

Katherine Cole: Hello and welcome to The Four Top; it's a round table discussion of today's hot button topics in food and beverage. I'm your host Katherine Cole. On today's episode we are joined by three experts in food, nutrition, children and families and we will discuss whole food cooking for families, a new concept for empowering kids to cook and selective eating. We are not in the studios of OPB today but rather the offices of Little Sous, that's S-O-U-S. A new company that inspires children to become culinary adventurers.

Katherine Cole: The first guest I'd like to thank for being here is our host today, the founder of Little Sous, Kelly Montoya. Hi Kelly.

Kelly Montoya: Hi, so excited to be here. Thank you.

Katherine Cole: Thanks for joining us. We're also joined by Michelle Smith, cookbook author and food blogger who's plane literally touched down just minutes ago. Welcome Michelle.

Michelle Smith: Thank you Katherine.

Katherine Cole: And Dr. Julie O'Toole, founder of Kartini Clinic for Children and Families and the author of give food a chance. A new view on childhood eating disorders. So good to have you here, Dr. Julie O'Toole.

Joolie O'Toole: Entirely my pleasure Katherine.

Katherine Cole: So now for our first course which is selective eating. Every parent who knows a kid who is a very picky eater, most kids grow out of this phase after toddler hood but some continue to be very restrictive about what they eat even into the high school years and beyond. Dr. Julie O'Toole your book your book addresses the subject of selective eating and I've read blog post of yours about this subject and found it fascinating. What is selective eating? And at what point should parents worry about it?

Joolie O'Toole: That is a great question and first I want to say that selective eating was first described by two doctors in London, England at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. Selective eating as they see it, as we see it is really a condition that's present from birth or earliest babyhood whereby a child will only eat a very narrow range of food and this persist lifelong. This condition is subject to a great deal of misunderstanding. One other things that I thin is the most difficult to manage about selective eating is the parents falsely blame themselves for it and grandparents blame parents and neighbors blame parents and friends blame parents. So the parents of a selective eater are often told, "Well if you just made him sit at the table until he was done, he'd eventually become so hungry he would eat outside of his range. But selective eaters will starve to death rather than eat outside of their range.

Joolie O'Toole: It's amazing. I try to tell parents, first of all, this is a biological condition. This is not caused by parents not exposing their kids to a wide enough variety of foods or eating the same things at home themselves. Seems to run in families which makes sense, for biological conditions. May have something to do with taste receptors in the tongue. In fact we're trying to look into that at Kartini Clinic we have an IRB approved proof of concept pilot study whereby we're going to block the bitter receptors in the mouth using a commercial product and see if that allows people who never eat vegetables to eat vegetables.

Katherine Cole: Oh my gosh that's fascinating.

Joolie O'Toole: It's totally fascinating. It really is.

Katherine Cole: I need to back you up. What does IRB stand for?

Joolie O'Toole: I'm sorry, Institutional Review Board. This is what keeps scientists all over the world on the up and up when they do research with human subjects. You have to have approval from an IRB in order to publish any results that you might get from, work with human subjects. This all arose out of some terrible basically crimes of the past, where people were subjected to experimentation without full disclosure of what was going on. I think everybody has heard of those situations.

Katherine Cole: This is so fascinating. My background is in wine and I have studied our perception of bitter flavor as well. I would never have thought that you could block someone's perception of bitterness. That's fascinating.

Joolie O'Toole: It's completely fascinating and actually it's very important to the beverage industry. The people who manufacture these products that block the bitter oral fairings are using it to make very bitter, happy beers palatable to people who like Budweiser. You can take a really bitter IPA, take a few sips of this stuff ahead of time and it'll taste like a flat Pilsner.

Katherine Cole: That's so interesting.

Joolie O'Toole: I know isn't that interesting? I heard the idea of trying this out on selective eaters. Because of the rules of the IRB, you can't try this on children, it has to be done with adults. So we're trying to recruit selective eaters, adults, people over 18 to try this experiment.

