

How to help

Create Calm Predictable Spaces

Keep dining areas calm and predictable. Stick to routines around lining up, taking turns and serving the food. Have quieter areas for child to eat and reduce sensory overload. Allow children to sit in the same familiar space if they choose to. Let them bring a familiar object to the dining room. Give extra time to eat and give general time reminders. Allow flexibility

Support Sensory Differences

Learn about each child's unique sensory needs and food sensitivities such as aversions to specific textures, smells or temperatures. Offer support if they need accommodations like seating away from strong food smells or different textures

Accommodate Food Preferences

If a child is particular about food presentation or prefers familiar foods, work to accommodate this where possible. Letting children bring food from home or serve themselves familiar items can provide a sense of routine. Respect food choices even if they seem limited. Eating is better than not eating. Support them bringing food from home that they enjoy

Avoid Pressure and Create Non-judgemental Spaces

Do not try to pressure or persuade children to 'go on try some' or 'try a little'. It is likely to increase anxiety and make the problem worse. Praise other behaviours-not eating such as sitting nicely or interacting with others. Normalise difference if peers point it out'everyone likes different foods and that's OK. Have a no share policy so children don't feel pressured to try food

Make Communications Clear

Plans should be communicated to lunch staff. Lunch staff should communicate with key staff contacts. Menus should be available to children in advance. Visuals should be provided around eating and dining routines. Support children's communication methods and encourage children to communicate their preferences and self-advocate. Be patient and empathetic

Name of staff contact: