

Managing fussy eating in young children: what works?

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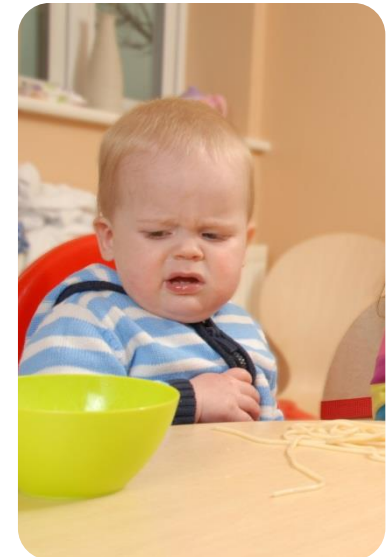




Fussy eating is very common

Children's fussy eating

- Food refusal
- Developmentally normative
- Evolutionary, protective response
 - Food 'neophobia'
- Around 50% of children are 'fussy' (Carruth et al., 2004; Dovey et al., 2008)
 - but likely much higher
- Usually transient
- Can be a cause for concern





The response to fussy eating is key

- Caregiver anxiety can exacerbate fussy eating
- Foods only offered 3-5 times (Carruth et al., 2004)
- Caregivers reported a **lack of support** for dealing with fussy eating (Witcomb, Farrow, Haycraft & Meyer, 2013)
 - Echoed by health & childcare professionals too
- Effective, credible advice and support required

What to do? What works?



Evidence Based



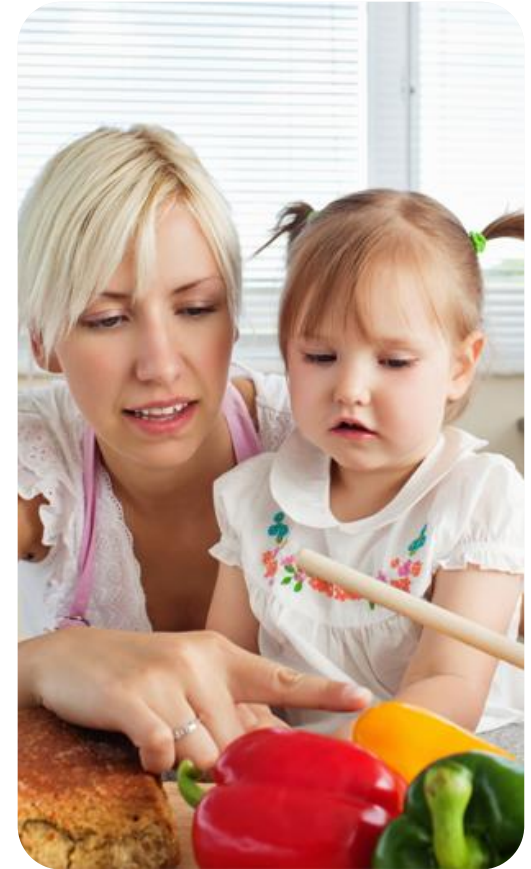
Role modelling and eating together

Draxten et al., 2014; Palfreyman et al., 2014



Parent provides, child decides (Satter, 1990)

- Autonomy development
- Availability & accessibility
- Choice



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Repeated offering



- Children need to **learn** to like tastes and textures
- Takes time: 8-14 offerings
- **Re-offering** disliked or new foods is **essential** (e.g., Holley, Haycraft & Farrow, 2015)



Not using pressure, coercion or force

- Unintended consequences
- Lower liking for pressured food (Galloway et al., 2006)
- Disrupts child's internal regulation (Orrell-Valente et al., 2007)



