuffed animal.
- Create a sensory basket: include squishy balls, fidgets, pinwheels for blowing, headphones to reduce sound, pictures of emotions, books, puzzles, etc.
- Provide children with positive reinforcement and praise.
- Engage in movement and exercise activities throughout the day.

— Megan Miccio, MA
Inclusion Specialist, CocoKids

Whole Wheat Buttermilk Scones with Raisins & Oatmeal

Whole wheat flour	1 ¼ cup	Brown sugar	2 Tbsp
All-purpose flour	½ cup	Salt	½ tsp
Oats	⅓ cup	Butter	5 Tbsp
Baking powder	2 tsp	Buttermilk	½ cup
Baking soda	½ tsp	Raisins	½ cup

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment.
2. Sift together flours, baking powder, baking soda, sugar and salt. Stir in oats. Rub in butter or place in a stand mixer fitted with the paddle and beat at low speed or pulse in a food processor, until incorporated. Add buttermilk and raisins and mix just until dough comes together.
3. Transfer to a lightly floured work surface and gently shape into a ½-inch thick rectangle. Cut into 4 squares, then cut each square in half on the diagonal. Transfer to baking sheet. Bake 15 minutes, until browned on the bottom. Flip over, bake 3 more minutes and remove from the heat. Serve warm or allow to cool.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for whole grain-rich

— *Cooking.nytimes.com*

Quick and Savory Tuna Burgers

Tuna, chunk light, drained	1 (12 oz) can	Prepared horseradish	1½ Tbsp
Eggs	2	Lemon juice	1 Tbsp
Bread crumbs	½ cup	Garlic, minced	1 clove
Onion, chopped	½ cup	Black pepper	¼ tsp
Celery, chopped	½ cup	Vegetable oil	2 Tbsp

1. Mix tuna, eggs, bread crumbs, onion, celery, horseradish, lemon juice, garlic and black pepper in a bowl until mixture holds together.
2. Divide mixture into 8 portions and shape each portion into a patty.
3. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat and cook patties until golden brown, about 5 minutes per side.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for meat/meat alternate

— *Allrecipes.com*

ACTIVITY CORNER

Physical Activity Around the World



TINIKLING

Tinikling is a popular dance in the Philippines that is based on the movements of a tinikling bird. It is similar to double-dutch jump rope but with two bamboo poles used instead of rope (broomsticks make a great substitute). It requires a minimum of three people to play—two to hold each end of the poles, low to the ground and one to jump and dance in and out of the space between the poles. Rhythm and music are made as the kids who hold the poles clap the poles together or tap them on the ground while the “jumper” times their jumping with the moving poles.

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Food Q. What's the worst thing about being an octopus?
Funny A. Washing your hands before lunch!