

Supporting your child to develop their eating skills

Some children find eating new foods challenging. They need our help to learn this skill!



Build your child's confidence to try new foods:

Enjoy happy and connected mealtimes together with family and friends. If your child feels relaxed, they will be more open to learning about new foods.

Make sure you don't pressure them to try anything they don't want to. Your child will learn to trust that you will support them by going at their own pace.



Explore foods by describing their colours, shapes, smells, sounds, tastes. This helps your child learn about the food and become more familiar.

“This carrot looks orange, feels hard and sounds crunchy! I wonder what it smells like?”



Incorporate your child's interests. For example, if they love cars, turn the new food into a car and drive it along the table! Or try nibbling a carrot like a bunny rabbit with sharp teeth. Does your child want to try next?



Involve your child in meal preparation. Your child may like to help you crack eggs, roll dough, add ingredients to the bowl or mix it all together with a spoon. It may help to have a teatowel nearby or let your child know they can wash their hands straight after they try touching something new.



Celebrate your child's efforts with praise or a sticker chart to mark their progress. Encourage your child for trying new things big and small including smelling, touching and tasting new foods.

Most importantly, play, have fun and share the joy of food! Play is the way kids learn best!

Remember, this handout gives you general information only. To get personalised tips for you and your child, speak to an occupational therapist. They will make it just right for you both!