I was preparing supper last night when our son James stuck his head in the kitchen to see what I was doing.
Crumbling bell peppers and an onion soup mix over a large piece of beef, I began to roll the piece into one big log for the oven.
“What is that,” James asked, with his nose nearly touching the meat itself.
Fanning him off the meat, I explained to him what the dish was and what all was in it.
“It looks delicious,” he smiled. “Is it grown up food? Is it for everybody?”
I told him he could have a piece once it cooked, but then he quickly scrunched up his nose.
“No, I don’t want it,” he said, easing back. “I want a hot dog with grapes.”
The same dish that was “delicious” a few minutes ago was now unworthy of his appetite.
When I was a child, I was the most picky eater ever. James has taken on that same habit. He rivals me with his selective food choices.
I was a ham, snap beans, potatoes and gravy type of kid. There were many nights that a pot of snap beans and a piece of bread made my meal because I refused to eat anything else.
Momma would try to put her foot down on my eating habits. Placing a plate of food in front of me, she would say that I couldn’t get up until I ate everything.
Then she would rant about all the starving kids in the world, and I would stare at the dining room light hoping that she would forget about the whole thing.
And she would always seem to place me right in front of window where I could see all my friends playing with such excitement and vigor.
There was this one dish she made that was supposed to be a tuna fish salad. Only I thought it didn’t taste like it.
I loved tuna fish so much that I would eat it straight out the can and then drink the juice left in the bottom. But this dish was filled with celery, dressing and some other spices. Momma even put it on a bed of lettuce for me.
I stabbed the glob with my fork a few times. I even spread it around on my plate to make it look like there was less than it appeared. The dog wouldn’t even help me out. She refused to eat it. In fact, I had to wipe it up off the floor real quick before Momma saw it.
I literally sat at the table until the nightly news came on. Momma was so disgusted, she grabbed the plate and told me to go run my bath water.
Sitting in my bath tub surrounded by my plastic toys, my stomach sounded like a bulldozer.
I couldn’t go in there and tell Momma that I was hungry. She would make me eat that awful tuna

salad.
I went to bed hungry that night and ate the biggest breakfast ever the next morning.
It hasn't got to that level yet with James. Jason and I have found that if we threaten to toss supper out to the dog, James wants to eat it all of a sudden.
We even once settled for James to eat his supper "like a dinosaur" just so that he would get his supper in him.
The pattern continues with our daughter Elsie. She is eating her baby food pretty well, but we have to make a series of noises and gestures to get her to open her mouth.
It's funny the things that parents will do to make sure their child eats a healthy and fulfilling meal.
Momma would stand her ground and make me sit at a table all night. My grandparents would mix my food up and call it a "casserole" in order for me to eat something they knew I wouldn't like. At times, I was even straight up lied to when I asked what something was on my plate.
And Jason and I have resorted to those same methods.
We will take a plate to the door and holler for the dog to come get it. We will try to steal a spoon or two for ourselves. We have promised an extra 30 minutes of play time before bed. We have bribed with a cup of yogurt for afterwards.
We have danced in a circle around a highchair. We have tapped the baby food jar like a bell to get attention. We have played peek-a-boo just to get a mouth open.
Parents will do some pretty silly things to get their picky eaters to eat their food. And kids seem to play the same tricks through the years.
As I picked up James' plate of spaghetti the other night, I grinned when I noticed half of it had been moved all over the plate to make it seem like he ate more than he did.
Cutting my eyes over at him on the couch, he grinned back...right before shoving a spoon of yogurt in his mouth.