



YOUTUBE FREEBIE

5 Sensory Tips for Picky Eaters

Picky eating can be a developmental stage that most children go through. But it can also be a challenging daily occurrence for children who struggle with sensory processing. These tips can be helpful for many children who struggle with picky eating!

1 GO SLOW & MAKE IT FUN

- Patience! Don't force. Allow for independence. Allow your child to say "no thank you." Less pressure, more EXPOSURE.
- Set and hold consistent expectations for meal time.
- Create a "no thank you" bowl and keep it at the table for meal time.
- Keep a food journal and track trying new foods at least 20 times.

2 TOUCH THE FOOD

If a child can tolerate touching a food, they are more likely to eat it in the future.

- Play with the food during play time.
- Create a fun food sensory bin.
- Kiss, lick, bite, spit - try this combination with new or non-preferred foods.
- Make more finger-foods for meals.

3 HELP MEAL PLAN, SHOP, & PREP

Bring your child into the kitchen and involve them in the process of meal planning, making a grocery list, shopping at the store, putting groceries away, cooking a meal, and cleaning up.

- Not only are they more involved with a variety of foods, but they are also working on LIFE skills!

4 ALWAYS CLEAN UP

Set the expectation that your child will always clean up their food and dishes after a meal.

- This may involve throwing food away or putting it in a container in the fridge for leftovers.
- This may include taking all dishes to the sink or the dishwasher.
- Also involve your child in helping set up before a meal.

5 MORE MESSY PLAY

Picky eating often goes right along with tactile defensiveness (there are many tactile receptors in our mouths!). Completing more messy play activities on a daily basis can help the tactile system learn to process different information.

- Shaving cream
- Mud and dirt
- Rice or beans in a sensory bin
- Think of any new tactile material that you can play with and include into the daily routine!

BONUS Ideas!

1 MODEL EATING HABITS

Monkey see, monkey do!

Children will follow your lead - if you eat certain foods, they are more likely to eat them as well.

If you want your child to eat fruits and vegetables, make sure you're eating them on a regular basis.

This takes consistency and exposure.

2 ORAL MOTOR GAMES

Be sure to include oral motor games into the play routine. This helps increase awareness of the oral structures and can often help desensitize if the child has tactile defensiveness.

- Bubble mountain
- Blowing cotton balls to a target

3 A POSITIVE MEAL TIME EXPERIENCE

Create a meal time that is positive and enjoyable for everyone.

Use fun dishes and silverware, play fun music in the background, engage in meaningful conversation.

There are a variety of "meal time" games you can snag from Amazon - some encourage new conversations while some are silly and wild.

Want more help?!

[CHECK OUT OUR SENSORY DIET DIGITAL COURSE](#)

This full length digital course teaches you all about sensory diets and how to create a personalized sensory diet for your child (and even for you!).

- What is a sensory diet?
- What are the 8 sensory systems?
- How does sensory processing affect daily life tasks (such as self-feeding)?
- How to identify sensory preferences / sensory needs.
- Sensory activity toolbox.
- And more!

Visit: harkla.co/products/sensory-diet-course