



# Early Intervention Clearinghouse

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## Handling Picky Eaters

Picky eating is a common challenge families encounter. For a variety of reasons, some children are very selective about the foods they will eat. Children may not like certain textures, colors, shapes, or flavors. Children may refuse to try new or unfamiliar foods.

Picky eating is also a common cause of worry and tension for parents and caregivers who may worry about whether young children are getting the nutrition they need to grow and thrive. The amount of food and number of servings a child needs from each food group depends on that child's age and activity level. A child who is growing well is getting enough to eat. Your child's health care provider can best answer questions about how much a child needs to eat.

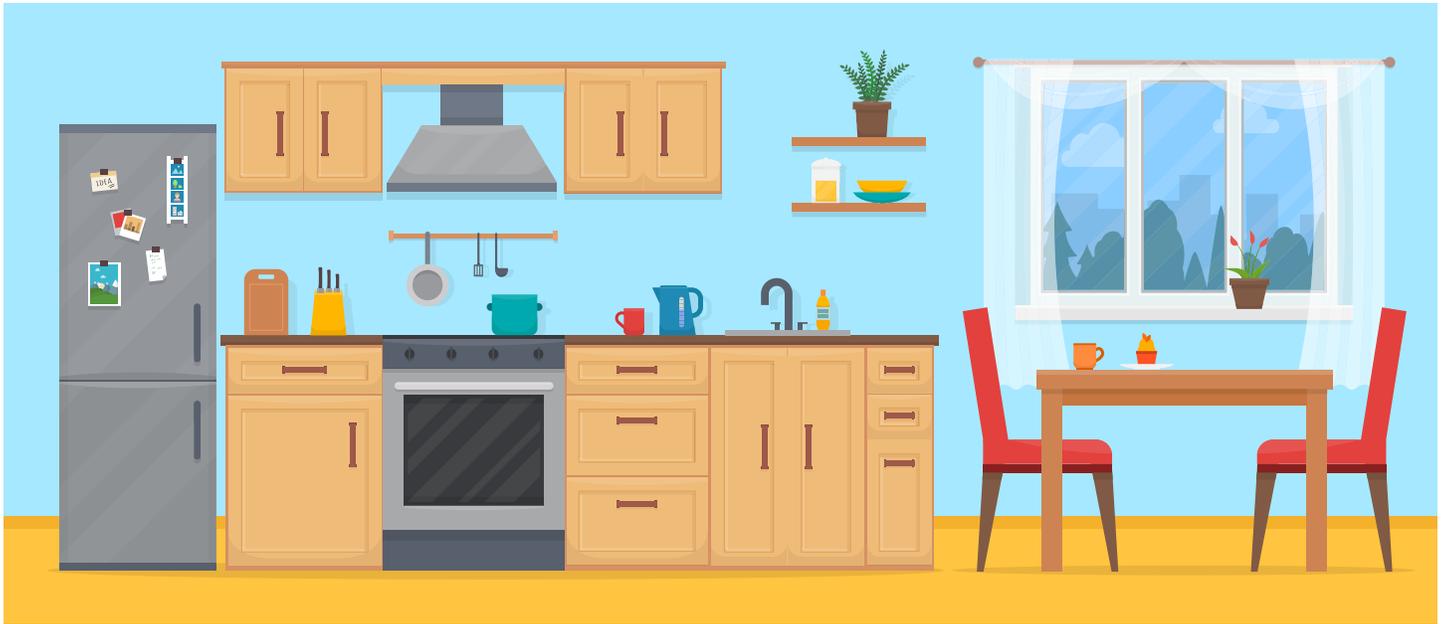
Instead of focusing on how much a child eats, author and dietician Ellyn Satter encourages parents to consider what she describes as the division of responsibility in feeding. She explains, "Parents are responsible for the what, when, and where of feeding; children are responsible for the how much and whether of eating." Using this division of responsibility can help parents focus on what they can influence about picky eating and can help children listen to their hunger cues and explore new

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# Everyday Early Intervention: In the Kitchen

Families spend a lot of time in the kitchen, which makes it a great place to work on early intervention outcomes. Help your child become involved in cooking, washing dishes, and cleanup tasks with items that are safe for infants and toddlers to handle. Here's how you can help your child learn and develop new skills during these everyday routines.



## Fine and Gross Motor Skills

Fill a low cupboard or shelf with kitchen items that are safe for your child to explore, such as plastic bowls, a whisk, wooden spoons, plastic containers, and measuring cups. Allow children to explore these items independently and practice grasping, stacking, and emptying their cupboard.

## Cognitive Skills

Practice matching pots and containers with their lids. Engage your child in sorting kitchen items such as cups, plates, and spoons. Allow your toddler to help set the table and put one spoon, cup, or napkin at each place. Ask your child to look at the table and figure out what items are missing for the meal.

## Language Skills

Pretend you are on a cooking show and describe what you are doing to your infant or toddler as you cook or clean. Introduce new vocabulary by describing the colors, textures, and shapes of the foods you cook and taste. Use words that describe the sequence of actions for a recipe.

## Social-Emotional Skills

Describe how your children are learning to feed themselves, discovering items in the kitchen, or being helpful with cooking or cleaning tasks. This builds their sense of confidence in their abilities and pride in their accomplishments.

