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YOUR CHILD'S FOOD LIKES AND DISLIKES



*Lesson Material on Care of
the Preschool Child
No. 5*



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YOUR CHILD'S FOOD LIKES AND DISLIKES

What makes us dislike a food?

Every time we do something that is new, go to a new place, see something new, or taste a new kind of food we have a feeling of pleasure or discomfort. If we find pleasure in doing this new thing, we wish to repeat it, until we get a habit of enjoying it, and we say that we "like" it. If our first feeling is one of slight displeasure or discomfort, this will grow just as a feeling of pleasure grows, unless some one helps by pointing out the nice things about it or by keeping us interested or happy while we try the new thing again.

All foods that are good for children give a feeling of pleasure if the child is hungry. But pleasure may be changed to dislike. Have you ever liked something "just a little" and had some one else spoil your pleasure in it? A child's pleasure in a new-food can be spoiled by hearing a person he loves or admires say that he does not like it. It may be spoiled if he is forced to take a large amount at first or to eat it when he is cross or not hungry.

Are you making your child's dislikes stronger?

Many mothers worry for fear their children will not eat enough, and they keep urging the children to eat a little more of this or of that. A great many mothers do this without realizing it. (One mother who insisted that she never urged her little boy was observed to speak to him about his food thirty-five times during his dinner time.) Most of us like to be the center of attention; would you blame a child for persisting in disliking a food if that made his mother pay more attention to him?

Should you force your child to take a food he dislikes?

You should make every effort to have your child take the right foods willingly and happily, so that he will be healthy and will develop as he should. But there is a difference between angrily punishing him because he refuses to drink his milk and firmly insisting that the milk must be taken before he receives some food that he likes better. Forcing a child arouses his antagonism and increases his dislike.

Do foods that children dislike disagree with them?

Our likes and dislikes usually have no relation to the food's real importance or its digestibility. A few children are unable to digest all the kinds of food recommended for children of their age. Children 2

to 6 years old need milk, green and other vegetables, whole-grain cereals, and fresh fruits; they need also some eggs, meat, and butter. If your child seems really unable to take a certain food known to be suitable for a child of his age or seems eager to have too much of a certain food, you should talk about this to your physician and get his advice. A temper fit may have upset a child's digestion, but the blame should not be placed on the food.

Have you trained your child to like simple flavors?

The foods people like best are those to which they become accustomed when they are young. Every nationality likes its own food cooked in its own way. Your children will learn to like the foods that you select for them, and it is your responsibility to see that they learn to like the right foods, not the wrong ones. Never offer a child food that he should not have nor let him have it even "just once." You surely do not wish to make it hard for him to like the right foods.

Problems.

1. What do you think of the following suggestions for overcoming dislike for a food?

(a) Serve it in a little different form or in some dish or cup that will please the child.

(b) After he has eaten a little do not urge him to take more.

(c) When he accepts the food but has no enthusiasm for it, explain that a certain amount must be taken before a better-liked food can be had.

(d) Be sure that his refusal to take a food is not due to its being wrongly cooked or too hot or to having its flavor spoiled by burning.

(e) Make a list of the foods that all the members of the family dislike and see whether their attitude may be influencing your child.

(f) Make a list of the foods your child dislikes and try to find out the reasons.

(g) Hang a card on the wall with the name of each child in the family at the top, and below each name make a mark every time anyone fusses about his food. Something that is particularly liked might be served as a reward for the child who fussed least during a given period.

2. What do you think of the following suggestions in regard to giving a new food?

(a) Do not give the new food very often the first week or so.

(b) If you yourself dislike the new food, do not let your child know this.

(c) Do not offer the new food to him after he has had the edge taken off his hunger by eating food to which he is already accustomed.

(d) When he starts to eat the new food, talk about something else so that he will not be considering whether he likes the food or not.

3. Check the attached list of foods for children and compare with a dietary recommended for children of about the age of your child.

References.

Child Care—The Preschool Age, pages 11–30. United States Children's Bureau Publication No. 30. Washington, 1925.

Child Management, pages 6–9. United States Children's Bureau Publication No. 143. Washington, 1925.

CHECK LIST OF FOODS FOR CHILDREN (FOR PROBLEM 3)

How often and in what amount should a child 2 to 6 years old have the following foods? Put a check after the answer that you think is best.

<p>Milk:</p> <p>Less than 1 pint daily. 1 pint daily. 1½ pints daily. 1 quart daily.</p> <p>Eggs:</p> <p>Used occasionally. One egg daily. One egg every other day in place of meat. When they are cheap.</p>	<p>Meat:</p> <p>More than one daily. Once daily. About three times a week.</p> <p>Potatoes:</p> <p>Twice daily. Once daily. About three times a week.</p> <p>Other vegetables:</p> <p>Occasionally. Once daily. Twice daily. About three times a week.</p>
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What vegetables are best for children? (Put a check after the one you think best.)

<p>Lettuce. String beans. Cabbage. Spinach. Greens.</p>	<p>Asparagus. Cauliflower. Tomatoes. Carrots. Beets.</p>	<p>Turnips. Onions. Peas. Dried beans.</p>
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Fruit:

- A. Fresh fruits when they are available—
Occasionally when they are cheap.
Once daily.
Twice daily if possible.
- B. Dried or canned fruits when fresh fruits are expensive—
Three or four times a week in place of fresh fruits.
Once daily.
Occasionally.

(Preserves are to be classed as sweets, not as fruits.)

Butter:

- Regularly on bread and vegetables.
Only occasionally.
Very little.

Sugar, sweets, and candy (not including fresh fruits):

- Simple desserts several times a week (in place of fruit).
Some sweet thing at every meal.
Some sweet thing at two meals.
Some sweet thing at one meal.
Candy occasionally between meals.
Candy never given.
Candy every day.

Cereals:

- A hot whole-grain cereal, such as oatmeal, cracked wheat, or corn-meal mush, once or twice a day.
Hot cereal for breakfast about twice a week.
Cold cereals used quite often.

