Caregiver Workshop: *Understanding Picky Eating & How to Help!*

kidztales
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7 Strategies to Try at Home!

1. Support Posture

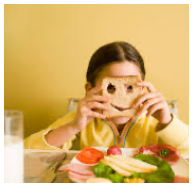


- Hips, knees, ankles at 90°
- Feet flat on floor or footrest
- Back supported in chair

2. Build a Safe Plate

- 1–2 safe foods + 1 learning food every meal
- Bite sizes matched to your child's skill level
- Aim for: 1 protein, 1 starch, 1 fruit/vegetable

3. Encourage Exploration



- Touch, tap, smell, kiss, or lick — all count!
- Offer a "no-thank-you bite" option

4. Sensory Warm-Ups Before Meals



- Wipe down the table together
- Chair push-ups or wall push-ups
- Blow bubbles
- Hand or mouth "wake-up" rubs

5. Swap Your Language

Instead of → Try this:

- **"You have to try it"** → "You can explore it with your fingers"
- **"Just one bite"** → "You can smell it or tap it first"
- **"It's not yucky"** → "You can tell me what part feels yucky"
- **"Just pick it up"** → "You can use a fork or toothpick to explore"

6. Use Social Modelling



- Involve your child in grocery shopping & prep
- Eat together and over-exaggerate your chewing
- Make food fun — talk about it neutrally at the table
- Never punish or pressure at mealtimes

7. Reduce Mealtime Stress



- Keep meals to 20–30 minutes
- Predictable, consistent routine
- Calm, low-pressure atmosphere
- Avoid grazing between meals

How Kidztales Can Help!

Comprehensive Feeding Assessment

- ✓ Medical history
- ✓ Clinical Interview
- ✓ Oral-motor Evaluation
- ✓ Sensory Processing
- ✓ Posture and Stability
- ✓ Mealtime Observation
- ✓ Summary Report

Individual Feeding Therapy Sessions

- ✓ Food exploration using SOS feeding hierarchy plan
- ✓ Building tolerance and gradual exposure to target foods
- ✓ Parent coaching and home feeding plan

NEW! Feeding Foundations Package

Includes a Comprehensive Feeding Assessment + 2 Individual Feeding Therapy Sessions!

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What is Picky Eating?

- Eats fewer than 20–30 different foods
- Avoids entire food groups or textures
- Needs food to look exactly the same every time
- Rejects food by smell, appearance, or brand
- Distressed or melts down around new foods
- Eats only crunchy or only soft foods

Sensory Processing and Eating

- Eating is a full-body sensory experience
- Sensory processing differences can make textures, smells, or temperatures feel overwhelming
- Autistic children may be over- or under-sensitive to sensory input



- New foods can feel unpredictable

Signs A Child May Be Struggling with Food

- Chews for a long time or tires while eating
- Holds food in cheeks (pocketing)
- Upset when foods touch on the plate
- Tantrums, crying, or shutting down at meals
- Mealtimes feel tense or unpredictable
- Drops foods over time without adding new ones



See a Doctor First If…

- Unsafe swallow or choking risk
- Regular vomiting or pain with eating
- Poor weight gain or weight loss
- Tube feeding or recent tube transition

When to Seek Feeding Therapy?

- Eats fewer than 20 foods
- Avoids whole textures or food groups
- Gags, vomits, or cries around new foods
- Mealtimes regularly take over 30 minutes
- Daily mealtime battles
- Growth or nutrition concerns

What Feeding Therapy Looks Like:

- ✓ Individualized assessment (sensory, oral motor skills, behaviour, regulation, etc.)
- ✓ Play-based food exploration
- ✓ Sensory regulation strategies
- ✓ Gradual, step-by-step food exposure
- ✓ Parent coaching and home feeding plan

What We Use in Feeding Therapy: The SOS Approach to Feeding

Step 1: *Tolerates*	Step 2: *Interacts*	Step 3: *Smells & Tastes*	Step 4: Eats
Child is in the same room as a new food without distress	Child touches, pokes, or plays with the food — messy play is therapeutic!	Child brings food near mouth, kisses or licks it — no pressure to swallow	Child chews and swallows after true sensory safety is built. This takes time and that is okay!

Questions? *Contact us at contact@kidztales.ca*

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