

Jackie

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Peaceful Parenting Podcast. I'm your host, Sarah Rosen, sweet mom of three young people, peaceful parenting coach, and your cheerleader and guide on all things parenting. Each week we'll cover the tools, strategies, and support you need to end the yelling and power struggles and encourage your kids to listen and cooperate so that you can enjoy your family time.

I'm happy to say we have a great relationship with our three kids. The teen years have been easy and joyful. Not because we're special unicorns, but because my kids were raised with peaceful parenting. I've also helped so many parents just like you, stop struggling and enjoy their kids. Again, I'm excited to be here with you today and bring you the insight and information you need to make your parenting journey a little more peaceful.

Let's dive into this week's conversation.

Hey everybody. Welcome back to another episode of the Peaceful Parenting Podcast. I'm so excited because today is our 200th episode. We have been putting out this podcast for four years.

I can't believe it. It's been so much fun and I've talked [00:01:00] to so many great people and learned so much from you and from all of the guests that I've interviewed. And I hope that this has been really. Great for you. If you are a new listener, go back and check out our archives. Look at our past episodes.

We've had some just really amazing guests and really great topics that we've talked about. If you love the podcast, we would so appreciate it. If you could rate and review us on Apple and Spotify, leave us a review on Apple and of course share this podcast with a family or a parent that you think might like to hear it and might learn from it.

Today's guest is Jackie Silver. She is a nutritionist, and I actually found out about her because Corey worked with her and just had such wonderful things to say about working with her. She has a neurodivergent affirming lens for working with families, and she really helps parents to shift how they're thinking about.

Feeding their kids and also giving real specific strategies when feeding kids is hard. Whether [00:02:00] it's that you feel like your kids are eating too much, or

you worry that they don't have enough variety in, they're picky eaters, or they have sensory challenges that make eating hard and makes feeding them hard.

And Cory just loved working with Jackie so much, and she. Found working with Jackie. So helpful that I had to talk to her and have her on the podcast. So I'm so pleased to have Jackie Silver nutritionist talking with us today. And also, I would like to say that I'm excited that we have a sponsor on board for the podcast now.

I just said it'd been four years I. Since I started this podcast, and I've never had a sponsor before because I never could think of anyone that I wanted to reach out to, whose product I really believed in, and I found that with yo Oto is a screen free audio book player or music player, whatever you wanna have your kids listen to.

You can either buy prerecorded cards from yo oto of classic books or some of the newer fun books, or you can make your own cards for kids with your own music or mp three files. [00:03:00] And Yto also has original content, podcasts and radio, and also has some other really great has some really great features, like an okay to wake clock.

White noise for sleeping has a sleep timer, so you can set it to go off. If you're letting your kids listen to something as they fall asleep, you can set it to go off after a little while so it doesn't go all night. , we didn't have Ottos when my kids were little, but I did find that my daughter used to listen to audiobooks.

And it really helped her to play independently. And that's actually something Corey has said as well. Being able to listen things really helps kids play independently and it's screen free. It's not connected to the internet. And it it is such a game changer for so many families.

Again, I wish we had it when my kids were little. Before we get to today's podcast, pause this and go and check out reimagine peaceful parenting.com/yo oto to find out all about the Yo Oto player and what a game changing parenting tool it is. Okay, let's dive in and meet Jackie.

Sarah: Hi Jackie, welcome to the podcast. [00:04:00] Hi. It's so great to be here. Yeah. I've heard so much about you from Corey. Corey who works with me, worked with you, and she just went on and on about how much you helped her. So I was keen to get you on the podcast so other people can know about you and the work that you do, and and learn from you.

So welcome.

Jackie: Awesome. Thanks for having me.

Sarah: So, can you just tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do?

Jackie: Yeah, my name is Jackie Silver. I am a registered dietitian. I run my own practice, Jackie Silver Nutrition. We are a team. I have another lovely dietitian on my team and we work with neurodivergent kids, teens and adults across Ontario.

In Canada and then I'm also licensed in the state. So I also see clients in New York, new from New York, New Jersey, all many different states and it's all a virtual private practice.

Sarah: Amazing. We'll put links to you to how to work with you in the show notes. 'cause I'm sure after listening to you, a lot of people are gonna wonder how to do [00:05:00] that.

So we'll link to it. Awesome. So why did you choose to specialize in helping neurodivergent people with eating?

Jackie: Yes, great question. So during my master's, I did my master's of health science in nutrition communications at Toronto Metropolitan University. And I did, we had a 10 month dietetic internship, RO rotations at different placements.

And one of my placements was with Special Olympics. So I got to teach cooking classes and nutrition, sport nutrition classes to athletes with intellectual disabilities. Many of them were autistic. Thick or had other intellectual developmental disabilities, IDD. And it was here that I started to see that there's a really big need to support this community.

And then I started my practice in the thick of the pandemic lockdowns of 2020, and I was making a. Profile on this healthcare directory listing, and they had autism and A DHD there that you [00:06:00] could check off as having experience with. So I naively checked it off because of my experience with the Special Olympics, and I didn't think anything of it.

And then I started getting all these requests. To work with autistic children or children with A DHD and adults as well. And so I really saw that there's a big need and not very many dietitians are serving this need. So I decided to go all in and I'm really passionate about it.

Sarah: I'm glad that we found you when I I do a summit every year about raising complex kids and I tried to find somebody who specialized in feeding neurodivergent kids.

And it was really hard to find someone, you know, two years ago. And so I ended up leaving it off of the off of the program. But we'll have to have you this coming fall and back and have you for our summit 'cause it, it's. It's definitely a need. Like it's something that a lot of parents struggle with.

Oh, yes. And I think it's also, it's really hard. Not only it's hard in practice, but it's hard on parents because feeding [00:07:00] children is so representative of nurturing, right. And and often if you have a kid who won't eat or a kid who you feel that they're not eating properly or well, it can make you feel like a bad parent.

Jackie: Oh yes. I've heard many parents have told me they feel like failures, that they cannot feed their children, and that it's so hard to feed their children. They feel so much shame over that. And so, yeah, a lot of my work is telling them, you know, you are doing your best. This is really difficult.

And trying to, yeah, just. Providing that empathy and encouraging them to release that shame around it, because it's really not their fault. And if you think about it, feeding is the one task that humans need to do multiple times a day for every single day of their life. Yeah. So how could it be easy when you think about it through that perspective?

You know, there's no, and also with kids, we have to feed kids multiple times a day. For [00:08:00] their life. It's one of the only tasks, you know, like you don't need to bathe five times a day. You don't need to exercise five ti times a day. You don't need to brush your teeth five times a day. But with feeding we, we do.

So it, it's not easy

Sarah: and it's also something that we have little to no control over as parents, which is so hard to you know, it's so hard when you feel like you want something to go a certain way, but you really. You know, not only should you not try to control it, but you can't control it.

Even if you could, even if it was a good idea. Exactly. So I think there's powerless powerlessness along with that shame and fear.

Jackie: Absolutely. Yeah. 'cause it's up to the kid Yeah. Ultimately to decide what, you know, if they're gonna eat, when they want to eat and all that. Yeah.

Sarah: What do you find are some common challenges with it, with your population of neurodivergent children and families that you work with?

Jackie: Great question. So with so I see a lot of selective eating. I don't love the [00:09:00] word picky eating. It kind of has a negative connotation to it. So I like the word selective eating instead. So I see that a lot in autistic children, also in children with A DHD, and I'm trained in. Sensory feeding therapy.

So I use those skills. A lot of different tools from that training and other trainings to coach parents on how to introduce new foods with their kids. Along with selective eating, often comes kids who might be underweight, falling off their growth curve. Malnourished. So I. Work with parents on that as well.

How to increase calories, how to get them back on their growth curve. I often recommend they get blood work from the pediatrician to check if there's any nutrient deficiencies so that we can fill that in with supplementation. I will also see for kids with a DHD who are on stimulant medications, it often suppresses their appetite.

And that's also often when we see them start to fall off their growth [00:10:00] curve or start to lose weight, which is really not good, especially for a growing child. So I'll work with the. Families on that and come up with also ways to, that their kids can eat something that feels safe while they have a low appetite or might be feeling nauseous.

Oftentimes, the doctors are threatening to take the kids off the medication unless they gain their weight back and grow. So, I support with that. I also see. A lot of kids who are lack that interceptive awareness of their hunger and fullness cues. So I'll teach them in a kid friendly way how to start to recognize those.

I see a lot of GI issues, a lot of constipation, which often, which is very connected to. Autism. And also if, you know, if you're a selective eater, not really eating much fiber, more likely to be constipated. So I'll see that. I'll see food allergies IB like symptoms, so I'll help with [00:11:00] that. And also for older kids, so like teens often they're.

There ha there are some body image issues that come up as well. And it could be from you know, the way that parents speak to their children. Not, obviously not, never intentional, not intentionally wanting to read anything negative. But I

do see, you know, parents coming to me saying, oh, my, my kid needs to lose weight.

I keep telling them to watch what they eat. And so, and that's often, like people who grew up with parents commenting on their body, they're more likely to develop disordered eating patterns into adolescence and adulthood. And that's the last thing that I want to. Happen. So I'll coach the parents on how to talk to their teens in a, in about their bodies in a neutral way and about food in a neutral way.

And, you know, not commenting on how they look, not commenting on how much they're eating or on calories, [00:12:00] anything like that. And yeah, so that's, yeah, a lot of unlearning. As well.

