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So You Have A Picky Eater?

By Destry Maycock

If you have a picky eater, mealtime can make you feel like you want to pull your hair out. It is very frustrating for parents to watch their child only fiddle with their food at dinner or not even touch it, claiming they "don't like it." Then what happens? Thirty minutes later guess who is hungry? You guessed it. Your little picky eater.

Jamie's mother was concerned about Jamie's lack of interest in food. She stated, "Jamie never wants to eat anything I fix for dinner. What can I do to encourage Jamie to eat the meals that I have prepared?" I came up with the following ten tips for her. You may find them useful as well.

TIP: INVOLVE JAMIE. You could have Jamie help with planning the menu or meal preparation. Kids are less likely to "turn up their nose" at something, they had a hand in.

TIP: PLACE A LIMIT ON JAMIE. Perhaps Jamie is playing with her food at dinner and not real interested in eating it. Mom say's, "Jamie, I will be serving breakfast at 7:00 a.m. try to eat enough to make it to then. You decide how much you will need. Oh! We will be clearing the table in _____ minutes."

When Jamie comes to you later that evening complaining of being hungry. With an understanding tone, simply remind her that you will be serving breakfast at 7:00 a.m. as usual. Jamie will most likely be persistent about getting something else to eat. It is important that you follow through with the limit you have placed. Otherwise, Jamie learns that you do not mean what you say and you lose your credibility with her. You may have to tell her several times that you will be "serving breakfast at 7:00" until she realizes that your are not going to give in.

Jamie: "Mom I'm hungry. Can I have some cookies?"

Mom: "Kids who eat all their dinner are welcome to have a snack after."

Jamie: "But mom I'm really hungry."

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Mom: "I know Jamie. I would be hungry too if I ate as little as you did for dinner, but don't worry I will be fixing a big breakfast at 7:00 a.m."

Jamie: "What? Do you want me to starve?"

Mom: "I'll be serving breakfast at 7:00 Jamie"

Jamie: "This isn't fair."

Mom: "I'll be serving breakfast at 7:00 Jamie"

Jamie: "Fine!"

TIP: NOTICE THE EXCEPTIONS. Call attention to the times when Jamie eats most of her meal.

"Wow! Jamie you ate everything on your plate. Good job. You should be proud of yourself." Too often, we only notice the negative aspects of our children's behavior and that is what we reinforce with our negative attention.

TIP: CATER TO JAMIE'S DESIRE TO BE "BIG". " You probably won't like this halibut Jamie. Usually, adults are the only ones who like halibut." Guess what may just become Jamie's new favorite food?

TIP: PROVIDE VARIOUS CHOICES AROUND MEALTIME. "Would you rather sit by me or by mommy?" "You can eat with a fork or a spoon which would you prefer?" "Do you think you will need more potatoes or is that enough?" "Have as much as you think you will need to make it to dinner." "Milk or juice?" "Should we eat at 7:00 or 7:30?"

TIP: BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL. "You know dear, although spaghetti is not my favorite, I will eat it because I know how hard you worked to make it."

TIP: EXPOSURE. Encourage Jamie to try a variety of foods early on in her life before she knows any different. Some children may have never thought liver was gross if it hadn't been for what someone else had set their expectation to be.

TIP: PROVIDE SOME FLEXIBILITY. Let's remember there are some foods that certain children just can not stomach. If Jamie has a problem with spinach but it is part of that particular meal, try to have other items that she can get her fill up on once everyone has their share. However, this should be the exception rather than the rule.

Try letting Jamie dip her foods in sauces, dressings, syrups or ketchup. It may make them taste better to her.

TIP: MAKE MEALTIME ENJOYABLE. Try to talk about things other than eating at mealtime. Dinner is a great time to talk to Jamie about how her day went. During breakfast, you could discuss what everyone has planned for the day.

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Everyone pitching in to help prepare the meal can teach Jamie an important family value. An added bonus for children is that it can teach them important thinking skills regarding timing, measuring, colors, comparisons, counting, and cause and effect.

Be creative in the ways that you dish up Jamie's food. Mold her mashed potatoes into a volcano, cut her meat or sandwich into bite sized pieces and poke toothpicks in them, layout veggies in the shapes of letters or numbers, or use a drop or two of food coloring to make it more interesting.

TIP: LIMIT SNACKING. For children to be hungry enough to eat a meal they usually need to go two or three hours without food. However, it is difficult for children to go from noon to 6:00 p.m. without food. A nutritious snack after school should be fine to get Jamie to dinner still having her appetite.

TIP: RECALL PAST SUCCESSES. Think back about times when Jamie has ate her meals. What were you doing? Were you placing a lot of emphasis on her need to eat her food? What was she doing? What were you eating? What happened before the meal? These kinds of questions may help you realize some of the things you or Jamie is already doing which assist her in becoming a better eater.

Destry Maycock has over eleven years experience working with children and families as a professional social worker. Destry has helped hundreds of parents solve various parenting challenges and strengthen their relationships with their children. Destry enjoys developing products that help parents. To learn more visit

<http://www.parentingstore.com>

Picky Eaters – The Dawn of Understanding

By Jason Katzenback

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"In general my children refuse to eat anything that hasn't danced on television." (Erma Bombeck, 1927–1996)

Once upon a time not so very long ago, you probably envisioned that your children would be good, healthy eaters while growing up. Naturally, they would like everything you placed before them on the dinner table, and would beg for seconds and sometimes thirds. However, because you are reading this article, that lovely bubble has most likely popped and disintegrated into the mess you may find yourself cleaning off the floor, table, or wherever your delicious entrees happen to land thanks to your picky eaters.

Keeping up with your child's picky eating preferences can be frustrating, especially when one week he or she will only eat peanut-butter sandwiches, and the next cheese-covered French fries. Then, when he or she develops the nasty habit of putting catsup on everything – including ice cream – you may

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think you have reached the ultimate level of gross-out.

Do not despair because eventually your picky eater child will become bored with that food of choice and move on to something else!

Many children undergo a period of highly selective eating, commonly referred to as "picky eaters." The reality is that all children (not just what you might consider a picky eater child) do not have the same taste buds as adults. Instead, their palates are undeveloped and may be more sensitive to different textures, flavors, and spices.

As children grow older, their tastes literally change, expanding to include more foods "C but not always. When this does not happen, clever picky eater coping strategies are needed.

Many explanations exist for children's unusual picky eating habits that bypass biological and developmental reasons. Today, you will discover numerous forms of public awareness and understanding about picky eaters. In fact, discussion forums and clubs devoted to the mysteries of picky eaters, along with what makes these folks tick are everywhere. We are not just talking about kids, but also adults who grew up as picky eaters and now find themselves in this exclusive category as they struggle with their unique appetites.

Remember, when it comes to picky eaters, "unique" is the keyword. Your picky eater child may have a different palate, but he or she is not strange, weird, or even unusual. A variety of reasons could account for his or her taste buds being apart from other children.

If you would like to learn more about the reasons certain kids are picky eaters or discover some great tasting and easy to prepare picky eater recipes then visit

<http://mypicky eater.com>

Learn step-by-step how to successfully cope with Picky Eaters with Help There is a Picky Eater in The House! Full of Proven Strategies and Great Picky Eater Recipes that are Guaranteed to Help.

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