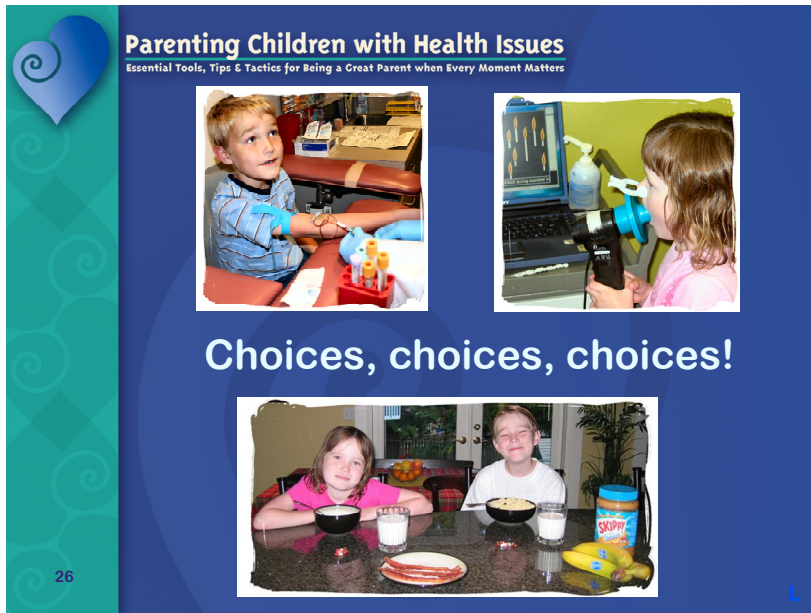


Dear CF Parent,

Following are the power point slides with my notes that I use in my presentations for CF family education days. I hope this helps give you more ideas about handling food issues. They are so very common with our kids with CF. Go easy on yourself if you are struggling- many of us do. Good luck! *Lisa*



One of the biggest challenges with our CF kids is around food. We all know the importance of keeping up their weight and most of us have probably experienced how hard that can be at times. One of the earliest power struggles for any parent, but especially a CF parent, is around food.

The bottom line is that we can't *make* a kid eat! And, of course it makes us parents crazy when our kid with CF won't eat. So it's very easy to get hooked into a power struggle over food.

Remember: When one demands, the other resists. So the more you try to *make* your child eat certain foods or a certain amount, the more your child will naturally resist.

Kids love emotion so the key is to show *lots* of emotion when they do things right and very little emotion when they don't. Most of us do the opposite. We don't even notice when our kids do things right and then we show all kinds of emotion when they goof up!

So we have to be thoughtful and clever about how we motivate our kids to eat and one way is with choices. The earlier you start with sharing control around food

choices, the better. Now with younger kids, you can do two choices like “Do you want pancakes or waffles?” “Do you want one pancake or two?”

But as our kids get older, we’ll start to give them the freedom to make choices in a more open-ended manner. Here’s an example:

One morning, I asked the kids what they would like for breakfast and they both wanted cold cereal which we don’t normally eat for breakfast. We have it around for snacks.

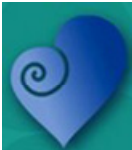
So now *I* had a choice. I could say “NO, it’s not nutritious enough” and get a fight. Or, I could allow *them* to decide and take this opportunity to teach them by giving them more choices. So, I said, “Okay. You can have cereal but that’s only 150 calories and you need 800 for breakfast. Plus, you need some fat, and protein and fruit. So what else will you eat?”

Jacob pipes right up with, “Okay, I’ll take peanut butter for my protein and a banana for my fruit. Plus, with a cup of whole milk, that’s just about right.” At age ten!

And, Kasey decided to have some bacon instead of the peanut butter so everyone was happy. And what I realized was that if *I* was the one making all the decisions about what they eat then I probably wouldn’t be so involved in teaching them. I would just prepare the meals and expect them to eat it. *And* end up with a lot of control battles over food.

But with choices, I am less likely to have power struggles *and* I have a lot more opportunities to teach them along the way.