Sarah: Oh, it sounds like you have a very broad scope of the different types of challenges that you work with. Like it sounds that's a lot, not a lot of different challenges.

Jackie: Yeah. Yeah. When people think dietician, they think, oh, you just do weight loss, or, oh, you provide a special diet to cure autism, but that's absolutely not what I do.

Sarah: Oh that's wild. I like how you said that you don't use the word, you don't like to say picky eating, that you like to say selective eating. I remember I read somewhere that someone said picky eating is usually only a problem for the other people, not for the person who's been labeled a picky eater. Like they're usually quite happy with the foods that they're eating, and it's everybody else who thinks it's a problem that they're not eating enough different kinds of foods.

And on that note. How does a parent know when I'm gonna, when it's a quote problem, like, how do you know if your kid, so your kid, you know, has 10 things that they like to eat [00:13:00] and they're not, you know, they might eat only apples and baby carrots and chicken and. Toast or something, you know, it's like not just one thing.

Would you say like, I dunno I guess just how do you know when it, when your child has crossed the line from being a selective eater and will just like, leave them alone to their preferences, to, we need to make some changes.

Jackie: Yeah. So I would say if it, if the. The narrowed palate is affecting the child's growth.

If the child is losing weight or not gaining weight, then that's a problem. If the doctor has found, you know, iron deficiency or another nutrient deficiency, that could be an indication. I would say also, if the child is having. Constipation, bowel issues that could be an indication also if the family is just honestly, really struggling to come up with what to serve at dinner time and also is [00:14:00] struggling for, to take their kids out to restaurants or to grandma and grandpas or vacation or.

Yeah. On vacation. Yeah. 'cause yeah, a lot of times I'll hear like we'd, we, it's really hard for us to travel because there's nothing my kid will eat or we don't go to restaurants 'cause there's nothing my kid will eat. So that's impacting quality of life. And so that is certainly an indication to seek professional guidance.

Sarah: Those are good markers. So if your child's doctor has concerns about their growth or their nutrition, you know, like if iron deficiency or something like that, or if it's impacting your quality of life, either for the individual or as a family. Those are good signs.

Jackie: Yeah. Or if you end up making a different meal for your kid than what you eat.

Than what the parents eat. And that makes it really stressful. Like if it's, if the parents are stressed, I'd say that is also an indication.

Sarah: Right. That makes sense. So can you talk a little bit about how complex eating is? Corey? Corey told me to [00:15:00] ask you about the steps of eating.

Jackie: Yeah. So. Eating is definitely complex when we think about it in general, you know, general. And also the fact that it's something we have to do multiple times a day for our entire lives. And there's, you know, diet culture reflects our eating and. Cultural preferences and societal messages and messages from our doctor.

And you know, that all adds to the complexity of feeding. And so what you were asking is about the steps to feeding. So I learned about this when I did my training in the SOS approach to feeding the sequential oral sensory approach to feeding. And we went through this. Staircase, so to speak, of different type, the different steps that come before you get to the point of actually eating a food.

So, and it involves all the [00:16:00] senses. So if a child. If a parent keeps saying, oh, just try the broccoli. Just try it. But the child can't even tolerate having it in the kitchen while they're eating, then we gotta scale it way back and

start with those earlier steps. So it starts with tolerating the food, tolerating it in the kitchen, tolerating it on the table, then on your plate interacting with it, you know, that could mean using gloves if.

Touching is really difficult, or just like using utensils to interact with the food or cooking, mixing things together. And then there's touching and smelling and feeling and you know, maybe putting a food like close to your mouth and putting it to your lips, then putting it in your mouth and spitting out or in your mouth, taking two bites, then spitting out then.

Finally eating. So there's multiple steps that come and I find when I show parents this chart, it really calms them down. 'cause they can see, okay, you know what, like my child, right? You know, they can't [00:17:00] tolerate, they tol many of these foods. So I shouldn't have that expectation that they should suddenly start eating them.

Sarah: Right. Yeah, I I was just visiting on the weekend. I was just visiting somebody with a baby who's nine months old and you can really see the steps to feeding and if you watch a baby eat, because they're like squishing the food. Like she had it on her high chair and she's like squishing it and putting it in her mouth and spitting it out and taking it out and like really like full on body exploration of the food that she was eating.

And she was eating it too? Yes. But she was really like. Playing with it and I, you know, it just goes to show you that it's wrong. It's not helpful to say, don't play with your food to kids. 'cause that's one of the steps to eating it sounds like.

Jackie: Absolutely, yes. I once heard someone say that, you know, like, why should we expect kids to be super.

Clean and proper with their eating, you know, and not make a mess. You know, it's important for them to have it, you know, smooshed on their face so that [00:18:00] they have that sensory experience and they play with it and touch it and make shapes with food like that. That's. Part of the process of learning to appreciate new foods.

