

# MEALTIME ISSUES

TIPS AND GUIDANCE TO HELP PARENTS TO OVERCOME BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES AT MEALTIMES.

## MEALTIME PROBLEMS

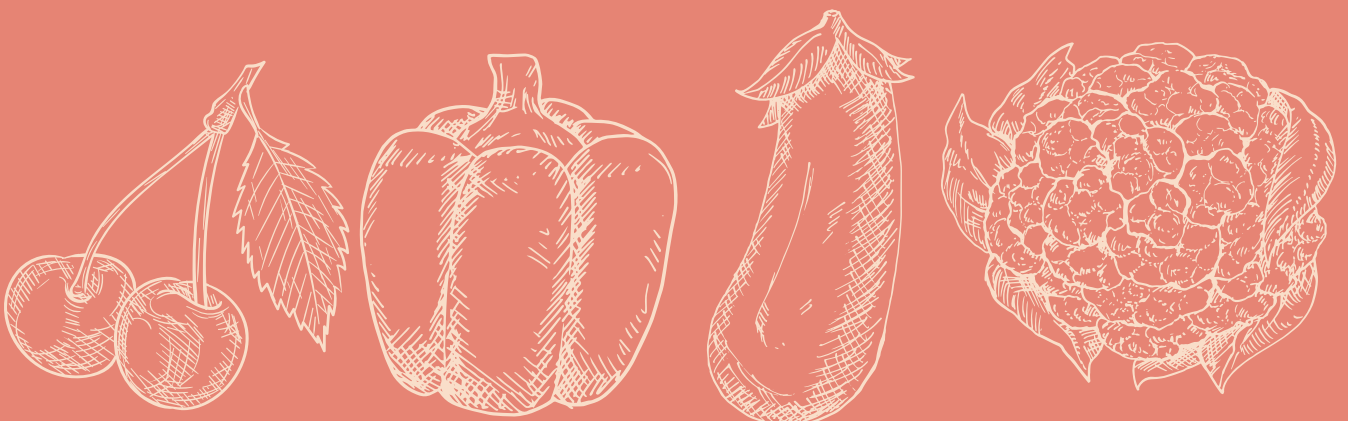
MEALTIME PROBLEMS ARE OFTEN AN ISSUE OF CONTROL. OFFER YOUR CHILD TWO CHOICES OF WHAT TO EAT AT MEALTIMES SO THEY FEEL THEY HAVE SOME CONTROL OVER WHAT THEY EAT. IF YOUR CHILD THEN DECIDES THEY DON'T WANT TO EAT WHAT THEY HAVE CHOSEN, DON'T GIVE THEM SOMETHING ELSE AS THEY WILL LEARN IF THEY FUSS ENOUGH OR SHOUT LOUDLY THEY WILL GET WHAT THEY WANT.

## Some Mealtime Tips:

Try not to shout at your child or fuss over them if they don't eat. Children like attention and if they learn not eating will get attention they will continue to not eat. Even shouting is attention for a child.

Praise other children that eat well in the presence of your child, even praise other adults that are there. Children want praise and if they see others getting praise for eating it may encourage them to do the same.

Don't give your child lots of different foods at each meal to try and get them to eat something. This will only create more work for you and allows your child to control you. Tell them if they are hungry, they eat what they are given or go without. Young children rarely know how to starve themselves and will soon learn that if they are hungry, they need to eat what is given to them.





## Further Tips and Tricks to Make Mealtimes Easy...

If you are sure your child dislikes something, don't force them to eat it as they will become distressed and afraid of mealtimes. You can still give them some of that food on their plate in case they change their mind.

Introduce new foods regularly and try and get them to try some before they tell you they don't like it. Be especially careful with vegetables as children often claim not to like them without even trying. If you introduce new foods and include vegetables regularly children are more likely to eat them.

by 1 year, your child will be able to start feeding themselves with your help, especially with finger foods. Most children should be able to feed themselves by age 3. If your child is over this age and you are still feeding them they are probably able to feed themselves but have discovered this as a way to control the situation.

The biggest part of encouraging a child to eat is to let them know when they get it right. If they eat a new food, eat well or try something they don't like then praise them. If they sit well at the table praise them for this too. This will encourage them to do it more.

*Try to eat with your child, this reassures them that it is ok to eat and they like to spend time with you.*

