

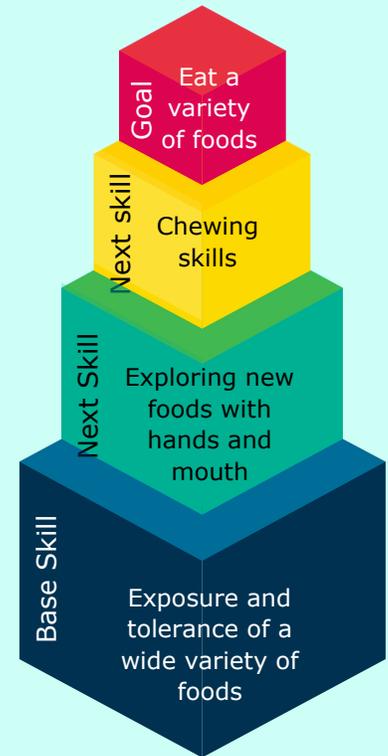


A STEP AHEAD

Feeding & Eating: The basics

"I recommend you put one tablespoon of any new foods, especially foods that the rest of the family is eating during the mealtime, on the child's plate. But don't force them to eat it. Just having it on the kid's plate is the first step to making friends with that food."

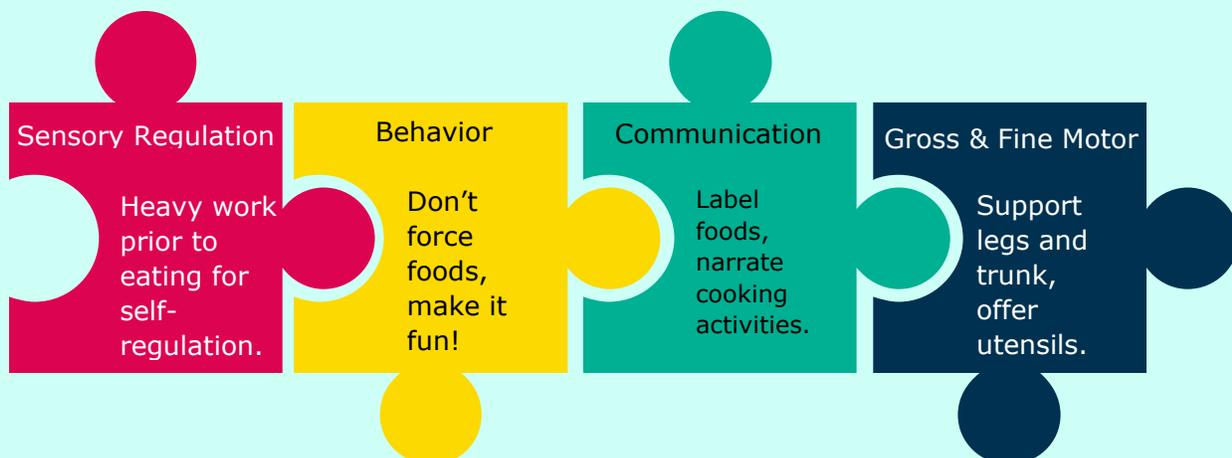
-Melanie Potock, pediatric feeding specialist and author of "Adventures in Veggieland" and "You Are Not an Otter"



Steps to Eating (Summarized from the SOS Approach to Feeding)

- 1) Tolerate: Child can be in the same room with the food. They can look at it and accept being in the presence of that food.
- 2) Interact: Child can manipulate or move the food around using an eating utensil, toy, or napkin. The food can also be in a container such as a bowl or bag, then child can move or touch the container to manipulate the food.
- 3) Smell: Child can be in presence of and accepts the food's aroma.
- 4) Touch: Child can touch use a part of their body (e.g. fingers, toes, elbow, etc.) to touch the food to their skin. The goal is to gradually get the food item/texture closer to the child's mouth.
- 5) Taste: Child can touch food to their tongue, lick off their lips or a finger.
- 6) Chew and Swallow: Child can have a small bite of the food and eat at least a small part of the bite.

~ Some foods will be more challenging than others for the child. Allow the child to go at their own pace through these steps.



Trying new and challenging foods:

- **Model actual eating.** Show your child how it's done!
- **Make a routine.** Wash hands, set the table, allow child to serve themselves, clean up.
- **Move from easy to hard.**
- **Praise any interaction with food.** This includes smelling, touching with a finger, holding the food, putting it to his/her lips, teeth or tongue, biting, chewing and eventually swallowing.
- **Have fun!** Don't hesitate to try fun, interactive strategies to help your child interact more with the food.

Troubleshooting tips:

Having extra trouble getting your child to try a new food? Try a "no thank you plate" at the dinner table. When it's time to clean up have the child put each food from the "no thank you plate" between their lips and "blow" it into the garbage! They will get a little taste and get to be silly with no pressure to eat.

References:

Study: Don't Pressure Your Picky Eater – It Doesn't Work.

<https://detroit.cbslocal.com/2018/07/30/study-dont-pressure-your-picky-eater-it-doesnt-work/>

SOS approach to feeding

<https://sosapproachtofeeding.com/>

Tips for increasing activity and strength of the tongue and lips:

- Make funny faces with exaggerated mouth and tongue movements for your child to imitate. Do it in front of the mirror to help them see their own face.
- Make sounds that add excitement to their play like big smacking kisses, blowing raspberries, saying "pop pop pop" with exaggerated sounds while playing with bubbles, saying "boom boom boom" with exaggerated sounds while pretending to play drums.
- Play a game with your faces by making your cheeks big with air and the other person press on your cheeks to push the air out.
- Eat foods by licking (ice cream cones, popsicles) or sucking (thick milk shakes or fruit smoothies, lollipops (while sitting for safety)).

Information derived from SOS Approach to Eating By Kay Toomey, Star Institute

Handout produced by Evonne Ryken, OTR/L
2020

Resources:

Nutrition Guide for Toddlers

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/toddler-food.html>

Stress Free Cooking with Toddlers

<https://yourkidstable.com/cooking-with-toddlers/>

Recipe: No Bake Apple Donuts

<https://www.forkandbeans.com/2017/07/31/no-bake-apple-donuts/>