



Helping the Picky Eater: Strategies for Parents & Providers

I. Introduction

II. What is Normal Eating?

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2. Resistance:
3. Food Jags:
4. Independence:

III. Feeding Disorders:

A. Sensory Processing Disorder:

B. Selective Eating Disorder:

C. ARFID (Avoidant/Restrictive /Food Intake Disorder):

IV. Strategies to Help Picky Eaters:

#1: Establish Meal & Snack Times

#2: No Pressure:



IV. Strategies to Help Picky Eaters (cont'd):

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A. Books:

- Fearless Feeding: How to Raise Healthy Eaters from High Chair to High School by Jill Castle and Maryann Jacobsen
- Love Me, Feed Me by Katja Rowell, MD
- Helping Your Child with Extreme Picky Eating by Katja Rowell, MD and Jenny McGlothlin, MS
- Child of Mine, Feeding with Love and Good Sense by Ellyn Satter
- Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family: How to Eat, How to Raise Good Eaters, How to Cook by Ellyn Satter

B. Websites/Blogs:

- www.RaiseHealthyEaters.com
- www.justtherightbyte.com
- www.HealthyEating.org
- www.feedingbytes.com
- www.kidshealth.org/parent
- www.webmd.com/parent



Scenario #1: Worried Mom of a “Skinny Preschooler”

Mrs. Martin states that her son Jeremy is 3 ½ years old, very energetic, and is too skinny. She says he has little interest in food and would much rather play than eat.

At home she serves him snacks whenever he asks for them or says he’s hungry. She says, “I better get the calories into him while I can.” Most nights Mrs. Martin makes a different dinner for herself and her husband and serves Jeremy the foods he already likes and she knows he will eat. She frequently offers him another snack or two-- after dinner and right before bed time.

Jeremy’s	Height % ile:	Weight %ile:
18 mos:	60 th %ile	35 th %ile
2 years:	60 th %ile	25 th %ile
3 years:	75 th %ile	25 th %ile

Mrs. Martin’s main concerns are:

1. Is Jeremy eating enough food to get all his nutrition?
2. How can I get him to gain weight?
3. How can I get him to sit at the table longer than 5 minutes?

Questions:

1. Based on Mrs. Martin’s current feeding routine, what changes would you suggest she make?
2. How would you address her concerns about his weight?
3. What suggestions would you make to help concern #3?



Scenario #2: Balancing the Picky Eater + Overweight Child

Mrs. Reynolds is the mother of 2 girls: She says, “Susie is 5 years old and a very picky eater—she doesn’t eat more than 20 foods. Lena is 7 years old and is chubby—I’m very worried about her weight and being teased at school. And I’m so frustrated with meal planning! I don’t know what to serve them because their needs are so different.”

	<u>Height</u>	<u>Weight</u>		<u>Height</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Susie:			Lena:		
3 years old:	35 th %ile	55 th %ile	5 years old:	65 th %ile	98 th %ile
4 years old:	36 th %ile	50 th %ile	6 years old:	65 th %ile	92 nd %ile
5 years old:	36 th %ile	56 th %ile	7 years old:	67 th %ile	98 th %ile

Mom states that breakfast is waffles with syrup or high sugar cereal & milk because “that’s what Susie will eat. But I’m worried because Lena loves these foods and eats too much of it. It’s not helping her weight.”

She also says, “For lunch Susie will only eat a PB&J sandwich or bagel with cream cheese as her main dish. She’ll eat fruit or string cheese or crackers with it, but I want her eating other lunch entrees.”

Lena “is starving when she comes home from school”, so dad asks her what she wants for snack. She then comes back several times for other snacks. She eats a wide variety at dinner and eats what mom and dad are eating. Susie doesn’t like the foods that the other 3 like and won’t eat if that’s all that’s served, so most of the time she is served pizza, macaroni & cheese or a chicken & rice burrito from the restaurant nearby, but she will only eat the burrito from that particular restaurant.

Questions:

#1: Would you suggest any changes to the breakfast routine?

#2: How would you approach Mom’s concerns about Susie’s lunch?

#3: What changes would you recommend for the afterschool snacks and current dinner situation?



Scenario #3: Picky 7 ½ year old

Mrs. Larsen says, “I have 2 boys who are 14 and 7 ½ years old. I’m worried about my 7 ½ year old’s weight, and I don’t think he’s getting enough of the foods he needs to grow. He refuses to try anything new. We eat dinner "family style", but he never eats it. He goes and makes a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or gets a bowl of cereal. He won't eat meat, chicken, fish, or vegetables. He only likes a couple of fruits (strawberries, applesauce and bananas), milk and carbohydrate foods.”

She says, “I dread dinner time at home. We all dread going out to eat, and I hate menu planning! I’m trying not to make a big deal about his eating, but I’m so frustrated!”

	Height:	Weight:
Age 4:	60 th %ile	50 th %ile
Age 5 ½:	60 th %ile	36 th %ile
Age 7:	60 th %ile	35 th %ile

Questions:

1. Should she be worried about his growth? Why or Why not?

2. Based on what you’ve learned today, what suggestions would you have for this mom?