The ARFID Mom's Playbook

How to Reduce Mealtime Stress and Help Your Child Eat with Confidence



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

ARFID Ally

Script 1: Introducing a New Food

Parent: "I have something new on the table today alongside our regular foods. You don't have to eat it, but I'd love to explore it together."

Child: "I don't want it."

Parent: "That's okay. Would you be willing to help me learn about it? What color is it?"

Child: "It's orange."

Parent: "Yes, it is orange like your goldfish crackers. Do you think it might be crunchy like them too?"

Child: "Maybe."

Parent: "Would you like to touch it to find out, or should I touch it and tell you what I notice?"

Mealtime Routine Chart

This visual chart outlines the 5-step routine described in Chapter 7.
Display it near your eating area.

1. Prepare Together

- ☐ Wash hands
- ☐ Help set the table
- ☐ Talk about what foods we'll have
- ☐ Take 3 deep breaths

2. Set The Stage

- ☐ Sit in our regular seats
- ☐ Make sure feet are supported
- ☐ Put safe food on plate
- ☐ Have water ready
- ☐ Turn on calm music

3. Connect Before Directing

- ☐ Share something good about our day
- ☐ Say our mealtime affirmation
- ☐ Remember our mealtime rules
- ☐ Express gratitude

4. Explore and Eat

- ☐ Serve food family-style when possible
- ☐ Use kind words about food
- ☐ Have conversations about fun topics
- ☐ Use "no thank you" bowl if needed
- ☐ Stay at table for agreed time

5. Transition Positively

- ☐ Thank everyone for mealtime
- ☐ Notice something that went well
- ☐ Help with one clean-up task
- ☐ Talk about next meal positively
- ☐ Move to next activity

Food Chaining Worksheet

Use this worksheet to plan potential food chains based on your child's current safe foods.

Start with a SAFE FOOD: _____

What characteristics make this food safe? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Crunchy
- ☐ Soft
- ☐ Smooth
- ☐ Lumpy
- ☐ Sweet
- ☐ Salty
- ☐ Other:
- ☐ Bland
- ☐ Flavorful
- ☐ Dry
- ☐ Wet
- ☐ Warm
- ☐ Cold
- ☐ Consistent texture
- ☐ Mixed textures
- ☐ Specific brand
- ☐ Specific preparation method

Potential Chain

Safe Food: _____

Small Change 1: _____

(Example: different brand, different shape, slight flavor variation)

Small Change 2: _____

(Build on Change 1 with another small modification)

Small Change 3: _____

(Continue the progression with another small step)

Bridge Food: _____

(A somewhat different food that shares key characteristics)

Target Food: _____

(A nutritional goal food that's currently not accepted)

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

Safe Food Tracking Sheet

Use this sheet to document your child's current safe foods and track new foods as they're accepted.

Child's Name:

Date Started:

Current Safe Foods:

Food	Brand/ Preparation	Notes

Food Exploration Progress:

Date	Food Tried	Interaction Level	Notes

Interaction Levels:

1 = Tolerated on plate

2 = Touched

3 = Smelled

4 = Touched to lips

5 = Licked

6 = Took tiny bite (may spit out)

7 = Swallowed tiny amount

8 = Ate small portion

9 = Accepted as regular food