Sarah: Yeah, I love that. How do you get a child on, on, I'm gonna say on board because as I said before, there might be some kids who are happy with their diet of four or five things and I. Just because those concerns come in or the quality of life is being affected, how do you help a child? Because I know from Corey that you also work with the kids too.

Like you don't just work with the parents. I know some professionals really just work with the parents and then the parents work with the kids. But in your experience through working with children, how do you get children to be. I guess, open-minded to the approach and to the kinds of things that you are, that you work on.

Jackie: Great question. So, I do engage the kids in our sessions if they're age appropriate. You know, so like, I'm not gonna ask a 2-year-old what type of foods they wanna be able to eat, but [00:19:00] if it's a child, you know, maybe. Six and up. Then I really like to have them in session with their parents so that I can get them involved and give them as much autonomy as possible.

Because if they, you know, if they have some choices of new things they can try, then I find they are more motivated and more on board. Whereas if I just say, okay, just let's work on. X, y, Z foods. You know, I'll ask the kid and get input from them. Maybe come up with some fun, creative recipes that gets them excited.

And also showing, you know, telling them that there's no pressure. I'm not, you know, no one's gonna force them to eat something. That also helps to alleviate the anxiety and make them more willing and. Open to trying new things.

Sarah: I love that. I love that you involve the kids. I know from working with parents or you know, in this reading about sort of the best practices for feeding [00:20:00] kids and working with parents that we, what we learn from the research is that the more pressure you put on kids, the less likely they're going to eat, right?

And. At the same time when a parent is really worried about their child and their selective eating or they're not you know, they're falling off their growth curve and they know rationally that it's, you know, I can't put pressure on my child, I have to back off. But at the same time, they have this intense sense of fear, like, my kid's not growing properly.

How do you help them? Do you see what question I'm getting at? Like, when your brain tells you one thing, like, don't put pressure on my child, but your, you know, your heart is saying like, oh my gosh, I'm so worried about this. It's so hard not to put pressure on them. Is there anything that you find helps parents to feel a little bit more relaxed and trusting and not putting pressure on kids?

Jackie: Yeah. So. I really do appreciate what you're saying and I see, like, I feel this dichotomy oftentimes too, especially if a child [00:21:00] is, you know,

quite severely underweight. It's like, oh, on the one hand we really do want them to grow and eat more, but on the other hand, if we put pressure, it's just gonna backfire.

So I find that while teaching parents about the steps to eating, teaching them, you know, that it takes neurodivergent kids, honestly, like double the amount of exposures to a new food as it would a neurotypical child. So that helps them to relax and not feel as much pressure. And then they know like, okay, you know what?

If my child's tried something five times, I'm not gonna give up. We need 30 exposures. Like, just keep going. And yeah, I mean, hon honestly, it's har it's hard to it's tough. Yeah,

Sarah: it's tough. Yeah. Maybe just even that compassion helps parents. Yeah. Just the compassion and taking I, I guess a little bit of a leap of faith to trust [00:22:00] the, trust, the process and the research.

Jackie: Exactly. And that, and reminding themselves, you know, the more pressure I put the least, like the less likely my kid is gonna want to eat or try new foods and then they're not gonna grow. So let's just take a step back. It's okay. You know, this is temporary. I'll follow, you know, we'll, I'll. Not put pressure and, you know, let the, let my kid be and when they're ready they'll come.

And also to to look at the progress that they have started to make. With our work together or just in general. Yeah, I think that's another big piece is reminding yourself the progress that your child has made. 'cause I'll have many parents, you know, they're like, oh, I don't think we're doing so great.

This time wasn't so great. My kid only tried, you know, five new things and I'm like, but they tried five new things. Right, right. Like that's huge. Yeah. You know, remind yourself of that.

Sarah: That

Jackie: makes

Sarah: sense.

Let's take a [00:23:00] quick break to hear about the Yo Oto player. Yo Oto is a new sponsor of our podcast. I only promote products that I really believe in, and

yo Oto is a great product. I wish they were around when my kids were growing. Yo Oto is a screen free audio player for kids. It uses physical cards to play stories, music, podcasts, and other audio content, encouraging independent listening and play.

You can buy the cards for your favorite books from the classics like Charlotte's Web or Raw Doll, or newer books like Captain Underpants. You can also make your own cards of podcast stories or music from MP three files. Yto also creates original content like radio and podcasts for kids. The possibilities for listening are varied and endless.

Yto also features a nightlight and okay to wait clock and other functions like white noise and an alarm. It's not connected to the internet, so kids can't go where you don't want them to go, and no one is listening in on them. And did I mention it screen free? I learned about Yto from Corey. Here's what she says.

The Yoko player is by far my favorite [00:24:00] parenting tool that I've ever purchased, and I recommend them to everyone who has kids. They're an amazing screen-free audiobook player that have been an absolute lifesaver for teaching my kids to play independently. Both my kids carried their yo Oto players around the house, listening to books while drawing, doing Lego, and even relaxing in their rooms before bed.