 For more information, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at <https://eicclearinghouse.org>

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Early Intervention.



# Picky Eating and Healthy Nutrition for Young Children

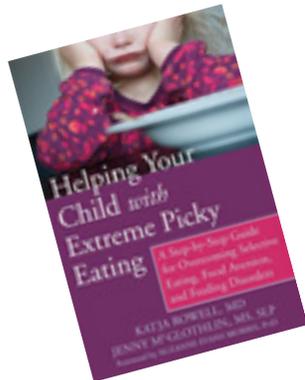
## Feed Your Baby and Toddler Right: Early Eating and Drinking Skills Encourage the Best Development

Diane Chapman Bahr  
Future Horizons, 2018  
WS 130 .B148 2018



## Helping Your Child With Extreme Picky Eating

Katja Rowell  
New Harbinger, 2015  
WS 130 .R795 2015  
Also available as an eBook

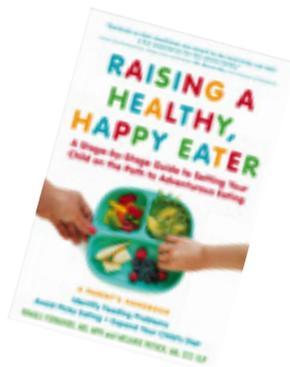


## The Pediatrician's Guide to Feeding Babies and Toddlers

Anthony Porto  
Ten Speed Press, 2016  
WS 120 .P66 2016  
Also available as an eBook

## Raising a Healthy, Happy Eater

Nimali Fernando  
The Experiment, 2015  
WS 130 .F47 2015

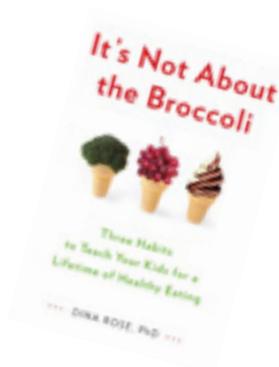


## Early Years Nutrition and Healthy Weight

Laura Steward and Joyce Thompson (Eds.)  
Wiley Blackwell, 2015  
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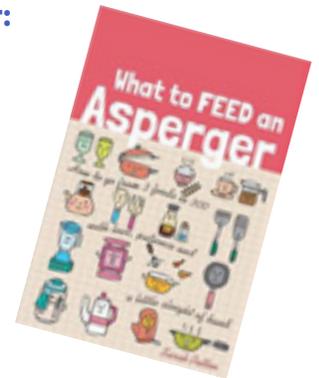
## It's Not About the Broccoli: Three Habits To Teach Your Kids for a Lifetime of Healthy Eating

Dina Rose  
Perigee, 2014  
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## What to Feed an Asperger: How to Go From Three Foods to Three Hundred With Love, Patience and a Little Sleight of Hand

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## Give Peas a Chance: The Foolproof Guide to Feeding Your Picky Toddler

Kate Samela  
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Also available as an eBook



## Nutrition: What Every Parent Needs to Know

American Academy of Pediatrics (Eds.)  
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## Baby-Led Feeding: A Natural Way to Raise Happy, Independent Eaters

Jenna Helwig  
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Also available as an eBook



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## El Nutrition Services

Nutrition services in early intervention are provided by licensed dietitians. These services can include:

1. Conducting individual assessments in nutritional history and dietary intake, feeding skills and feeding problems, and food habits and food preferences.
2. Developing and monitoring appropriate plans to address the nutritional needs of eligible children based upon individual assessment.
3. Making referrals to appropriate community resources to achieve individual planned nutrition outcomes.
4. Family training, education, and support provided to assist the family of a child eligible for EI services in understanding the special needs of the child as related to nutritional services and enhancing the child's development are integral to this service.

## The Role of Nutrition in Early Intervention

Feeding, weight gain, and diet are consistently high on parent's priority list for their infant/child and can be a source of stress when they feel unable to meet these needs on an ongoing basis. We now know that nutrition is the biggest environmental influence in an infant and young child's brain development.

Balanced nutrition with adequate iron, in particular, is essential for optimal brain growth and development in a child's formative years. Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) supplements at ages 1-3 have been found to bring consistent, positive results in cognitive and language development.

A nutrition assessment can identify needs or gaps in child's nutrition that may

be directly affecting developmental progress. Nutrition consultation can provide options and guidance to parents with nutrition information that is targeted toward their child's individual needs.

Early intervention can effectively work alongside a public health and/or a medical model of care in the home setting to adapt strategies to a family's individual culture and schedule. Nutrition services in early intervention can bring adaptations and accommodations that meet an infant or toddler's individual needs in their diet that can promote strength, attention, comfort level, and independence.

*Written with assistance from Jo Sue Stine, RN.*

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## Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse

Early Childhood Collective  
College of Education  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Children's Research Center  
51 Gerty Drive  
Champaign, IL 61820-7469  
Phone: 877-275-3227 (in Illinois)

**Principal investigator:** Meghan Burke  
**Contributors:** Sarah Isaacs, Rebecca Swartz, Jill Tompkins, & Meghan Burke

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