Covert, rather than overt, restriction

Fisher & Birch, 1999; Birch et al., 2003; Ogden et al., 2006

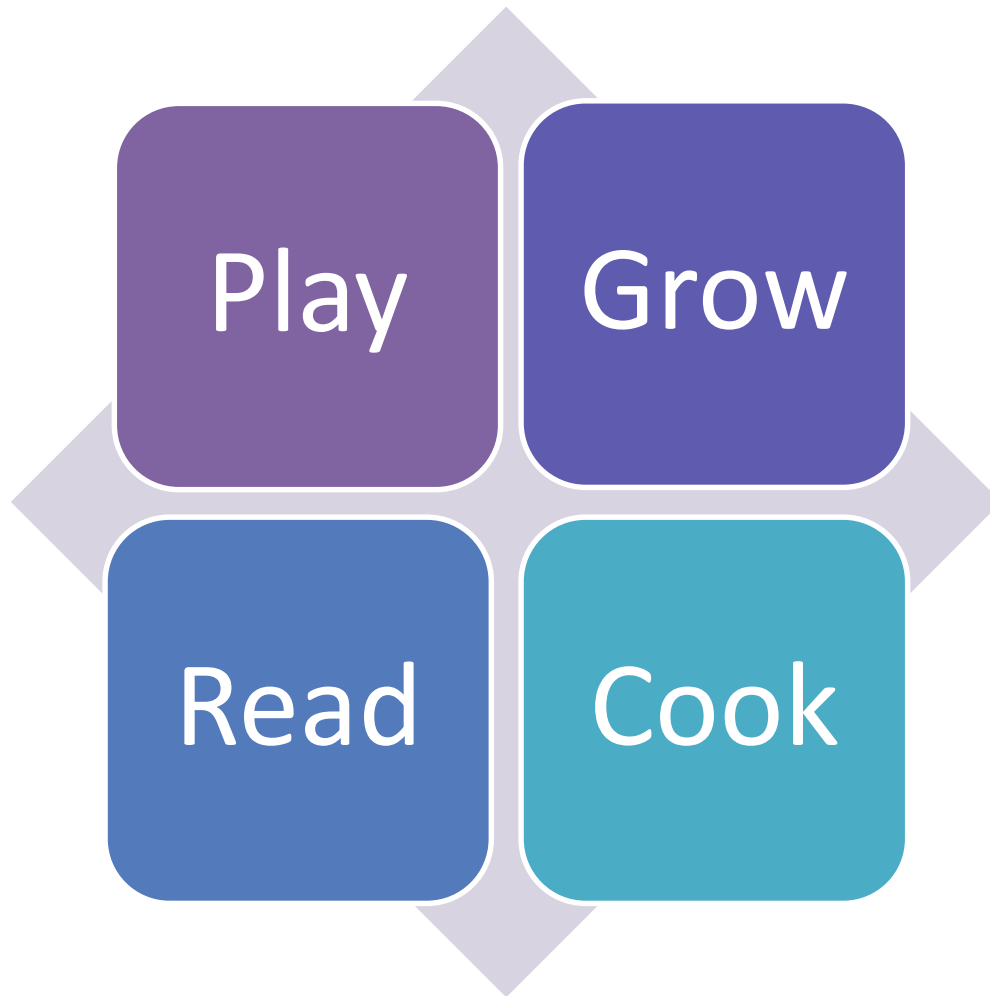


Food is a fuel, not a tool

- Not using food as a reward or in response to emotions
- Can teach children to eat in response to external, rather than internal, cues
(Blissett et al., 2010; Farrow et al., 2015)



