

NEWS LESSON

Even Chefs Have Fussy Children

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Were you a fussy eater as a child? What would you not eat?
2. Who cooked at home when you were growing up?
3. Is there a food you hated as a child but like now?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**fussy**	☐	A	to push pieces of food one after another onto a stick
2	**trick**	☐	B	in a way that makes you feel it is about you
3	**chopped**	☐	C	cut into small pieces
4	**thread**	☐	D	only liking a few foods and often saying no to the rest
5	**involved**	☐	E	a clever way to make someone do or believe something
6	**personally**	☐	F	understands something, often suddenly
7	**comforting**	☐	G	taking part in something
8	**realises**	☐	H	making you feel calmer and less worried

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Nine professional cooks were asked what their own children eat at home. The answers are more comforting than you might expect.

1 If you have ever cooked something carefully and watched a child refuse it, here is some good news. It happens to professional chefs too.

2 The Guardian asked nine cooks and food writers what they feed their own families. Almost all of them described a child who would not eat something. “I'm fairly certain every child is a picky eater,” said the TV chef Tom Kerridge, whose son Acey is ten. He does not believe the parents who say their children happily eat beetroot and feta salad.

3 Several of them said the same thing about timing. Kerridge tries to put food in front of his son before he realises he is hungry. If he waits, Acey asks for whatever comes in the brightest packet. If he puts a chopped apple on the table, it gets eaten.

4 Another common idea was letting the child help. Kerridge gets his son to build his own pizza or thread peppers on to kebabs. “If he's involved, he's more likely to eat it,” he said. Marie Mitchell, who has a five-year-old, puts it a different way. She and her partner decide what goes on the table, but once it is there, it is up to her daughter.

5 Two of the cooks said they do not hide vegetables in food. Helen Goh grates courgette into pasta sauce, but she always tells her sons it is in there. “I don't want food to become a trick,” she said. Mitchell agreed: if the child never knows she is eating something, she will never learn that she likes it.

6 The pastry chef Ravneet Gill has a different rule, about sugar. She does not call it a treat. Her son knows he is allowed it, she says, so he does not long for it.

7 Jackson Boxer has four children, and he had to learn not to take refusals personally. Saying no to food, he realised, is one of the few kinds of power a child has. Rosie Birkett says the same thing in a gentler way: for most children, being fussy is only a phase.

8 Perhaps the most useful comment came from Meera Sodha, who was called a fussy eater herself as a child. Her advice is not to label children. “If you keep calling them fussy, they start believing that's who they are.” She used to ask her daughter to try one cherry tomato a year. Recently, she ate three.

Sources: The Guardian, Don't make sugar a treat, or hide the broccoli: top chefs on how to make your kids happy eaters. Picture: .

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Tom Kerridge does not believe parents who say their children eat beetroot and feta salad. T F NG
2. Helen Goh hides vegetables without telling her children. T F NG
3. Ravneet Gill does not describe sugar as a treat. T F NG
4. Tom Kerridge's son, Acey, is five years old. T F NG
5. Most of the nine cooks eat with their children every day. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

advice	beetroot	certain	label	packet	phase	power

1. My sister gave me some good _____ about how to cook for a toddler.
2. Many toddlers go through a _____ when they only want to eat pasta.
3. Please do not _____ your brother a fussy eater, because he may start to believe it.
4. A child can use food to show _____ , because it is one thing only she controls.
5. I'm fairly _____ that my daughter will eat the soup, because she liked it last time.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. It _____ to professional chefs too. (HAPPEN)
2. The Guardian _____ nine cooks and food writers what they feed their own families. (ASK)
3. Last week a father _____ his son build a pizza. (HELP)
4. Yesterday my son _____ all of his carrots. (EAT)
5. Jackson Boxer _____ four children. (HAVE)

7 Language focus: phrasal verbs

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. A phrasal verb is a verb plus a small word, such as out or on. The small word changes the meaning, so learn the two words together.

away	into	off	on	out	through	up

1. Most children grow _____ of fussy eating.
2. Her son pushed his plate _____ and said he was full.
3. Kerridge feeds his son early, before his hunger turns _____ a demand for crisps.
4. Once the food is on the table, it is _____ to the child to decide how much to eat.
5. The chefs say you should carry _____ offering a food, even after a refusal.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Should parents cook a separate meal for a child who will not eat?
2. Is hiding vegetables in food a good idea?
3. What is the best way to get someone to try a new food?

9 Role-play: to hide it or to tell her?

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the parent who wants to hide it

Your four-year-old will not eat vegetables. You want to grate courgette into the pasta sauce and say nothing. Explain why, and try to agree on a plan.

Student B · the parent who wants to tell her

You think your daughter should know what is in her food. Explain why, listen to your partner, and try to agree on a plan you both like.

Useful phrases

I'd rather not tell her.
That's a good point, but I'm not sure it's fair.
She won't learn what she likes if she never knows.
What if she refuses it?
How about we try both ways?
I think we're worrying too much.

Tell the class what you agreed, and whether either of you changed your mind.

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 D · 2 E · 3 C · 4 A · 5 G · 6 B · 7 H · 8 F

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 T · 4 F · 5 NG

5 Vocabulary

1 advice · 2 phase · 3 label · 4 power · 5 certain

6 Verb forms

1 happens · 2 asked · 3 helped · 4 ate · 5 has

7 Language focus

1 out · 2 away · 3 into · 4 up · 5 on

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