



## PICKY EATERS

### A NUTRITION IN-SERVICE FOR STAFF

When Rabbit said, “Honey or condensed milk with your bread?” he was so excited that he said, “Both,” and then, so as not to seem greedy, he added, “But don't bother about the bread, please.”  
~ From Winnie the Pooh



Washington State WIC  
Nutrition Program

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A lesson on conversations & strategies  
for caregivers with children who  
are described as picky eaters.

**Who:** Participants: WIC Staff, range of 2-15 participants with a varying degree of maternal, infant and child nutrition knowledge and WIC experience.

Leader: WIC RD/Nutritionist

**Why:** Many parents are frustrated by their young children who are “picky eaters”. It helps to know about normal eating behaviors and discussing strategies parents can use to deal with them.

**When:** A monthly in-service that is designed to be 30 to 60 minutes - depending on the discussion and the number of staff attending.

**Where:** The session was designed for a WIC classroom, meeting room or large office depending on the size of the group.

**What:** By the end of this session staff will have:

- Distinguished “picky eating” from normal toddler/preschooler eating.
- Described strategies that parents can use to deal with “picky eaters.”
- Practiced communicating strategies to parents of “picky eaters.”

**Materials** Flip chart, easel, paper and markers

**Needed:** (On large piece of paper or flip chart or white board: make 2 columns or T-chart with the headings: “Picky Eater” and “Normal Toddler/Preschool Eater”)

What is Picky? - An Activity (cut out slips of paper- Part 1)

Copies of:

- TH #21: Food fights (picky eating) - “Smart Moms Resist the Food Fights” (one for each participant printed from: <http://www.touchingheartstouchingminds.com> )  
Select Educational Based Materials.  
Select Healthy Eating.
- Picky Eater In-service *Participant Copy*

- Picky Eater In-service *Feedback Form*

**Background  
Reading for  
Leaders:**

For Further review and consult:

- TH #21: Food fights (picky eating) - "Smart Moms Resist the Food Fights"  
<http://www.touchingheartstouchingminds.com>
- "Secrets For Feeding Picky Eaters"  
<http://www.wichealth.org>
- Ellyn Satter, 2000, Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense, Pages 406-408. Palo Alto CA, Bull Publishing Co.
- <http://www.ellynsatter.com> "The Finicky Child;" "The Poor Eater;" "What if my child won't eat vegetables?"

**How:**

- Schedule in-service.
- Review background information.
- Review in-service *Leader Copy* (*italicized print indicates leader speaking*).
- Prepare materials needed.
- Have fun!

**Introduction / Warm-Up****5 minutes**

*Welcome! I will be the leader for this month's nutrition training. I encourage all of you to participate. Together we can explore our topic and discover strategies to support our WIC clients.*

*By the end of this session you will have:*

- *Distinguished "picky eating" from normal toddler/preschooler eating.*
- *Described strategies that parents can use to deal with "picky eaters."*
- *Practiced communicating strategies to parents of "picky eaters."*

*Pair-up with the person next to you:*

*Share your most memorable "WIC picky eater" story.*

*Note what similarities your stories had.*

*Who would like to share what similarities or common themes your stories had?*

**Part 1****10 minutes****What is Picky?**

*Sometimes it can be hard to distinguish what is "picky eating," from what is normal toddler and pre-school behavior.*

*"What is Picky?" - An activity:*

*Hand out slips of paper describing normal toddler and preschool eating behavior and picky eater behavior (one slip or more per person depending on number of participants.)*

*Look at your slip of paper; do you think the behavior that is on your slip of paper describes normal toddler/preschool behavior or a "picky eater"? Take your slip of paper and tape it on the T-chart where you think it should go.*

*(Alternate: Pass around two baskets, one marked "Picky Eater" and one marked "Non-picky Eater", have participants place slip of paper in baskets.)*

*Review T-chart (or contents of basket), discuss behavior and adjust any responses as needed.*

The completed T-chart should look like:

Picky Eater	Normal Toddler/Preschool Eater
Only eating favorite food – ever	Liking a food one day, but not the next
Getting upset when seeing a new food served	Not eating much at times
Whining or crying at the table – always	Tasting a new food, and then spitting it out
Worrying about eating away from home or with a person other than parents	Seeing a new food many times before trying it

*Do any of the Normal Toddler/Preschool Eater behaviors surprise you?*

*How is a “Normal Toddler/Preschool Eater” different than a “Picky Eater”?*

*Why do you think some parents believe their child is a “picky eater”, when it is really normal behavior?*

Sample responses:

A first time parent.

Other children have been very accepting of variety of foods.

Being told so by friends, family, etc...

Child’s small size makes parents hyper-sensitive to eating.

**Part 2****15 minutes****Reading the Story**

Hand out copies of “Smart Moms Resist the Food Fights” (TH #21).

*Who would like to read Michele’s story?*

Read the story part of the hand-out.