Fun with food

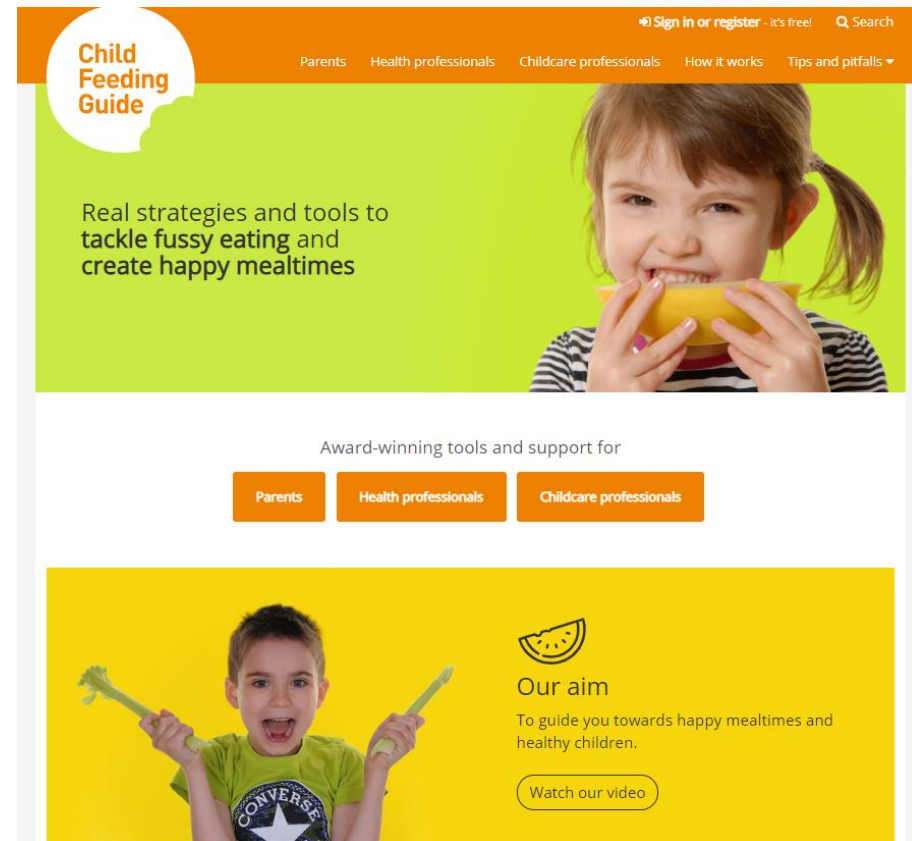


Getting these messages out there

www.childfeedingguide.co.uk

The Child Feeding Guide

- Effective, credible support and information for parents, caregivers and professionals.



[Home](#) >

Parents

Welcome to the Child Feeding Guide digital support resource.

The Child Feeding Guide contains information about the most common feeding pitfalls that you might encounter as a parent/caregiver. It also shares an array of effective tips and tools to help you to promote healthy eating in your children.

We recommend that you start by creating a profile and completing some of the initial assessments. This will help you to make the most of the information and strategies on offer so that you can bring about positive changes and happier eating habits.

If you want to learn more about what the Child Feeding Guide contains, check out the how it works section.



How it works



Profile and assessments



Common feeding pitfalls



Tips and tools

Find out what others who have used the Child Feeding Guide thought about it by reading their [testimonials](#).

[Home](#) >

Health professionals

Welcome to the Child Feeding Guide digital support resource.

The Child Feeding Guide provides information about common feeding pitfalls experienced by parents. As a health professional, you can use this information to help you to support families who might be experiencing problems.

The Child Feeding Guide also shares an array of effective tips and tools which can be used by parents to promote healthy eating in their children. You can refer to these for suggested changes and activities which families who you are working with might consider using.

The Child Feeding Guide also has an option for users to create a profile and complete some initial assessments. You might find it useful to encourage families that you work with to complete these to help you monitor progress.

In addition, our newly launched online training for health professionals is available to support you with helping the families you work with who might be experiencing problems with fussy eating or children eating a limited selection of foods. This training includes interactive activities and tests of your knowledge.

Click on each of the options below to learn more.



Common feeding
pitfalls



Tips and tools



Online training
course

Tips and pitfalls

Tips and tools

Common feeding pitfalls

Food refusal

Unhealthy food preferences

Pressure to eat

Food as a reward

Restriction

Role modelling

The most common feeding pitfalls

Below are the most common feeding difficulties reported by parents and professionals conducting research into parenting around mealtimes. In each section you will find an educational description of the behaviour, an explanation of why the behaviour is problematic, and suggestions for how to improve the behaviour.

Click on each of the feeding pitfalls to learn more.



Food refusal



Unhealthy food preferences



Pressure to eat



Food as a reward



Restriction



Role modelling

Tips and pitfalls

Tips and tools

Exposure monitor

Ways to increase fruit and vegetable intake

When, where, why and what awareness exercise

Non-food reward ideas

Common feeding pitfalls

Tools to help



Exposure monitor



Ways to increase fruit and vegetable intake

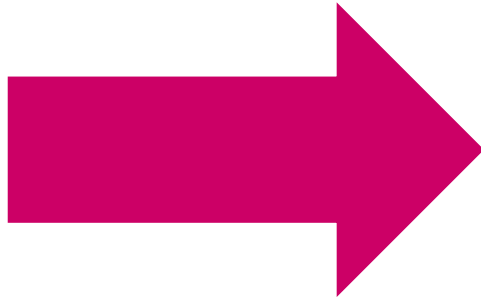


When, where, why and what awareness exercise



Non-food reward ideas

By using these strategies...



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Thank you!

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