Katherine Cole: Kelly Montoya I want to turn to you for a second. When you are selecting the recipes for Little Sous, do you have things like bitterness in mind in terms of palatability to kids who might be a little picky?

Kelly Montoya: I think the way we certainly approach recipes broadly and every single experience that we create is rooted in a singular curriculum. The one that we just created was ricotta. So that one is kind of like a blank slate, like rice. It's

interesting to know how to make. It's way easier than I even thought it was. We made it for the first time when we developed it. But recipes like that or you can ingredients, take away ingredients to customize to certain palates and experiment is really neutral. And what we try to do, our curriculum is designed to foster creativity and improvisation. Not that we won't do things that are a little more dangerous. We certainly don't want to put really harsh strong flavors into sort of the main curriculum recipe that we have for particular experience. We don't want to deter people, we want to bring them onboard to nice instead.

Katherine Cole: Julie can you tell me. What is the difference between a picky eater and a selective eater. I would admit I have a 13-year old and we joke that she only eats Nutella and sushi but of course she does eat other things. But she's always skinny. It bugs us that she does eat more. At what point should a parent worry-

Kelly Montoya: I have the same question.

Katherine Cole: Exactly.

Kelly Montoya: At what point should a parent worry.

Joolie O'Toole: Well as parents we're born to worry so start with that. We always worry. But you know there's something deeply offensive to our sense of good parenting when your child won't eat. When all they'll eat is chocolate milk, Cheetos and chicken nuggets. You can imagine how scary this is for a parent and how embarrassed you would feel for this menu. I spent a lot of my time telling parents whose children's growth chart I've reviewed, selective eaters that they've done a good job considering the hand they've been dealt and that basically they should be congratulated for their excellent parenting because their child is thriving. It's important to be able to take your child to a pediatrician or someone who is versed in growth in and development and who understands selective eating and reassure yourself that you're doing the right thing.

Joolie O'Toole: Because honestly there's not one darn thing you can do about a selective eater. You can bribe them, you can threaten them, you can stand on your head, you can eat in front of them, you can make them sit at the table until they fall asleep, it won't change. The most important tool at your disposal is actually the growth chart. If the growth chart is good, everything is good. Back off, worry about something else. If your child is failing to thrive, that's a whole different issue and that is a medical diagnosis and has to be looked at carefully.

Katherine Cole: What do you think of the Little Sous thought of introducing some pretty neutral foods like Ricotta and empowering kids to make them themselves? Is that effective with kids who are struggling with kind of thing?

Joolie O'Toole: It's a fabulous idea, it won't affect a selective eater.

Katherine Cole: No.

Joolie O'Toole: But it will probably broaden the palate of other children and not only that, Ricotta is really fun to make. What you're looking for is more than just forcing people down a certain menu track. You're looking for fun and adventure and something meaningful to do with your children.

Katherine Cole: I'm super curious about, you talked about it being genetic, are their personality type commonalities across the board. What would be an indicator that it was selective eating versus a picky eater?

Joolie O'Toole: Eating and appetite is really complex. It is affected by what we're exposed to. Now I'm not talking about the selective eater here. But in general children eat with their eyes. They won't eat a pancake but if it looks like Mickey Mouse, they will. The average child is very affected by the shape, the context, what their friends are eating, all that kind of stuff, the smell, everything, the table. They maybe picky in certain ways like only eat pancakes if they look like Mickey Mouse or only drink chocolate milk if mom started instead of dad or whatever. That's picky eating and that usually develops later and goes through phases and comes and goes and changes and so forth. But selective eating is really tough. It's touch on the child because they'll go places where they absolutely want to be able to eat like other kids but can't.

Joolie O'Toole: You mentioned Katherine that you read my blog in which I stated that for an average eater to imagine what a selective eater experiences, ask yourself what it would take for you to be induced to eat gag excrement. Would you do it? You wouldn't do it. No matter how it's dressed up or what people told you or if it was good for your health.

