

Child's Remarks or Actions

Your Words or Actions that Hinder

Your Words or Actions that Help



"Yuk, I don't like it."
"I won't eat it."

- It's good; you'll like it.
- It will make you big and strong.
- You have to take a bite.
- I made it and you are going to eat it.
- I spent a lot of time making it and you make me feel bad when you say that.
- If you won't eat it, what else would you like?
- I'll make you something else.

- You don't have to eat it, but you do need to be polite about turning it down.
- If you don't want it, just say "no, thank you."
- There are other foods on the table. You can eat some of those if you don't feel like trying this.
- Just sit with us for a little bit while we eat.



Child is whining and/or crying and belligerent..

- Leave the table and come back when you are ready to eat.

- You are whining – "now stop" and then ignore him.
- If he doesn't stop, dismiss him from the table. Do NOT let him come back.



Child is a picky eater.

- Make a separate meal or offer something she generally eats, such as cereal.

- Always offer one or two items at meals or snacks that child generally eats and let her eat those foods until she is full.
- Teach the child how to be polite about refusing food and let the child down when finished eating.



Child tries new food but spits it out.

- Swallow that; don't spit it out.

- Say "You don't have to swallow it if you don't want to."
- Teach the child how to politely remove the food from his mouth by putting a napkin close to his mouth and spitting the food into it.



Child eats too much.

- You've had too much – that's all for now.

- We are putting food on the table for everyone to eat and enjoy. When we have dessert, you can eat it whenever you want it—before, during or after the meal. But you cannot have seconds on dessert. The same rule applies to everyone at the table.



Child tries a new food.

- You are so good.
- I'm so proud of you.

- I see you tried it.

For more about the division of responsibility, see Elyn Satter's *Feeding with Love and Good Sense: 18 months through 6 years*. Kelcy Press, 2014. See www.ElynSatterInstitute.org to review other resources.

©2014 by Elyn Satter. You may reproduce this article if you don't charge for it or change the content and if you include the "for more about" and "copyright" statements. Please email notifications@ellynsatterinstitute.org about how and where you use it (include a link if applicable).

Funded by the PA Department of Public Welfare (DPW) through the PA Nutrition Education TRACKS, as part of USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). To find out how SNAP can help you buy healthy foods, contact DPW's toll-free Helpline at 800-692-7462. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.