



# Picky Eaters Family Programme



## MOVE MORE INVITES YOU TO JOIN OUR FUSSY EATER FAMILY PROGRAMME!



<https://youtu.be/GCabp8LA060>

You prepare nutritious meals for your family only to be met with “Yuk! I won’t eat that!” attitude. Your children refuse to eat anything that’s not “beige” or doesn’t start with a letter “P” - pasta and pizza. Sometimes they even refuse to sit at the table or use knife and fork. For the peace in the house and your own sanity, you give up and just serve what they want, where and when they want it. Or, if you are more stubborn, you keep nagging and bribing for them to eat just one more bite. Does this sound familiar? Are mealtimes a challenge in your household? Would you describe your child as a “picky” or “fussy” eater? If yes, this programme is for you.

It has been created to help you understand why children can be “picky” when it comes to food and to empower you with tools to help them have a good relationship with food in the long run. Because it is worth remembering that bigger picture: when children grow up most of us want them to have good eating habits and enjoy food. But not many of us realise that not every parenting approach will help our children get there. So, during the next 6 weeks we will be sharing an equal number of facts and practical ideas to help you empower your children to improve their relationship with food and eating.

### To do that, you need to:

- Read each installment of the programme;
- Reflect where you are at with regards to topics discussed;
- Use the tools suggested in a way that fits your family and your life;
- Take part in the programme and share your results!
- Join our closed Facebook page for more ideas, tips and ongoing support;
- Share your thoughts/progress/feedback with us via email ([marijana@move-more.org](mailto:marijana@move-more.org)) and/or via social media (Facebook page)

At the end of the process, all the families that take part in the programme and share their activities with us will be put into the prize draw – the winners will be announced at the end of the programme.

We can’t wait to hear and see how you are getting on! Good luck!

All weeks reserources can be found below:

<https://bit.ly/MM-Picky-Eaters>





## What you need to know to understand picky eating – **interesting fact No4: Could it be medical?**

Although this is not a medical advice, it is worth drawing attention to some potential medical causes for fussy eating. Many parents worry that fussy eating will cause vitamin and nutrient deficiency in their children, but it is less known that fussy eating can be caused by low nutrient levels. There are some nutrients that can cause fussy eating behaviours if we aren't getting enough of them. For example, zinc deficiency (zinc is very important for growth, development and repair of the body, as well as essential for producing stomach acid) can cause appetite to be reduced and eventually fussy eating.

Digestive issues can also cause fussy eating as painful tummies are less likely to be hungry. There are many causes of digestive issues, so it is always best to speak with your GP. However, digestive issues are often linked to the quality of gut microbiome which is affected by what we eat on regular basis, thus creating a vicious cycle. The most common reasons why your child's gut microbiome might be disturbed include antibiotics use, stress, the use of hand sanitisers and antibacterial cleaning products, as well as a diet high in sugar, pesticides and ultra-processed food. These factors kill good bacteria and allow the bad to overgrow leading to cravings for sugary and starchy foods, constipation and bloating. All of these are linked to fussy eating.



**If you are at all worried, please speak with your GP. They will be able to advice you further on potential medical reasons behind fussy eating.**

## The Family Mealtime Makeover Principle 4: **BEWARE OF LABELLING**

The fourth step to encouraging your children to be less picky is to follow this simple principle: **"Beware of labelling"**.

This principle is about noticing our own actions and the impact they can have on children. When we label children with anything, either positive or negative, this can turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Children internalise our words and behave to live up to our labels/expectations. So if we call a child a fussy eater, they might get a message "No one is expecting me to eat this. I am a fussy eater. I can't help it." This can be particularly reinforced if it is accompanied by parents not regularly exposing children to foods that they refuse to eat.

Be also careful of comparing children as this polarises them at opposite ends of the spectrum and encourages them to stay there.



## WEEK FOUR

# MEALTIME MAKEOVER 4

To help you apply the “Beware of labelling” principle, consider the following suggestions:

1

Reflect on what your parents used to say to you around mealtimes. Did you hear things like:

- *“Think of all the starving children”*
- *“You are going to sit there until you have eaten it all”*
- *“Finish that little last bit. It isn’t good to waste food”*
- *“You won’t grow big and strong if you don’t eat your vegetables”*
- *“He is such a fussy eater, so different to his sister who eats beautifully”*

How hearing these things made you feel? Did this impact your own relationship with food? In what way?

2

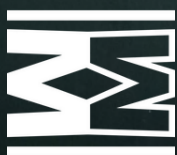
Keep a tally of times when you catch yourself repeat your parents’ words to your children or when you make evaluative judgments about what your children may or may not be eating. Do you call them fussy in front of them? Reflect on if this is the best way to encourage a healthy relationship with food.

3

Rephrase your language to send the messages of growth, encouragement and support. Consider the following phrases:

- *“Yes, I know peppers are not your favourite right now”*
- *“You will eat it when you are ready”*
- *“Red foods give you a strong heart while yellow foods help your body heal cuts”*
- *“I know you currently don’t eat peas. What do they feel like in your hand?”*
- *“Billy is still learning to enjoy his fruit”*

This might feel like learning a new language but do persevere – the outcomes are well worth it!





# WEEK FOUR



# MOVE MORE

EVERY CHILD ACTIVE



This weeks parent / child activity is a **ACTIVE GUESS WHO QUIZ** involving some interesting, positive facts about foods that typically to fall on to the 'tricky foods' list. Watch this video to see a series of multiple choice questions. Pick your answers and do the exercise underneath that correlates with your choice.

## <https://bit.ly/PickyEatersQuiz>



You are invited to join our **NEW PARENT FACEBOOK GROUP** for participating schools. Click on the link to join Move More's Family Health programme 2023/24 & share your feedback, photos or videos of your new **MEALTIME MAKEOVER** dinner tables!

We hope you and your child(ren) find the programme both helpful, engaging and informative. Join in healthy discussion topics and share tips and ideas **#PickyEaters**

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