We also take yo Oto players everywhere with us, short or long car trips, sporting events, restaurants, and even doctor's appointments. On a recent vacation, their yo Oto players got them through an eight hour drive and were used every evening in our hotel to help my kids relax. After very busy days, yo Oto has an impressive and ever-growing collection of books you can buy and have absolutely helped inspire a love of reading in both my kids.

Thanks for the firsthand recommendation, Corey. And I also just wanna highlight that you don't have to buy their books. You can buy blank cards and record your own content. To learn more, visit www.reimaginepeacefulparenting.com/yoto. That's www.reimaginepeacefulparenting.com/yoto. [00:25:00] I hope you check them out and I'm just so happy to have them on as a sponsor for the podcast.

Let's get back to the podcast.

So far we've been talking about selective eating, like when your kid won't eat, but what do you do when kids are maybe not getting the cues of hunger and fullness that other kids might eat, might be getting, or that other people might

get and they are just wanting to eat all the time, or they're not getting a sense of being full if they've already eaten?

What is kind of a reasonable amount to eat at a meal?

Jackie: Great question. So there's many factors to this. I would say first step is to rule out anything going on with any medical underlying medical issue that could be causing extreme hunger. 'cause I have seen that. Or if the kid is taking any medication, some psychiatric medications make.

You really hungry. So make sure they're [00:26:00] not

Sarah: just actually hungry before you, like put your own value judgment on it. They can't be, they can't actually be hungry. Yeah.

Jackie: Yeah. That's like, maybe it's a thyroid issue. May, you know, there could be something underlying going on. Second, I would wanna know especially if the kid is on stimulant medications.

Are they skipping meals during the day? Are they not eating? And then, you know, quote unquote binging at night. Because getting them to eat on a schedule consistently can help to reduce that. Right. And, third is, I would wanna know what they're eating. You know, are their meals actually satiating?

Are they getting enough protein and fiber in their meals? It's possible, you know, that they're eating you know, five slices of pizza, but not feeling full because there's just, there's no fiber and not much protein in that meal. So, yeah, I would wanna look at that. And then I would say, comes the.

That interoceptive awareness. So for, so I have, I've I have a kid's [00:27:00] hunger, fullness scale that I've created. I also have one that I found online and in, so like a typical intuitive eating hunger, fullness scale, it has steps one to 10. So mine has five steps. So it's it's simplified for kids. So it's either very hungry moderately hungry.

Neutral. So, you know, comfortable, not hungry, not full, slightly full or very full. So, and I'll talk to the kids and their parents about what our body signs could be that we are getting full and. Also, you know, I might ask them like, do you ever feel like Thanksgiving dinner full or Christmas dinner full?

Where it's just, it's really uncomfortable. Like I, you know, I'm familiar with that feeling. I don't like that feeling. It doesn't feel physically good. So you

could approach it from that lens of like, let's try to, you know, not feel. I guess bad. And just, it's really a practice, honestly.

It's really a practice. I find once [00:28:00] kids do start to practice, you know, pause, you know, perhaps during one meal a day you could practice pausing and checking in. You know, is my tummy starting to get full? Is my tummy already really full? And start to tune in that way. And then also. You know, if they want to.

If they think that they still feel hungry at the end of a meal, perhaps taking a pause for 10, 15 minutes and then checking back in to see if you are hung still hungry or not. It could be that feeling has passed and if you are still hungry. Okay, then let's have some, you know, let's have some more food.

And there's nothing bad about that. If it's, you know, also the child is seeking, like, especially with a DH, ADHD is like dopamine seeking or sensory seeking. Can we come up with some non-food ways to still get that stimulation? So, you know, that could be. Knitting or coloring or, [00:29:00] you know, keeping your hands busy.

'cause sometimes that's all it is. The kid just need, you know, they're seeking that, that input.

Sarah: Right. And food does hit that spot for that sensory or dopamine input. How do you talk to a child about that without it? Because without it being like shaming. Like, you know, you're eating too much, you shouldn't eat that much.

Or you know that kinda like, how do you talk about how much food a person needs and how to think about that without it being like a shaming thing.

Jackie: So I will say it is really tough. It is hard, especially if, you know, I've had situations where. I'm saying to the kid one thing, and you know, and the parent is, you know, like, oh we don't want you to gain weight.

We want you to be healthy. And there's kind of conflicting messages. So it, it is very tricky and something that I'm very sensitive about. So typically I'll, you know, I might say to [00:30:00] the kid, you know, like I'd mentioned in the previous question, like, do you ever feel that Christmas dinner full?

