



IT TAKES A VILLAGE!

Is your child a picky eater?

Don't think of picky eating as a battle. If you do, your child will sense your anger and frustration. That will make the problem worse. Be calm and patient. Look at how you're handling the situation. See if you can improve. For example:

- Don't overwhelm your child with large portions. If your child doesn't like vegetables, then a huge helping isn't going to help. Consider serving small portions on a big plate to make it look as if there's hardly anything on the plate.
- If you're not successful at mealtimes, consider ways to improve snack time. Consider healthy ways to serve peanut butter or vegetable shapes. And don't let your child "graze" outside of scheduled snack and meal times.
- Juice is not a replacement for fruits. In fact, there is so much sugar in juice that it's best not to serve it at all.
- Don't force your child to eat. This makes it a battle. Your child has the energy to wait out the battle.
- Don't bribe your child. Bribing becomes a habit and your child will never try new foods without a reward.
- Don't cater to individual meal requests each night. Your job is to serve one healthy meal, not special items for each family member.
- Don't stress if your child isn't eating enough of a healthy food. Your child will decide how much he can handle.
- If mealtimes are difficult, try introducing your child to new foods in the grocery store. It can be fun to look at all the different selections and colors. Talk about how you could prepare it.
- Don't forbid certain foods. It just makes the battle worse. Instead, limit them.
- Don't use dessert as a reward or punishment. If you choose to serve dessert, make it part of the meal.
- Don't forget to teach mealtime behavior. If your child doesn't like something, teach him or her to politely decline and not make a scene. Honor their opinion after one or two reasonable attempts to introduce new foods.