Katherine Cole: Or even I feel like there's this new trend to eat insects and we keep seeing videos. There's a video of Nicole Kidman just eating all these insects. The thought is just horrifying.

Joolie O'Toole: I've eaten chapulines in Mexico. Little grasshoppers but I do have to admit it's fairly horrifying.

Kelly Montoya: Were they covered it in chocolate or were they?

Joolie O'Toole: No they were crunchy. They were kind of like a little potato chip except grasshopper shaped.

Katherine Cole: Ew.

Joolie O'Toole: Yeah. Exactly.

Katherine Cole: So the idea of eating dog poop is not comprehensible to me. But there's another term food phobia. So what's the difference between a selective eater and a food phobia?

Joolie O'Toole: And a child with food phobia. Food phobia is a completely different thing. But interestingly, you asked earlier about whether certain personality types or temperament types are more prone to-

Katherine Cole: Kelly asked that?

Joolie O'Toole: Kelly. Yes to selective eating. I can only give you anecdotal experience. My own and then Dr. Lask the original describer of selective eating. We think we've noticed that it is more common with children with autism and in personality types that are relatively more rigid in other ways. The person who has food phobia, the child who develops food phobia is entirely different. Although it's commonly on a substrate of an anxious temperament type. Food phobia is the sudden onset of unwillingness to swallow essentially. It's also sometimes called functional dysphagia but I hate that term. Functional comes out of medicine from the 19th century it means like you're crazy, it's all in your head. I never use that.

Katherine Cole: Dysphagia is when you physically can't swallow food, correct?

Joolie O'Toole: You can't or you won't. Functional dysphagia implies that you could but it's all in your head. So food phobia happens commonly after a choking incident. So a child might-

Kelly Montoya: I was going to ask if it was event related or?

Joolie O'Toole: It can be a vicarious event. I have had a couple of patients over the years who witnessed somebody choking or vomiting and they became convinced that if they swallowed anything, they would choke and die or they would vomit in front of everybody. This again is you cannot talk them out of it. You can take them to swallowing schools. We get kids from the local ear, nose and throat doctors. The parents have taken the kids of occupational therapists and psychotherapists and hypnotherapists and everything and it doesn't work. After I had seen about I don't know maybe the 10th child with this condition early in my career, I decided that we were going to work out a protocol to see if we could change this for the kids.

Joolie O'Toole: We've developed a protocol that I have published in my blogs in the hopes that somebody else will pick it up because we get a lot of calls from other doctors, what should I do? And so the last one that I wrote I called Food Phobia the Recipe because do this, this, this and this.

Katherine Cole: What do you do?

Joolie O'Toole: The protocol either in the hospital or in our partial hospital at Kartini Clinic is a nasal gastric tube is placed in the child's nose. It won't work without the tube. As soon as the tube is placed, you quit feeding the child. You quit talking about food, you quit offering food. What you're trying to do is take all of this anxiety down a huge notch. Then you start them on a medication olanzapine. Olanzapine we think works because it will relax you the way anti anxiety medication does. But it's also an antipsychotic.

Joolie O'Toole: The reason that's probably important is because this is basically the delusional belief that you will die if you swallow. There's a magic number, it's 7.5 milligrams we have no idea why. So we start them at a really small dose, we get them up to 7.5 milligrams which is also a small dose and then we wait. And the kids come in and they play and they read and they talk to the therapist and they play with the other kids and we wait until we are sure that the child's anxiety has diminished tremendously. That the biological drive to eat which we all possess has gotten stronger and stronger. They smell pizza, they see cookies, all these they want to eat, they're just terrified. The medicine has worked its magic and the reason we have the tube in the nose is because when you are starved, these kids usually come to us, they've lost weight, they starved and don't eat. The brain does not function well.

