

## ON THE MENU

Every child is different. Some are very selective about what they'll eat, while others are only "picky" sometimes. Some will avoid certain textures or will shy from certain flavours. The important thing is not to judge what your child will or will not eat and compare it to other kids you know. It's important to think about children as individualized beings, with their own unique tastes and preferences. Find their favourite tastes, textures, temperatures, and methods, and find ways to "upgrade" and increase the nutrients within those options. The following is what my selective eater chooses to eat in a typical day (but this may continue to change as his tastes expand and grow!)

**Breakfast:** Scrambled eggs, whole sprouted grain bread with almond butter, and berries

**Snack:** Apple slices and homemade muffin

**Lunch:** Chickpea pasta with 12-vegetable tomato-based marinara sauce and drizzle of olive oil

**Snack:** Smoothie and seed crackers with hummus or avocado

**Dinner:** Brown rice, red lentils, sweet potato, peanut butter, and oat milk mixed together (he won't eat rice or lentils on their own but loves them when mixed together like this, so we start there!)

## PRIORITIZING WHAT OVER HOW

As you begin thinking about what to aim to include in your child's diet each day, consider the following recommendations:

**Green goodness** Include a serving of dark leafy greens (kale, spinach, swiss chard, etc.) either in whole form, or hidden in a smoothie or blender juice, pancakes and muffin batters, soups, or even salads.

**Optimally orange** Enjoy orange vegetables like sweet potatoes, carrots, squash, pumpkin. These can be eaten raw, roasted, or baked, or mixed in smoothies, soups, and added to baking.

**Favourable fats** Include healthy fats like nuts, seeds, avocado, olive oil, coconut oil, full fat coconut milk, or wild fish with each meal. These can be for cooking, drizzling, spreading, or whole!

**Protein-packed** Protein requirements vary based on age and body size but aim for approximately 9-11 g per day for children under the age of one; around 13 g for those 1-3 years old; 19 g for kids aged 4-9 years old; 34 g for 9-13-year-olds; and 45-55 g in adolescents. There are a wide variety of sources of higher protein foods including lean meat, fish, eggs, red lentils, quinoa, bone broth, oat milk, nut or seed butters, beans, and legumes. You can also choose higher protein noodles or cereals such as lentil and chickpea, and sprouted grain breads.

**Fruit-full** While many parents are concerned that too much fruit isn't good for their children due to the sugar content, it's important to

## Sneaky Superfood Smoothie

½ c unsweetened vanilla oat milk  
½ banana  
1 piece of frozen raw broccoli  
2 pieces of frozen raw cauliflower  
Handful of kale  
1 tsp hemp seeds  
1 Tbsp pumpkinseed butter  
Fish oil (amount based on brand)

Blend ingredients in high-powered blender until smooth and creamy. Makes 1 serving.



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recognize that although fruits do contain natural sugars they also are high in vitamins, antioxidants, fibre, and water. When considering a child's diet as a whole, if the concern is too much sugar, natural sugars from fruit are not often the culprit, making including a few servings of fruit a day a tasty way to get more nutrients!

I have spent time and mental energy feeling frustrated that my little one won't eat many foods in the forms I'd prefer, but ultimately my goal for him is not that he chooses to eat broccoli or carrot sticks. My goal is that he understands nutrition and how it impacts his health and the way he feels, that he listens to his body, and that he enjoys his food. I want this for you and your kids too. Feeding our children and ourselves is an opportunity to nourish more than our bodies: it's an opportunity to send a message that you matter—your thoughts, feelings, preferences, physical health—all of you! Let go of those unnecessary expectations. Keep offering safe tasting opportunities and be confident that as they grow, so will their food repertoire! •

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