

A Newsletter for Parents

Summer 2025



The Parent Line

Conquering the Food Battle with your Toddler

For a toddler, so many things are changing such as learning how to communicate, discovering things independently, and even their appetite. They are learning what foods and textures they like and what they don't. Each toddler's appetite is different, and even their favorite foods may change daily. Although this time may be frustrating, this is normal toddler behavior. In time, your child's appetite and eating habits will level out, but for now you can follow these tips to create a healthy relationship for your toddler's food choices and habits:

- **Respect your toddler's appetite - or lack of one.** If they refuse a meal, don't give attention to it. It is important for them to understand their own hunger cues. The responsibility to provide food is for the parent, and it is the child's decision to eat it. By pressuring children to eat meals or punishing them when they don't, may cause them to dislike foods they really like.
- **Be patient with new foods and offer variety.** Just because your toddler refused it once, doesn't mean you should give up. Your child may need repeated exposure before their taste buds accept it.
- **Set a good example.** You want your child to create a positive and healthy relationship with food, so do your best to guide them on a path toward healthy eating.



- **Stick to a routine and share a meal together as a family, when possible.** Use this time to model healthy eating habits such as having no media distractions (TV, cell phones, etc.) and serving one balanced meal for the whole family.
- **Make food FUN.** Create themed meals to learn about different cultures or get creative by arranging them in fun and colorful shapes.
- **Let them be Tiny Chefs.** Some cooking tasks (with lots of supervision and patience) are perfect for toddlers such as mashing, stirring, or counting measurements. By knowing that they helped prepare the meal, it may motivate them to try what they made.

Lastly, if you are concerned about your toddler's diet, speak with their pediatrician who can help ensure that your child is getting all the important nutrients to grow and develop.

Source: [10 Tips for Parents of Picky Eaters - HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/healthykids/eating/10-Tips-for-Parents-of-Picky-Eaters)

If you have any questions regarding this topic or any other parenting topic, please call the Parent Line at 808-526-1222 or 1-800-816-1222.

Suggested Readings

Wake up, Mermaids!
By: Tammy Yee



The Pie That Molly Grew
By: Sue Heavenrich

A Wild Windy Night
By: Yui Abe

Compiled by the staff of the Edna Allyn Room for Children at the Hawai'i State Library. Mahalo!

Resource Directory for Parents of Young Children

The Resource Directory for Parents of Young Children provides contact information of different community organizations/programs regarding concerns such as crisis services, parent education, child care, and much more.



GET YOUR DIRECTORY NOW

You can also download the Resource Directory for Parents of Young Children at www.theparentline.org

For more information, please contact us at 808-526-1222.

Spotlight on Safety

Keeping our Keiki Hydrated

Water plays an important role in keeping us happy and healthy, so ensure that your children get an adequate amount of liquids this summer by helping them develop good hydration habits that'll last a lifetime.

- Be a good role model – get in the habit of drinking water regularly and make water readily available by having special bottles or cups for the family.
- Help your family choose water – try to avoid drinks that contain caffeine and lots of sugar. Caffeine can contribute to dehydration.
- Make it fun – infuse your water with lemons, berries or mint for some added flavor or freeze fruit inside ice cubes that young children can help fill the trays with.
- Stay hydrated with food – include high water content foods such as fruits and vegetables (like watermelon, zucchini, and strawberries) in your meal planning.



Source: HealthyChildren.org



A Parent Asks...

Q: How can I handle grocery shopping with my three-year-old son?

A: Shopping trips can be stressful with young children; however, they can be great

opportunities for learning and bonding. The key is to plan your trip and set the expectations and boundaries before you even leave your house. Let your child know where you are going and what you are looking for. Shopping can be easier for children when they understand what will happen; preparation is one way to prevent behaviors. Once you are at the store, let your child “help” you so they are involved like pushing the cart, looking for an item, or even helping to scan the groceries. During this time, you can also reinforce basic concepts like colors, numbers, shapes, and problem solving.

Keiki Food Critic Activity

Whether you are picking new food items at the grocery store or eating out at a new restaurant, you and your child can become food critics together with this fun food activity.

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Pencil and/or Crayons
- Food item or Meal

Keiki Food Critic Activity	
MY PLATE 	Rating: _____
	Visual Appeal _____
	Smell _____
	Taste _____
Texture _____	TOTAL: _____

Directions:

1. Create a template to rate your new food item or meal. First, fold the paper in half, then open it. On one half, draw a circle. This will be the plate where you can draw the food item or meal.
2. Next, on the other half of the paper create a rating based on visual appeal, smell, taste, and texture using a scale from 1 through 5, where 5 is the best. Have a total score section at the bottom.
3. Lastly, have you and your child taste the food item or meal, then use the template that you created to become food critics and rate your food! Enjoy!

Source: USDA Food and Nutrition Service | Food and Nutrition Service

Special Days to Remember

June is National Dairy Month

6/11/25 – King Kamehameha Day

6/15/25 – Father's Day

6/19/25 – Juneteenth

July is National Picnic Month

7/4/25 – Independence Day

7/27/25 – Parents' Day

August is National Sandwich Month

8/15/25 – Hawaii Admission Day

8/9/25 – National Potato Day

