



Food of the Week



We know that it is a real challenge for your child to explore new foods.

We want your child to succeed in Food Exploring, so here is a strategy to try:

- 🍎 Let your child choose one food from the fridge or pantry (or from the supermarket if you wish), and you as parent choose one food. A drink could also be chosen.

These should not be your child's preferred foods, but also foods that are not too much of a challenge. This helps set your child up for success, which is very important. Examples could be: a different flavour of cracker, chip or biscuit; chicken nuggets or tenders rather than takeaway versions; different types of fruit juices.

Foods can be alternated with a sweet and a savoury. (Sweet foods may be biscuits, muffins, fruit bars etc).

- 🍎 Explore these foods for the week, ideally for a few minutes each day, together with parent/s and siblings if appropriate – and take your child through the steps on the placemat: Looking, Sniffing, Holding to the mouth, Licking, Biting and dropping, Biting and holding for a count of at least 3, Chewing and dropping out the mouth, Chewing and swallowing.

If the food is very challenging, be realistic as to how far your child might progress with this food (which may be looking at it and sniffing it).

It can be helpful to have a child's preferred food to compare with the new food, particularly with older children (e.g. a preferred chicken chip to compare with a ready salted flavour new to your child). Treat it like a science experiment – how are they the same and different...

Keep the food exploring fun and light-hearted.

- 🍎 You can record these foods on a **Food Exploring Diary**. They can also be rated on the **Thermometer Rating** or **Yum scale**. In this way you and your child can see their progress.
- 🍎 Exploring food is a real challenge for your child, so their efforts should be rewarded in some way. A small reward that same day is recommended (e.g. an extra bedtime story, a lucky dip box, 10 mins on a device)

It is also VERY IMPORTANT that your child leaves each food exploring session feeling positive about what they have done. Praise is essential, always making mention of their best interaction with a food. (Even small steps can be a significant challenge for a child with a restricted food range). If you have pushed them a little too hard, fall back to a previous step and praise that interaction with the food. (We understand that there is a fine balance between encouragement and pushing too hard.)

We want your child to leave each session with a feeling of success as a food explorer.

Some examples of foods with similar properties: such as dry or crunchy, similar shapes or colours.

Instead of this:	You could try these:	
		
		
		
		
		
		