How does that feel for you? Like, is it comfortable for you? Usually they say it's not comfortable. So, you know, I might say, okay, like, let's, I might just like frame it in that lens of like using, you know, what we eat as like a learning

experience. So you know, if they see like, oh, you know, I had this and I felt really uncomfortable after then that's a great learning experience.

It's not a failure. Then next time, maybe we could try scaling, but. You know, reducing it a little bit so that we still feel satiated, but we're still comfortable. We could still go about our day and go to our sports, you know, and music classes and all that. Yeah, so that's one way. And also, so I never mentioned calories to kids.

I never mentioned weight. I don't ask them to weigh themselves. I don't talk about their bodies. I don't comment on [00:31:00] bodies that, you know, that is not my philosophy. More so just framing. Food as fuel. Seeing it as fuel and nourishment and not labeling it good or bad. 'cause I'll hear the kids say like, oh, I was bad today.

Right, right. I had a chocolate. Yeah. And I'm like, no, that, that's not bad. Food is food. You did not commit a crime by eating chocolate. You know, like removing that. Morality that we often place associate with food.

Sarah: I wonder if it's just incurring to me as you're talking you know, we were just talking about how sometimes food gets.

Food gets seen as the answer to when the body is needing some you know, dopamine or sensory input. And I wonder if you could just say to a kid, you know, sometimes your body wants something and your brain might say the answer is food. But sometimes your body wants something different. And just checking in about what those other types of things could be and like checking in with yourself [00:32:00] around that.

Jackie: Yeah, I like that. That's a good idea. I hadn't actually thought about framing it that way.

Sarah: Yeah. Like, what do I need? Right. Like, what do I need right now? Is it actually that my tummy is feeling hungry or is it that I'm bored? Or is it that I'm, you know, wanting something fun or to be nice to myself or something like that?

I'm not sure.

Jackie: Yeah. Like, yeah. Of like, how can I nourish my body? How can I be kind to my body and. And listen to what it wants.

Sarah: Yeah, because I know from the, it just can get tricky when the division of responsibility says that the kid decides if they're going to eat and how much and what do you do when that answer seems counter to what their body actually needs.

Like if they can't, like, because responsive feeding is that the body knows what it needs. Right. But if there's something that's getting in between getting, having it be a mixed message or a, or getting in the way of the message, then it can be really tricky for parents. I think.

Jackie: It is. It is. And yeah.

[00:33:00] So yeah I've seen a lot of dieticians shifting away from division of responsibility. I used to use it a lot more in my practice than I currently do. I'm not like talking badly about it at all. It has many wonderful uses. But yeah, I mean, I'm not as. Like strict with like, you know, these are the times we're feeding and kitchen's closed if it's not that time.

Because, you know, there are times when kids are, you know, they are hungry and they do wanna eat something and it's not at that set time and that's okay.

Sarah: Yeah. I have heard some, I have heard some some criticisms that if you were a person who wanted to be restrictive in your eating, that you could find the.

Division of responsibility as a way to uphold that, even though that's not the intention of the division of responsibility.

Jackie: Yes, totally.

Sarah: Yeah. Yeah. So we just always have to be careful with getting too dogmatic about anything and really looking at our, I guess looking at our own our own motivations.

Like why do we, you know, why are we [00:34:00] doing what we're doing? I'm gonna shift a little bit to something else Corey said to make sure to ask you about. She said to ask you about the 11 step family. Meal routine, and maybe you could give a couple of ex of examples of the, tell us what it is and then maybe give a couple examples.

Jackie: Yeah, so this comes from the SOS approach to feeding which I learned in my training, and they've come up with this very intricate 11 step family

mealtime routine. I do not recommend doing all 11 steps, but I show the families that, and we pull from it the ones that they think will best support their family at dinner time.

And so it's essentially different. The different steps to like before, during, and after DI dinner, to bring some routine to mealtime and consistency and familiarity for the kids, and also to create an environment that's relaxed and fun and low pressure and more conducive to trying new foods. So, [00:35:00] you asked a few steps.

So the first step is giving your kids a verbal warning. Like kids we're going to, we're gonna have dinner in five minutes so that they, their brains can have that time to transition from, you know, homework or playtime to dinner. And some of the other steps are washing hands before dinner. Serving.

Serving out the food in family style on the table so that kids can have the opportunity to explore different foods and be around different foods. And another one of the steps that I really like, that I'll use often is having the learn a learning plate on the table. So that's, you know, if the kid might not be ready to tolerate having.

New foods on their plate, we can have a, you know, small bowl, small plate next to their dinner plate that's called the learning plate. And their responsibility is to dish some of the food that, you know, that's on the table [00:36:00] that other family members may be eating and put a little bit of that onto their learning plate.

And so that's the plate where we are. Experimenting and getting exposure to, and learning about new foods and learning whether, you know, how we feel about them yeah, how we feel about them. And other steps are helping to clean up. One step that I really like is the kid, if they're, you know, if it's a age appropriate, is to help scoop some of the leftovers from their plate into the compost or into.

