

Tips From Other Family Based Treatment Parents:

- Parents should immediately assume full responsibility for selecting, serving, and supervising all meals and snacks - it's easier to start firm and then move back once treatment progresses.
- Each time you plate your child's food, ask yourself two questions: 1. "Is this enough food to nourish my child back to health?" and 2. "Am I confident I did not allow the eating disorder to influence my decision?" If either answer is 'no', make a change!
- Grocery shop without your child to avoid negotiation and reduce anxiety in your child.
- Keep your child occupied and out of the kitchen during meal prep and when you are getting their plate ready to avoid negotiations about what and how much to serve and reduce anxiety in your child.
- Create menus and meal ideas that have enough calories to reverse your child's malnutrition.
- Try to fit your child's calorie needs into a manageable portion-think dense! Boost the caloric value by adding butter, cream, whole-fat milk, olive oil, coconut oil, whipped cream, etc. as appropriate! Instead of serving plain fruit, consider baking a pie, cobbler, or crisp. Try french fries instead of boiled potatoes. Vegetables coated in olive oil and roasted bump up the calorie level.
- I do not recommend parents lie or "sneak" ingredients into foods, that said, remember that you do not owe the eating disorder any explanations for your choices. Know when to say, "Because I said so!"
- Stick to general answers like: "it contains the nutrients your body needs" or "it has everything your body needs to get well" to avoid being drawn into unproductive conversations. If arguing did not work before, it won't work now!
- If your child engages in self-induced vomiting, allow at least 1-2 hours to pass after snack before allowing your child to use the restroom (get into the habit of going before!)
- It may be necessary to supervise all of your child's bathroom use if your child attempts to purge at other times (e.g. during showers).
- If your child is engaging in compulsive/compensatory exercise, it may be necessary to provide supervision at other times as well.
- Use positive distractions when you can.
- Even in the toughest moments, remember your child is worth fighting for!