

Toddlers like to say “No”

But they don't always mean it. Your child is learning to make decisions and learning to make food choices. Sometimes, she is just trying out “NO!” to see how you react.

Relax, be patient, and learn how to handle these eating challenges.

- Treat food jags casually. (What's a food jag? Today, your toddler will only eat bananas and cereal. Two days ago, he would only eat jelly sandwiches.) The best thing about food jags—they don't last long!
- Trust your child's appetite. Don't force him to clean his plate. He knows when he feels hungry and when he feels full.
- Think about what your child eats over several days, rather than at one meal. If your child is offered a variety of foods, he is probably eating more foods than you think.
- Avoid bribing children to eat healthy foods by rewarding them with sweet desserts.
- Serve food plain, at first. Many young children do not want their foods to “touch.” As they become more familiar with a variety of foods, they often give up this “rule.”

Learn to Eat and Enjoy Healthy Foods!

Move and Play with Your Toddler

Rolling, Kicking, Striking

- Rolling larger balls and kicking larger balls are good ways to practice these movements.
- Sit on the floor, facing your toddler. Spread your legs apart and roll a ball back and forth.
- Sit on the floor and bend your legs. Kick the ball back and forth.
- Your child can bounce a ball with two hands and catch their own ball, as they bounce it. Use an empty plastic bottle to “bat” around large, lightweight balls on the ground.

Exploring Safely

- Let your toddler explore a box containing safe items, like plastic bowls, wooden spoons, pots, pans, plastic cups. Show how to: Stir, beat, spread, pour out of, into.
- Empty a cardboard box or clothes basket or turn a chair over. Cover with a blanket.
Invite your toddler to explore with you. Crawl around, all about, over, under, in and out.

Learn, Move, and Have Fun!

