



CARRIE EDGE COUNSELING & CONSULTING

Eating Blindness

A guide for caregivers of children with ADHD

First, take a deep breath! This is not an uncommon problem for individuals with ADHD. For children with ADHD, forgetting to eat — or **eating blindness** — usually happens because they are deeply hyperfocused on play or interacting and are unaware of their body's hunger signals. Since children lack the executive function to feed themselves, they need help from adults to structure their environment to make eating playful and low-effort.

Here are some suggestions to get your child's eating on track at home — and they can be modified for school.

Automate the Cues by Gamifying Transitions

Use Fun Alarms:

Set a phone alarm with a funny sound or a favorite song to signal "snack time."

Visual Snack Stations:

Place small, clear containers of safe snacks at eye level in play spots. Clear food containers at school could be helpful too.

Transition Pairing:

Build eating into routines, like serving a small snack immediately when they get in the car.

Make It Simple

Serve Single-Bite Foods:

Large meals overwhelm. Allow them to "graze." Use "grazing cups" (like muffin cups) filled with small items like berries, cheese cubes (by the way, cheese is one of the best snacks for an individual with ADHD), and nuts.

Keep Play Moving:

Allow them to stand, move, or play with a quiet toy at the table so eating doesn't feel like a boring interruption. This may be something their school could accommodate. Or, perhaps they could offer a quiet, dimly lit space so they can focus on food.

Use Fun Liquid Nutrition:

This is my personal favorite trick! Offer smoothies, drinkable yogurts, or milk or fruit pouches with fun straws. Cute, fun straw toppers might "encourage" eating.

Manage the "Hangries"

Watch for Behavioral Cues:

Since hunger recognition is a challenge, watch for secondary signs: whining, sudden meltdowns, aggression, or lethargy. These behaviors are probably saying, "I'm hungry."

Don't Ask, Just Offer:

Asking, "Are you hungry?" typically gets a "No." Instead, just place a small, appealing snack near them while they play.

Keep "Safe" Foods Prepped:

Keep "safe foods" at hand. Predictable favorites conveniently available prevent blood sugar crashes. Don't get overly concerned with the nutritional value — you will lose the battle. Intake is the goal! Let them **EAT!**

Remember: eating blindness is a wiring difference, not defiance. With playful structure, predictable cues, and low-effort foods, most children with ADHD can stay fueled through the day — at home and at school.