You know, leftovers into containers because that's another very low pressure way for a kid to interact with different foods. Right. They're not actually eating

Sarah: it, but they're maybe touching it and smelling it and seeing it.

Jackie: Exactly. And when they know it's going in the compost or going in the garbage, they know they're not gonna be forced to eat.

It's Right. So they're more relaxed. And that can sometimes be a time when they end up trying something new 'cause they don't have pressure. So yeah, it's, so yeah, that's essentially what it is. There are [00:37:00] 11 steps to it. You do not need to do all 11 steps and it's it's just fun and good to well.

Fun and enjoyable to bring some sort of routine to family dinner time, if that's what you know, families do or wanna do. And a lot of parents have told me that it's been a life changer for them. Like that technique alone, just having more of a. A dinnertime routine has been game changing.

Sarah: That's amazing.

Another thing that Corey said to make sure to ask you about are micro changes. She said, for example tiny changes like a beef burger with a quarter ground chicken to introduce chicken. So what are, what's a micro change and what are some maybe other examples that parents can do?

Jackie: So that is part of a technique called food chaining. Have you heard about that? I have heard of it, yeah. Okay. So Case, but go ahead and explain it for everybody else. Exactly. So that's where we take a familiar food or a safe food for [00:38:00] a kid and make. These micro tweaks to it until it ends up eventually becoming a new food.

Or it might not even become a new food. It might just be that we make small tweaks and that is it helps to give. Exposure to kids in a way that's not anxiety, not as anxiety provoking, not as fearful, because it's still somewhat similar to what they've already been used to and feel comfortable with.

So, for example, if, yeah, if a kid let's say they, they love smoothies and they'll only eat like. Say a strawberry banana smoothie. Mm-hmm. One tweak to it, but they won't eat like. Whole strawberry. So one tweak could be we make the smoothie, we go from strawberry banana to just strawberry or, and maybe then we start to reduce the liquid a little bit so it starts to become thicker.

Or [00:39:00] maybe we leave some small chunks of strawberry in the smoothie. So that they can get exposure to the solid. Piece of food and then, you know, maybe we reduce the liquid a little bit more and then and then maybe they're having. Small bits of chopped up strawberry in a bowl with milk. Right, right.

Or something. And then eventually, you know, they might feel ready to have the strawberry. Or like the example you gave with the beef burger. If, you know, if

kids really, if like they love hamburgers but not other types of meat. So maybe we make a ham, you know, we make a hamburger with. A little bit of lentils or a little bit of ground Turkey, and then gradually a little bit more until it becomes a Turkey burger or ground Turkey or ground meat, or, you know.

How

Sarah: much would you, how much would you tell a child about this when you're doing this process of the micro changes or the food chaining? Would you tell them? Because I, I know that, sometimes you could make a small change and they [00:40:00] wouldn't notice. But then that a, that almost defeats the purpose of making the change.

Because they wouldn't. No. Like, oh, I'm actually eating chicken and I thought I hated chicken. But also some kids get so anxious about anything that's new, like no way. I'm not eating that. Even if it tastes the same, but 'cause it has chicken in it. And also I'm throwing a whole bunch of stuff out at you here.

But also I have, I remember back when I. I don't, maybe you were like still in high school at this point, 'cause I think you're a lot younger than I am, but I remember there was a big fad of like hiding things in food. Like there were whole cookbooks that were like hiding vegetables and brownies and giving them to your kids.

Like, and I remember some of the criticisms of that were you're breaking your trust, breaking kids' trust, right? So where do you, when do you tell kids that you're making a change? Or when do you not tell them? And what's your, how do you fit that into what you were just talking about?

Jackie: Yes. Wonderful question. So I am not a fan of hiding. I am not a fan of sneaking because you know, as you said, the [00:41:00] kids know they're smart. They know it. Like especially autistic kids they're. Their palates are very sensitive. They know if there's one tiny change to something. And then, like you said, it does break the trust.

So my recommendation is to, you know, tell kids like, oh, this is this is a hamburger, but it has, you might say it's a little bit different from the typical hamburgers that you like. There's a little bit of some ground Turkey. Or I also recommend giving the food a different name. So, for example, there's brownies.

If you're making black bean brownies, you can call them brainy brownies. These brownies are they taste pretty similar to the other brownies that you like.

But we are calling them brainy brownies because they have a super food in them. They have black beans in them, and that's gonna make you strong.

And like a superhero type thing. So yeah, giving it a different name. 'cause then the kids know, okay, this is different. This is not the same, [00:42:00] you're not hiding. And it also makes it more fun.

Sarah: Yeah. When that makes sense. When I was a kid, my mom told me that, you know, Alva, Sesame.