Joolie O'Toole: You have to get that weight back. You have to get the nutrition back. So the brain comes back. The brain is back, the anxiety is low, the medication is at 7.5 and then all the stars are aligned, we start to feed them.

Katherine Cole: This is just fascinating. It's so interesting because what Kelly is doing with food and kids, it's this joyous things that's bringing families together and making them happy. We all need food to survive and yet it's like a life and death thing for these kids, you're working with Julie, there's so many ways in which food can affect our lives so profoundly. This is just fascinating.

Katherine Cole: So let's turn to our second course, turning kids into cooks. When I'm in a hurry on weeknights, I have to say I go into robot mode and I just plunked around on the table without really thinking about it. I'm not cooking creatively and my kids are not learning how to cook and I wish it was more fun for all of us. So Kelly Montoya, please help me out. You are a busy professional but you've always found time to cook with your daughter and now you founded a company that's all about cooking with kids. I'd love to hear what inspired you to start Little Sous and what Little Sous is accomplishing or hoping to accomplish.

Kelly Montoya: Well, it was kind of an accident and it was something that evolved over time and you know that saying, you can't really connect the dots looking forward, you can only connect them looking backward. Full disclosure, I don't cook every evening with my daughter, that does not happen.

Katherine Cole: I'm so relieved to hear that.

Michelle Smith: Me too.

Kelly Montoya: Oh my gosh! Let's just be honest about that. Parents are juggling a lot. When my daughter was born I was lucky enough, I was magazine publisher at the time, I had a really hectic lifestyle and my mom was taking care of my daughter during the day. But even as she got a little bit older, they go to bed so early and you get home and I would as many of us do as parents who are working and trying to be really great parents, you become a master of efficiency. At the time I didn't have this grand vision about what I wanted to instill in my daughter, I would come home and it was really about maximizing the time that I had. So let's say I got home at five, toddlers go to sleep at eight. I had three hours and I had to make the most of that time.

Kelly Montoya: We had to eat. I brought her into the kitchen with and as soon as she was old enough to sit up I put a spatula in her hand. And that just became our quality time together. It became the thing to do. We live in Portland, it rains you find things to do inside and it just became a passion for both of us and certainly has always been a passion of mine. I didn't go to culinary school, I'm an enthusiast, I love to cook. We've gotten pretty good at it over the years, it's just a passion of mine.

Kelly Montoya: When my daughter was in second grade she needed some help transitioning from picture books to chapter books. So I got a little creative about it and I invited her to write a cook book with me. As that project progressed she got very, very excited and she was really engaged and so I started looking around for material that I could buy for her to inspire her journey and the books would show up and she would be excited because something came in the mail for her of course but she would open them once and then not return to them again. And I stamped by that. I was like, "Maybe she's not interested in this as I thought."

Kelly Montoya: I got a book from Food52 by Mindy Segal called Cookie Love and I had a giant picture of a chocolate cream cookie on the cover and she went bananas for it. She brought it to bed with her, she dog-eared all of the things that she wanted to make and that's what we talked about before she went to bed. Long story short, that was how I transitioned her from picture books chapter books which was by reading adult cook books. When I looked at the material that I had bought for her through a bit of a different lens, I realized that what was available for kids or kid-friendly material was really dated and had a lot of the same things in them over and over again. Lots of mac and cheese recipes and brownie recipes and pizza. We're not here to judge. There's no judgment about those very delicious things. However she just was more sophisticated and her palate was broader. Of course she eats more than those things.

Kelly Montoya: I took it a step further and I was like, "Wait a second, what we've sort of labeled as kid friendly in this country is kind of an oxymoron." Then I got really fired up about it and took it a step further and what we created, we started a couple of

years ago. Two years later we've created a company that builds a massive culinary experiences for families. What we're trying to do is demystify this idea of mealtime right now for busy working parents. It's a box to check. We all freakout. "Oh my gosh!" We're all rushed.

