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Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life.

Avoiding Food Fights¹

Donna Davis²

When you think of "food fight," you might recall a raucous scene featuring John Belushi in the now-classic film, "Animal House." When raising a toddler, food fight takes on a different meaning. If feeding your toddler seems like an overwhelming task at times, take heart. There are some things that can make mealtime more enjoyable!

According to Jennifer Hillan at the University of Florida, the most important thing to remember is that parents are responsible for deciding what foods are offered, and children are responsible for deciding whether to eat and how much to eat. What a liberating concept! But in *Tips for Feeding Toddlers*, Hillan explains that parents are responsible for offering nutritious foods suitable for a child's age, setting regular meal and snack times, and serving foods that look appealing. She says it's the child's responsibility to decide if she'll eat, and to choose how much to eat from the foods that are offered. If she decides not to eat a meal, Hillan says that's okay.

Researchers say that it's normal for a child's appetite to vary from day to day. They usually eat only when they're hungry and stop when they're full. It's okay when they choose to skip a meal once in a while. As long as they're growing well, they're probably getting

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all the nutrients they need. And when they choose not to eat, tell them, "That's okay; just sit and keep me company."

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http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/foodfights.mp3

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