Young Families Gamily & Cole N



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A family-focused newsletter with young children in mind

New Beginnings

Temperament and Change

How we treat children has a significant effect on how they respond to the world around them. On the other hand, children arrive in the world with a temperament, a part of their personality that originates in their genes. We cannot change a child's temperament. Instead, our challenge is to accept and come to terms with what we cannot change.

A child's temperament can have an effect on how he or she adjusts to novelty and change. Some children have a slow-towarm-up temperament. They protest and cry when their parents drop them off at the neighbors for an evening. They

drag their heels on the first day of school. They grimace when given new foods. At a friend's birthday party, they are shy and quiet. While other children glide through such challenges, slow-to-warm-up children don't like change. They prefer the security of what is familiar.

The tension slow-to-warm-up children feel when they face new circumstances is normal. There is nothing wrong with these children when they recoil from what seems strange. We can love them for who they are instead of trying to get them to be someone else.

Change is a part of growth. When slow-towarm-up children hesitate in fear, we can show confidence in their ability to handle unusual circumstances. We might anticipate problems and take extra time to prepare them for change. For example, we could take our young daughter to visit her school and classroom before classes start. We could explain to our young son about what the doctor will do when we visit her office. We could go with them on their first day at the city pool and respond patiently to their apprehension about the water. We can cheer them on and encourage them to try.

Charles A. Smith

Living in Two Households

Living in two different households at different times may be a way of life for children with divorced or separated parents. Planning the transition between homes may not always be easy if the parents do not get along. However, if both parents can accept and acknowledge that their children have two homes —one with their father and one with their mother—the children and parents will experience less stress. Here are few tips to help families in which the children have two homes:

- Help children feel safe and comfortable in both homes.
- Be as flexible as possible when scheduling between the two homes.
- Develop routines in each home to give children a sense of security.

- Discuss rules and discipline with the other parent for more consistency between the two homes.
- Communicate directly with the other parent. Making the child a messenger between parents is very hard on children. Respond to the other parent in a respectful businesslike manner if emotions are strong.
- Understand that it is important for a child to be loved by both parents and not forced into a loyalty battle between the parents. Let children enjoy each parent without feeling auilty.

Charlotte Shoup Olsen



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Picky, Picky! Tips for Coping with a Finicky Eater

- Relax. Picky eating behavior is often a perfectly normal phase at certain ages and stages in your child's development.
- Understand parent-child boundaries in regards to eating. Offer your child a varied and well-balanced diet but don't force him to eat a specified amount or produce a "clean plate." Respect your child's ability to determine when he's had enough to eat.
- Realize that it's normal for many kids to react with disgust when they see a new food. Don't give up though—kids sometimes need 10 or more exposures to a food before they will take their first bite.
- Recognize the importance of family meals. Eating together on a routine basis contributes to good nutrition, improved communication and stronger family bonds.

- Be a positive model for healthy eating and physical activity. Children learn more by watching what we do rather than what we say!
- Involve kids in food-related activities such as shopping, menu planning, cooking and gardening. Host a "kids night" once a week where the children are in charge of planning and preparing the meal. Kids are more likely to eat something that they had a hand in creating.
- Catch kids when they are hungry. After school and before bed are times when kids often have the biggest appetite.
 Make sure there are plenty of healthy snack choices available for these times.
- Prepare foods in a variety of ways.
 For instance, if your child picks at her salad every night, try serving a hot vegetable such as petite peas or green beans with blanched almonds.

- Encourage your child to drink water when thirsty. When kids fill up on sweetened beverages such as soda pop or other sweetened drinks, they can lose their appetite for more nutritious choices.
- Be sure to take your child to the pediatrician for regular growth check ups. Most often, you will be reassured to see that your picky eater is managing to get enough food to grow on. Regular checkups can also alert you to any problems before they become serious.
- For many kids, a daily children's multivitamin/mineral supplement is a good idea. Supplements are especially appropriate for children who refuse to eat entire categories of foods, such as vegetables or dairy products.

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New Foods, Your Child and You

Every parent has heard stories of children and food issues, and many parents can attest to family food struggles. It's likely that the "terrible twos" reputation of toddler time has at least a little to do with parent vs. child feeding struggles.

When it comes to introducing new foods to children, parents will benefit from the "re-" actions that are so important to successful child feeding: RElax, RE-offer a new food several times to overcome a young child's fear of all things new, and remember the Division of Responsibility in Feeding a child. Ellyn Satter, renowned child feeding specialist, developed the Division of Responsibility in Feeding, and she reminds parents that it is their job to decide when and where a meal or snack

is offered and what foods are offered. It is the child's responsibility to decide how much he wants to eat, or if she wants to eat at all.

What's the best way to help young children learn to like new foods? Enjoy a variety of foods yourself, and REpeat these surefire tips to yourself: relax at mealtime, re-offer a new food again calmly in a few days if it isn't accepted today, and remember the Division of Responsibility in Feeding. Satter sums up the importance of positive feeding experiences for children when she says "Children learn from feeding what to expect from the world. It teaches them about themselves and about other people."

Sandy Procter

Source: Satter, Ellyn: How to Get Your Kid to Eat—But Not Too Much. Bull Publishing, 1987.

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