The Not-Yet Tasting Trail

You don't have to eat it. You can get to know it.

You can always say "Not yet" or "I don't like it."



1 Look

Let it sit on your plate and say hello



2 Sniff

What does it smell like?



3 Touch

Is it soft, bumpy or smooth?



4 Kiss

A little kiss, if you want

How was it? Pick a face.



Yum | OK | Not yet | I don't like it

7 Chew & Choose

What do you think? Every answer is a good one.



6 Tiny Taste

As small as a Dust Bunny



5 Lick

Just the tip of your tongue



Feeling wobbly?
Smell the flower...
blow the cloud.

Pick any step. Stop any time.
The napkin's always there.

For grown-ups: a small amount, next to a food they like · they choose the steps · praise exploring, not eating

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A little place for big feelings.

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How the Not-Yet Plate works

Picky eating is a very common, normal stage, especially between about 2 and 6. The aim isn't a clean plate. It's calm, curious meetings with food, again and again.

Quick start

1 One new food, a small amount

Next to foods they already like, in the star corner or its own little dish.

2 You choose what's served

When and where too. Your child chooses which steps to try, and how much to eat.

3 No pressure, no bribes

No "just one bite." Treats aren't a prize for eating vegetables.

4 Eat together, and enjoy it

Little ones copy what they see, just like Echo. Let them see you enjoying the food.



5 Offer it again another day

New foods can take many relaxed tries, sometimes 10 or more. Every child is different.

Try saying...

INSTEAD OF	TRY
"Just one bite."	"You don't have to eat it. You can get to know it."
"Clean your plate."	"Listen to your tummy. Is it full?"
"Eat your veggies, then you can have dessert."	"Treats aren't a prize. It just comes with dinner tonight."
"But you love carrots!"	"You can say 'not yet' or 'I don't like it.' Both are fine."
"Yuck? Don't be silly."	"It's new, isn't it? What do you notice about it?"
"Well done, you ate it all!"	"You had a really good look at that. Great exploring!"

Preparing food safely

Prepare food to suit your child's age and chewing skills.
For younger children, cook or grate hard foods like carrot and apple. Cut small round foods, like grapes and cherry tomatoes, lengthwise into quarters. Always have children sit down to eat, with a grown-up nearby.

The Not-Yet napkin

Keep a napkin by the plate. Taking food back out of the mouth is allowed.

Say so before any tasting: "You can take it out into your napkin if you want." Knowing there's a way out makes trying feel safe.



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Why new foods can feel hard

Refusing new food isn't misbehaving. For lots of children, unfamiliar food genuinely feels uncomfortable, for many different reasons.

Smell

Strong smells, like broccoli or fish, can feel overwhelming up close.

Texture

Lumps, bits, slime or mixed textures can be hard, even when the taste is fine.

Taste

Many children are more sensitive to bitter flavors, found in lots of green vegetables.

How it looks

A new color, a sauce, or foods touching can be enough to say no.

Past experiences

Gagging, feeling sick, or being pushed to eat can make a food feel unsafe.

Timing

Tired, over-hungry, unwell or rushed children find new foods much harder.

Notice which of these fits your child. It helps you choose which steps to offer.

Ideas to try over the next two weeks

- ○ Pick one or two "visiting foods" and offer them a few times, in tiny amounts.
- ○ Pin the Tasting Trail on the fridge and talk about the steps.
- ○ Choose a new fruit or vegetable together at the store, just to look at.
- ○ Use the Passport to record what they noticed or chose, if they want.
- ○ Read Pipin and the Not-Yet Plate together, away from mealtimes.
- ○ Let them help: washing, tearing, stirring, sprinkling.
- ○ Play with food away from meals: try the Make-a-Creature Plate.
- ○ Keep meals short and calm: at the table, screens off, no rush.



There's no target and no schedule. A week where your child only looks at a food is still a good week.

When to ask for help

Picky eating is common and usually eases with time, but some children need extra support. Speak to your pediatrician if your child:

- is losing weight, not growing as expected, or you're worried about their growth
- often gags, chokes or coughs when eating, or has difficulty chewing or swallowing
- eats a very small range of foods, or the range keeps getting smaller
- has stopped eating whole food groups, like all fruit and vegetables
- becomes very distressed, anxious or panicky around food or mealtimes
- seems unwell, very tired, or is often constipated

Trust your instincts. If you're worried about your child's eating, it's always OK to ask. You don't need to wait until things feel serious.

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My Food Explorer Passport

This passport belongs to _____

Write or draw a food. Color a circle, or add a sticker, for what you chose today, if you want. Stopping counts too!

Food: _____

○ Looked ○ Sniffed ○ Touched ○ Kissed
○ Licked ○ Tasted ○ Stopped

I think it's: ○ Yum ○ OK ○ Not yet

○ I don't like it

Food: _____

○ Looked ○ Sniffed ○ Touched ○ Kissed
○ Licked ○ Tasted ○ Stopped

I think it's: ○ Yum ○ OK ○ Not yet

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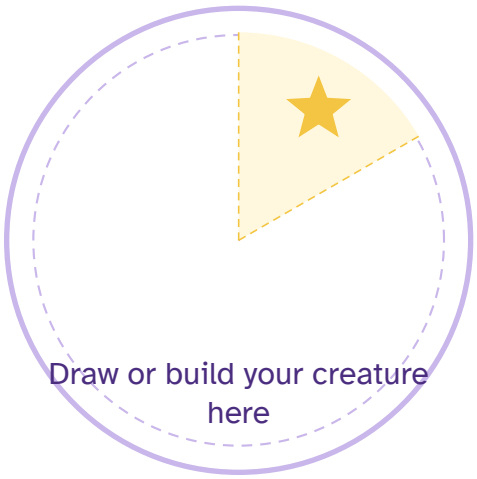



Make-a-Creature Plate

Away from mealtimes, playing with food is allowed! Can you make a Collyvale creature?

- Grated cheese for fluffy fur
- Cucumber or apple slices for big ears
- Peas or blueberries for eyes
- A cooked carrot stick for a smile

The star corner is for a food that's just visiting.

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