And, since I know food is a really big issue for many of us, here’s a few more tips for avoiding food fights.



Avoiding Food Fights

- Show empathy instead of anger or frustration.
- Use treats as a positive consequence.
- Involve your kids in the meal planning, shopping & cooking.
- Set a good example.
- Problem solve together around resistance.



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- Because this is so important, I have to say this again: do not show anger and frustration over food issues. Show encouragement when they eat well and empathy when they don't. Encouragement sounds like, "Way to go eating up all your food. You must feel really good about taking such good care of your body." And: "I'll bet you can't wait to get dessert- it's a good one!"

And empathy sounds like: "Oh, that's too bad you didn't eat dinner. I guess you won't be joining us for that *special, yummy* dessert I made. Ohh bummer."
(Remember to be truly empathetic- not sarcastic or snippy).

- And along these lines, use dessert and treats as a positive consequence for eating properly. Our kids are not allowed to drink soda pop or eat junk food unless they eat their healthy food first.

I was packing my daughter's lunch recently and had put in an oatmeal cream pie which she just loves. She was dawdling over breakfast and I could see that if she didn't hurry it up, she'd run out of time. *I was so tempted to nag!*

But instead, I simply took the oatmeal pie out of her lunchbox and set it on the counter. And I said, "Looks like you might not finish your breakfast in time so I'm not sure that you'll be having this today. But I'll set it right here just in case you finish." And you should have seen that little mouth move. And she did it! And, we were both happy about it. I said: "Yayyy Kasey! You get your cream pie!"

- Regularly involve your kids in the food planning and preparation. When they help you plan and cook the meals, they are a lot more excited about eating it!
- Example- use the power of example. *You* be excited about trying new foods and eating properly. Say things like “Oooh- I feel so good when I take good care of my body!”
- And when your older child is resistant around eating, problem solve together. I’ll be teaching you how in a few minutes. You might be surprised at the reasons why your kid is struggling but unless you explore it, you won’t know how to solve it. I was surprised to find that the reason my daughter wasn’t eating some of her school lunches was because she had a loose tooth and couldn’t eat some of the things I had packed for her like apples and sandwiches. Once we figured this out, I cut them up for her and it really helped.



Avoiding Food Fights

- Encourage your kids to “just taste” new foods.
- Be fun and creative.
- Make snacks quick & easy for older kids.
- Focus on positives.
- Rule out medical reasons for lack of appetite.



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- One mom shared how she gets her 4 and 7 year olds with CF to try new foods. They don’t have to eat it, just take a tiny taste. And she sneaks special toys into her CF clinic visits so when her kids report on all of the new foods they tried, the *doctor* gives lots of praise *and* the special treats.

And another mom shared that their family calls this “No thank you bites.” Once the child takes a little taste, they have the option of saying, “No thank you. I prefer

not to eat this.” And, this smart mom makes sure that she always has at least two other items on the plate that her child likes.

- Be creative and fun! With younger kids, you can make their food in fun shapes or colors. Even my older kids liked Mickey Mouse shaped pancakes for a long time. And sometimes just adding a new flavor will help like nutella or peanut butter. Or maybe you can have backwards day and serve pizza for breakfast and waffles for dinner! Our kids love that!

- For teens with CF, many parents have had good success with keeping a small refrigerator in their child’s room. They keep it full of the high calorie foods and drinks the teen, *and their friends*, like. Making it easy and convenient to keep the calories up is a key for this age group.

- And, we really “talk-it-up” how lucky our kids are that they get to eat all of the kinds of foods that everyone else wants to eat but can’t! *They* get to have brownies and ice cream with hot fudge for dessert but mommy and daddy get grapes. “Oh you lucky kids!!” ☺

- Here’s an important point about kids who don’t want to eat: Be sure to rule out medically based reasons before just assuming that it’s a behavioral problem. So rule out things like acid reflux, or sinus or lung infections, or if any medications might be causing stomach upset or decreased appetite. Be sure to discuss eating challenges with your doctor- good nutrition is *so* important with CF and other medical conditions, too.

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