*What surprises you about this story?*

*What makes this hand-out different than other “picky eater” hand-outs you may have used in the past?*

**Part 3****10 minutes****Review of Hand-out**

*Pair up with a new person.*

*Review the “Tips” from the “Smart Moms Resist the Food Fights” hand-out.*

*Think about:*

*What tip strikes you as most meaningful?*

*Together add any other tips you might have.*

*We will hear some of your thoughts.*

Allow time for discussion, then call group in.

Solicit discussion with the following questions. You do not need to hear from all groups.

*What tips struck you as most meaningful?*

*What other tips did you have?*

**Part 4****10 minutes****Ask, Provide, Ask: Activity**

*Now let’s think about how we might discuss this topic with a client.*

*Use: Ask, Provide, Ask.*

*Ask...Ask what the client knows, or would like to know.*

*Provide...Offer information in a neutral, nonjudgmental manner.*

*Ask...Ask about the client's thoughts, feelings, and reactions.*

*Example of Ask, Provide, Ask:*

*What makes you think that Suzy is a picky eater?*

*It is very common for young children to be picky...*

*What ideas sound like something you might try?*

*In your pairs brainstorm how Ask, Provide, Ask, might happen with this topic.*

*We will hear some of your ideas.*

Allow time for discussion.

*Who would like to share?*

<b>Closing</b>	<b>1 minute</b>
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*Thanks for participating today. We heard some great discussion and ideas that will help us to better serve our WIC clients.*

*Please fill out a Feedback Form – your input is greatly appreciated.*

Collect Feedback Forms.

Make any notes you have as a leader.

Review participants' Feedback Forms.

Document this training.

<b>Alternate Activity</b>	<b>20 minutes</b>
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In pairs or individually go to [www.wichealth.org](http://www.wichealth.org).

Choose the topic "Secrets for Feeding Picky Eaters." Answer the questions. Click on the helpful information.

Share as a group what you found interesting and useful about this web-site.

# WHAT IS PICKY?

## AN ACTIVITY

Directions: Cut out slips of paper and use for T-chart.

**PICKY EATER**

**NORMAL TODDLER /  
PRESCHOOL**

<b>Only eating favorite food – ever</b>	<b>Liking a food one day, but not the next</b>
<b>Getting upset when seeing a new food served</b>	<b>Not eating much at times</b>
<b>Whining or crying at the table – always</b>	<b>Tasting a new food, and then spitting it out</b>
<b>Worrying about eating away from home or with a person other than parents</b>	<b>Seeing a new food many times before trying it</b>



A lesson on conversations & strategies  
for caregivers with children who  
are described as picky eaters.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this session you will have:

- Identified “picky eating” from normal toddler/preschooler eating.
- Described strategies that parents can use deal with “picky eaters.”
- Practiced communicating strategies to parents of “picky eaters.”

Pair-up with the person next to you,

Share your most memorable “WIC Picky Eater” story.

Note what similarities your stories had.

### Part 1

#### What is Picky?

Sometimes it can be hard to distinguish what is “picky eating,” from what is normal toddler and pre-school behavior.

“What is Picky?” - An activity.

Do any of the Normal Toddler/Preschool Eater behaviors surprise you?

How is a Normal Toddler/Preschool Eater different than a “Picky Eater”?

Why do you think some parents believe their child is a “picky eater”, when it is really normal behavior?

### Part 2

#### Reading the Story

“Smart Moms Resist the Food Fights” - read Michele’s story:

What surprises you about this story?

What makes this hand-out different than other “picky eater” hand-outs you may have used in the past?

**Part 3****Review the Hand-out**

Pair up with a new person.

Review the “Tips” from the “Smart Moms Resist the Food Fights” hand-out.

What tip strikes you as most meaningful?

Together add any other tips you might have.

We will hear some of your responses.

**Part 4****Ask, Provide, Ask: Activity**

Using Ask, Provide, Ask practice how you might share this information with a WIC parent.

Pair up with a new person.

*Ask...Ask what the client knows, or would like to know.*

*Provide...Offer information in a neutral, nonjudgmental manner.*

*Ask...Ask about the client’s thoughts, feelings, and reactions.*

**Closing**

Thanks for participating today.

Please fill out a Feedback Form – your input is greatly appreciated.

To print the hand-out used today please visit:

<http://www.touchingheartstouchingminds.com>.

Select Emotion Based Materials.

Select For Healthy Eating.

Select #TH 21: Food Fights (Picky Eating) - “Smart Moms Resist the Food Fights”

When Rabbit said, “Honey or condensed milk with your bread?” he was so excited that he said, “Both,” and then, so as not to seem greedy, he added, “But don't bother about the bread, please.”  
~ From Winnie the Pooh

1. What did you like about this training in-service?
2. With 1 being low and 10 being high, on a scale of 1 to 10; how confident are you in using the information presented in the in-service? Why did you choose this number?
3. Name one new idea or concept you will do differently.
4. What additional information or training do you need on this topic?