That the sweet that's made outta sesame paste. Yes. My mom gave me some and told me it was fudge, but I already knew fudge. 'cause my aunts would make fudge and I thought it was. She gave it to me and said it was fudge, and when I tasted it, it was so radically different than what I was expecting. I still can't stand.

Tini today, because I think of that early experience of having this shocking flavor when I thought I was getting peanut butter fudge or maple fudge or something like that.

Jackie: Oh my gosh. Yep. Yeah. You could at least call it sesame fudge. Sure. Exactly.

Sarah: Yeah. Yeah. '

Jackie: cause a lot of people,

Sarah: a lot of people tell me that Hava is really delicious, but I've never been able to get past my first experience with it.

Jackie: Wow. Yeah it's fascinating. Hey, how it. These experiences from childhood really [00:43:00] can come with us into adulthood.

Sarah: Yeah. Yeah, for sure. So as we draw to a close, is there anything that I should have asked you about feeding kids when it's tricky to feed kids that I haven't asked you about?

Jackie: I mean, we could spend hours on this topic, but I would say you know, if I'm gonna leave parents with some parting words and some advice, I would say be persistent. You know, continue offering and exposing new foods and it's not your fault. You are doing your best parent, you know, parent, all parents wanna do their best for their kids.

So it's not, I know it's, you know, it's not coming from a bad place that you know, of like wanting the kids to eat. But yeah, so have that compassion for yourself. Know that you're not doing anything wrong. You are not a bad parent and be patient with [00:44:00] your kids. And try to, you know, like I said, keep offering, try to let go of that pressure, you know, they're gonna be okay.

They'll get there. And yeah, let go of that pressure. And also it's, honestly, as much as it is helping the kids, it's also helping the parents to feel less stressed at mealtime as well. Yeah, because they're often very stressed and the kids feel it. Yeah. So if they can, you know, let go a bit, let go of the pressure on themselves and the pressure on their kids to eat, that's when we start to see the magic happen.

I love that.

Sarah: Yeah. 'cause stress, really, stress shuts down your nerve, stretch down, shuts down your digestive system, right? So it stress at meal times is gonna make feeding even harder. Even, you know, as hard as it is already, it makes it harder. Hundred percent. So the question that I ask all my guests or a variation of it is if you [00:45:00] ever have kids someday, what do you hope?

What do you wanna remind yourself of? So, what do you wanna be sure to remember? You know, when you're, when you, if you have kids and you're in the thick of it, what do you wanna remember? Remind yourself.

Jackie: That's a great one. Yeah. Well, I definitely wanna have kids someday and I would wanna. It can be about, it

Sarah: can be about anything too.

It doesn't have to be about feeding. It could be about anything. Okay. General advice you wanna remind yourself about if you do have kids and when you do have kids?

Jackie: Yeah, I would wanna remind myself that parenting is hard and it comes with ups and downs. And we can do our best to, you know, to raise kids with strong values.

But at ultimately. Kids are their own people and they have their own autonomy and independence to, you know, live their life, how they end up living it. So I would remind myself to like let go of. The pressure on myself and the stress and and know that it's normal to have [00:46:00] ups and downs and challenges with

Sarah: parenthood.

So true. I love that. Great advice to your future parent self. Where's the best place to for folks to go and find out more about you and what you do? And we'll put it, we'll put the, whatever you say, we'll put that in the show notes as well.

Jackie: Yeah. Awesome. So feel free to check out my website, jackie silver nutrition.com.

We have lots of simple recipes and lots of blog posts about. Neurodivergent Nutrition for kids autism, A DHD, all that. So feel free to go there. We also have a free download neurodivergent grab and Go meals, which is also very helpful for parents and families. So you're welcome to download that.

And we also offer free 15 minute discovery calls for families who are interested in our virtual one-on-one. Nutrition counseling services and I'll give you the link that you can put at the bottom of fantastic podcast and it's also on my website. Awesome. On Instagram, find me on at Accessible Wellness.

Sarah: Accessible Wellness. Okay, [00:47:00] great. And I know Corey said that, you know, even though a lot of the things that you taught her, she already. Sort of intellectually knew or had read about. It just made such a difference to her to have somebody who just took all the burden off her shoulders to help her navigate this.

And, um, and I think that's where coaching would, whatever, in whatever area you're getting support in, it's just really helpful to feel like you've got somebody on your side cheering you on. And, taking some of the burden off your shoulders. So I know she really appreciated working with you, and I'm sure everyone's gonna appreciate the gems that you shared in this podcast.

So thank you so much. It's my pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode. I hope you found this conversation insightful and exactly what you needed in this moment. Be sure to subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast platform and leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcasts. Remember that I'm rooting for you. I see you out there showing up for your kids and doing the best you can.

Sending hugs over the airwaves today. Hang in there. You've got [00:48:00] this.