Kelly Montoya: Over the years, I've had to come up with little tricks and I enjoyed the challenge. It's not been easy but I really enjoy the challenge of trying to figure out how I'm going to get her to eat something or try something or open up. We've learned a few things about how to bring kids along as part of the process. Maybe we're not cooking full fledged meals every single night. Maybe we're making a cheese board or maybe she's selecting the kind of pasta that we're going to have. It's just about making her part of the decision-making process and part of the making process.

Kelly Montoya: The second piece of what we're doing is really trying to help kids is really trying to help kids become creative confident cooks. We have a curriculum that we've developed that does just that. It's focused on technique and it's focused on improvisational methods so that kids can connect not only with the ingredients that they're exposed to with their own palates and who they are and their identities and therefore empowering them, I think about the entire experience and having a voice in it.

Katherine Cole: That was a really long winded answer. Well, that was so interesting what you said about the foods we think of as kids, foods in the US are really not friendly to kids.

Kelly Montoya: They're not always healthy.

Katherine Cole: Yeah.

Kelly Montoya: And it's still a lot of processed food and one of the things that ... And everyone means well, again not trying to be judgy here but kids menus in restaurants are really, really limiting and after a while it gets a little tiresome and I think that kids just want to have smaller portions of what adults are eating. They are fully capable and I feel like what we're trying to do is give them a bit more credit than I think the industry gives them or big food companies are giving them for their ability to appreciate a diversity of food choices.

Katherine Cole: It's so interesting because in our first segment Dr. Julie O'Toole was telling us about the diagnosis of selective eating and the foods you were mentioning Julie were really highly processed foods that these kids who are suffering from this condition you were saying literally will only eat Cheetos and chocolate milk and these are just not nutritious foods.

Joolie O'Toole: Right. They're mostly horrifying food really. You can imagine how terrible the parents feel about it. But they do seem to have a common denominator which is bluntness.

Katherine Cole: That's interesting. I'm just wondering if Kelly has found the solution probably not to the clinical disorder of selective eating but pickiness is maybe just empowering kids to make their own decisions and getting there. Michelle you cook with you kids. And you cook super nutritious foods which blows my mind. I want to know the secret.

Michelle Smith: Yes. I have to say back up really quick to call it cute, kids menus are a pet peeve of mine. It drives me crazy. I'd rather my kids, I tell them they can order from the adult menu and I just split it for them. I think it dumps them down in their palates and if they're just getting used to that, of course they're not going to want to try other things. I've always introduced even as babies, I remember I would blend up lamb and put a little mint in it and make baby food that way.

Michelle Smith: It's always been really important to me to introduce other flavors since I don't want them to grow up being picky and just wanting the mac and cheese. People ask all the time, do your kids eat like you do and the truth is yes at home they do. I give them choices, in the healthy foods I say, "Hey do you want the butternut squash or the Brussels sprout for dinner? You guys pick." And they'll pick. But I don't give them choices. "Hey do you want the pizza for dinner or do you want the Brussels sprouts?" I think we know we'll get back often.

Michelle Smith: But I'm also really cautious to not demonize any foods. I think in society today, growing up is a product of the 80s when everyone is on a diet and we're talking about all of that. I'm really conscious about demonizing foods and teaching the kids that there is a time and a place to have pizza night but it's just an everyday thing for us.

Joolie O'Toole: I have to say my pet peeve would definitely be diets in general for children.

Katherine Cole: Not talking about adults here, talking about children.

Joolie O'Toole: Regardless of their size.

Katherine Cole: I feel like we're jumping ahead to a different topic but if the family has taken on a diet, how should the parents address that with the kids? How should they bring it up with the kids?

Michelle Smith: Well it doesn't sound to me like you're talking to me about a diet.

