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Fussy Eating Newsletter

Food Fussiness – What is it? What does it look like?

This can mean an individual is sensitive to the smell, texture, taste, look of a food or even the temperature. For example, only sticking to particular brands of food, such as McDonalds, as the food is always the same no matter which McDonalds you go to.

Myths of food fussiness

- **You're child will 'eat when they're hungry'.**
- **They'll 'grow out of it'.**
- **Eating is the body's number 1 priority.** Breathing is. Think when you have a head cold, you'll eat less, then postural control – keeping your head safe.
- **Eating is a 2 step process.** There are 6 steps (which have sub steps) in order for your child to eat. They need to:
 - 1) Tolerate the food visually
 - 2) Interact with it (using utensils, pouring, mixing, chopping, rolling)
 - 3) Smell it
 - 4) Touch it
 - 5) Taste it
 - 6) Eat it

Skills required to eat well

Sensory Tolerance/Exploration
 Postural Stability
 Tongue Tip Lateralization
 Rotary Chewing
 Positive Mind Set

Reassurance and Strategies

- You are **NOT** the major cause of your child's feeding problems. Research shows parents causing their child's feeding problems in only 5-10% of cases. Skill deficits and physical problems are the major causes of feeding difficulties.
- On average, to get a neuro typical child to eat a new food, it is approximately 20-25 steps,
- On average a child with a feeding issue will require approximately 32 steps.
- On average a child with ASD will require 40-60 steps.
- Offer the food with no expectation for your child to eat it (they can't try or potentially eat something if it is not offered).
- Consider use of a side plate or a plate divided into sections, so that the 'trying food' doesn't touch the rest of their food.
- Involve your child with food preparation – this helps them to experience foods in a less pressuring way than meal times.
- Allow time for messy play. A child learns a lot about food by touching and playing with it. This allows children to explore and play with a purpose. It is an important part of learning to eat.
- Make food fun. Be creative and make it more inviting / appetising to eat.
- Be a good role model. This includes teaching your child to put something on a plate/bowl that they do not want, instead of throwing food.



<https://sosapproachtfeeding.com/parent-workshop-when-children-wont-eat/>

I highly recommend this **FREE** 2 hour video, explaining why children won't eat (fussy eater or problem feeder) and strategies to help (including the hierarchical steps to eating). It's amazing just how many steps are required in order for us to eat! There could be up to 40 steps