

MAINTAIN A DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Most minor difficulties with eating can be resolved—or prevented—if parents do the *feeding* and let children do the *eating*.

For the Infant

- The parent is responsible for *what*
- The child is responsible for *how much* (and everything else)
- The parent helps the infant to be calm and organized and feeds smoothly, paying attention to messages coming from him or her about time, tempo, frequency and amounts.

For Toddlers and Older Children

- The parent is responsible for *what, when* and *where*
- The child is responsible for *how much* and *whether*

Here are the jobs parents need to do with feeding:

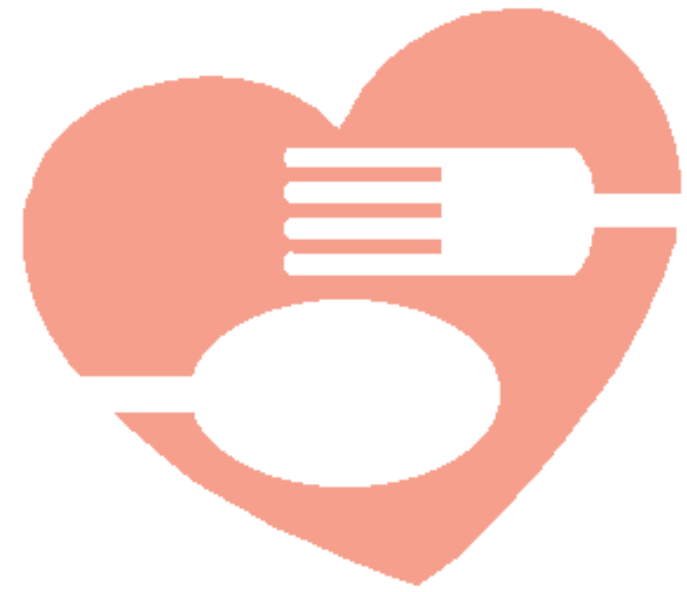
- Choose and prepare the food
- Provide regular meals and snacks
- Make eating times pleasant
- Show children what they have to learn about food and mealtime behavior
- Not let children graze for food or beverages between times

If parents do their jobs with feeding, children do their jobs with eating:

- Children will eat
- They will eat the amount they need
- They will eat an increasing variety of food
- They will grow predictably
- They will learn to behave well at the table

For more about feeding, see
www.ellynsatter.com

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SOLVING FEEDING PROBLEMS WITH INFANTS AND CHILDREN

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Ellyn Satter, registered dietitian, psychotherapist and author, is a widely recognized and respected authority on eating and feeding. Satter has helped many parents solve their children's eating problems.

SOME CHILDREN HAVE PROBLEMS

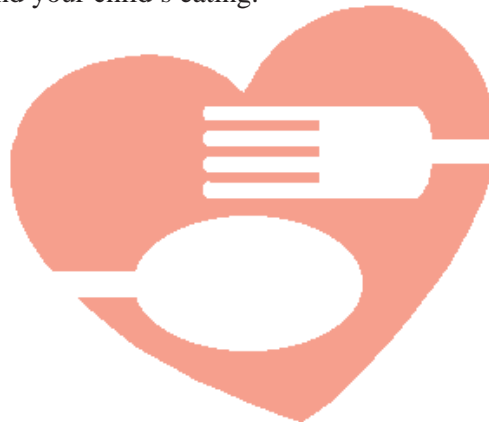
Many of children's feeding "problems" are simply normal child behavior or represent a stage in development. For instance, children are generally inconsistent about eating, and too-young infants generally don't do well with solid foods. However, some eating problems go beyond normal behavior and persist despite repeated attempts to solve them. These problems might include:

- Eating too much
- Eating too little
- Growing too fast
- Growing too slowly
- Getting stuck on the breast or bottle or on semi-solid food
- Eating only a few foods, over and over
- Refusing to eat anything at all
- Behaving badly and spoiling family mealtimes
- Consistently demanding special foods
- Being anxious, upset or defiant about eating
- Parents dread mealtimes and the struggles that erupt around feeding
- Everybody feels bad about food and eating

WHAT CAUSES FEEDING PROBLEMS?

It's normal for children to eat and grow normally. If your child does not, the question to ask is, "what is interfering?" Here are some possibilities:

- You are having trouble doing your feeding jobs and trusting your child to do his or hers.
- You misinterpret normal eating behavior. Children are inconsistent about what and how much they eat and take a long time to learn to like new foods.
- Your child's growth is at the normal extremes. Parents worry when children are exceptionally small or exceptionally large, although in most cases they are growing normally.
- Your child had or has a medical issue that complicated eating and growth early on and that continues to cause trouble.
- Your child has a challenging temperament that makes it hard to get on the same wave length with feeding.
- You and your child had trouble negotiating particular stages in development.
- Your child's sleep patterns or other behavior problems cause trouble with eating.
- Your child has special nutritional needs.
- Your child doesn't do well with the foods you eat.
- Family stress has interfered with your feeding and your child's eating.



ELLYN SATTER CAN HELP

Before you can fix the problem, you have to know the cause. Here's what Satter recommends:

- Discuss the problem with your health care provider to rule out medical issues.
- Ask for a referral to the dietitian to evaluate nutrition, food selection and feeding.
- Read one or more of Ellyn Satter's books:
 - Child of Mine; Feeding with Love and Good Sense* (Bull Publishing, 2000) helps parents observe and understand their child and translate that into good feeding: Birth to age 5 years.
 - Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family* (Kelcy Press, 1999) teaches fast, efficient, delicious, nutritious food management for the "thinking cook" and adapts meals for children.
 - How to Get Your Kid to Eat...But Not Too Much* (Bull Publishing, 1987) details solving feeding problems from birth through adolescence.
- Based on your consultations, reading and this brochure, review the problem. Are you getting the help you need?
- If the current solutions don't work, call Ellyn Satter at Ellyn Satter Associates (608-271-7976) to discuss an eating/growth evaluation. There is no obligation, and Ms. Satter will briefly review the problem with you and send you written information about the evaluation.

The eating/growth evaluation includes:

- Review of medical records from birth, including detailed assessment of growth patterns.
- Computer analysis of 7 days' food intake.
- Videotaped observation of several family meals.
- Two or more in-office interviews to assess child development and family dynamics.

For more detail about Ellyn Satter's recommendations, books and teaching materials, see www.ellynsatter.com