Katherine Cole: No but not in the traditional sense that we grow up where it's calorie restriction, weighing yourself and really thinking about it in terms of our parents. For us it's just creating a diet of whole foods, of more minimally processed foods so that the whole foods outweigh the less nutritious foods that we learn are now to be enjoyed as a special treat and not the foundation of our human diet. Is that?

Michelle Smith: That makes a lot of sense.

Katherine Cole: That's what's really changed. 'Cause growing up my mom was always on a diet of some sort and she can't eat this or that but it was never really talked about in a wellness aspect or a health aspect. It was always a weight aspect.

Joolie O'Toole: Or how about a delicious aspect?

Katherine Cole: Great. Yeah.

Kelly Montoya: In our house we talk about ... We really focus on empowerment as broadly. And a lot of what we do at Little Sous is we talk about food culture and when you talk about picky eating, part of way back when I knew less, right when we were building this content strategy I was like, "But wait. Kids in Japan are eating sea weed for breakfast. Kids in Iceland are eating fish jerky and they're eating completely different things because that's what they're exposed to so we made a conscious effort to really put some emphasis on that point of view and we do feature foods around the world what kids are eating around the world.

Kelly Montoya: But in terms of diet and health, for us, it still has been about empowerment and it is about empowerment the way we approach it. With my daughter she didn't want to eat spinach. 'Cause it didn't really look fun and she likes salad. But I was like, "Okay let's talk about spinach and what that does for your body. It makes you feel good. It makes you strong." She likes gymnastics and I'm like, "You want to be able to tumble, right? Well you need to have strong muscles." I would sort of say, "Let's figure out how we can maybe get this really nutritious thing into your body." And it opened her up to this idea of well, maybe I don't like it this way but I like it another way. So we made cream spinach. She loves that, put it in a smoothie she didn't taste it at all.

Kelly Montoya: Just saying, here are different ways that we can try it and let her choose. I let her choose my vegetable and she felt very in control and in charge. And I said, "Fine. You can choose whatever vegetable at the store that we're going to have for dinner." The rule in our house is that you don't have to like everything, you're required to try it. She's empowered to say, "No thanks I really didn't like that." And I'll say, "Let's think about how we could maybe put this together where you would like it because it's really good for your body.

Michelle Smith: I have to say I feel like we have the same household 'cause everything you say I'm like, "That's what we do, that's what we do." And it really does work when you give them the empowerment of choosing their foods, they take it on and they want to feel in charge of their lives. I have a six and an eight-year old especially at that age they're kind of coming out of that babyhood and little kid area. I let them pick what they're going to have in their smoothie and they're smart about it too and they understand. When they make it themselves they're more likely to eat it. If I just put it in front of them a lot of times they're like, "What is this?" But if they do it, they're excited too. They feel like it's play time too.

Katherine Cole: I like the fundamental idea behind Little Sous of if you got kids cooking, if they're actively cooking that means they are interacting with whole foods, raw ingredients. You don't start a recipe with something processed. Typically you start with vegetables and butter and some pretty elemental things which means that if the kid is cooking it and is feeling proud of it, they're probably going to eat it.

Joolie O'Toole: Although I wonder I spent my life taking food histories from families. One of my major concerns is that when parents tell me they really love it that their kids cook, what they mean is that they cook for them. The kids cook for the parents. Or more commonly the kids cook for themselves. So they are starting with processed foods, they are opening the box of macaroni, putting it in the microwave.

Katherine Cole: Totally fair.

Joolie O'Toole: You know what I mean? Cooking parenthesis, they're not actually cooking.

Katherine Cole: They're heating.

Joolie O'Toole: I wouldn't care if they cooked a 10-course meal. I think that the role of parents is to provide children a place to live and nutritious food. And it can't be delegated to the child, which is not what Kelly is describing.

Kelly Montoya: Coming to rescue, just assembling. It's about inner [crosstalk 00:32:24]

Joolie O'Toole: It's your job. That's the critical thing.

Kelly Montoya: Yeah mostly.

Katherine Cole: People ask me all the time, how do you get your kids to eat healthy foods and I come back with this idea, if my kids come home from school and they say they don't want to do their homework, how many of us are going to say, "Okay don't do your homework. You don't have to. Just go forward, go hangout, go play." It's my responsibility as a parent to make sure that they're doing their homework and they are keeping up with what they need to do as a child. It's also my responsibility to teach them how to take care of their bodies. And so if your kids are going to come home and say, they don't want to do their homework, are you going to say, "Okay." If they come back and say, "I'm not eating any vegetables." Are you okay with that? For me it's like, where is that line? We're the parent, we are in charge it's our job to teach them.

Katherine Cole: Unfortunately I think a lot of parents to your point Julie don't have that knowledge so they're getting the mac and cheese and the macaroni pizza, that's their cooking.

Joolie O'Toole: I fear that we're at least into the second generation of women who don't cook. It's not like, even though more men cook today than ever cook before. The mantle was not taken up entirely by men. In many households, no one cooks regardless of the level of affluence. I've seen this for both well-to-do families and families for whom food security is a problem.

Katherine Cole: Julie is there a connection between that and eating disorders?

Joolie O'Toole: I don't think so.

Katherine Cole: No.

Joolie O'Toole: Eating disorders are-

Katherine Cole: I'm trying to tie all of our topics together.

Joolie O'Toole: Eating disorders are brain disorders. But it doesn't mean just because you have a brain disorder it could be autism, it could be schizophrenia, it could anorexia nervosa. It doesn't mean that you aren't in all of the ways of valuable of wonderful child. So it matters if your parents sit down and eat with you and make real food and laugh and talk at the table, set the table so it's special and looks nice. That matters to everybody.

Kelly Montoya: Well, and if I could also, I just want to make sure I'm not painting this Pollyanna picture because sometimes it doesn't, sometimes there's a breakdown. Or sometimes someone is not really in the mood. But what I've found is that if I'm trying to get my daughter to open up about something, if I sat down with her at a table like we are and said, "Bryce what's going on?" She is doing to be like, "Nothing mom." She'll probably shut down. But if I'm standing side by side, if I'm standing next to her with a pot of something or chopping something or she's kneading a dough or whatever, she opens right up and she tells me what's going on because it's a lot less intimidating. So that side by side activity whether it's cooking, whether it's walking, whether it's, doing laundry-

Joolie O'Toole: Driving them to school.

Kelly Montoya: Driving them to school. Has been really powerful and has been just a way for me to get to know what's happening with her physically and also what's happening with her emotionally. And the whole idea of ... I feel like I'm really interested in what we're talking about in terms of not just picky eating but selective eating and how that plays in our thinking because it is developmental. Palates are constantly evolving and constantly changing and that's been part of our process as well where you don't like arugula, you didn't like it last time you tried it. But that was like six months ago. Try it now maybe your palate has changed. That's an active dialogue. At what point, we talked a little bit about this. But at what point do you get concerned that it's sort of beyond the scope of what's kind of natural ... What would be considered, 'Normal development'.

Joolie O'Toole: Well, again the growth chart is your friend. If they're growing normally you I think can kind of go back to modeling what you want them to do. It isn't necessary to actively insist on teaching them I think. When I was in my 20s when I was a young mother, I was a foreign student in Germany and I hung out with other foreign students and they were all from Asia. They taught me how to cook. And they always used fresh ingredients like you were describing Michelle. In fact because we were all poor students, they were experts at making amazing meals from very little. And nobody gave anybody any choices and I didn't give my little boy any choices. That was the food that was on the table. But it was eaten together really in a spirit of joy. I think that's the most critical thing.

Kelly Montoya: I think sometimes we don't give children enough credit. Our school started a garden this year and doing what I do in food and cooking they asked me to come and cook and have a demo in the garden for the kids and they told me what they had grown so far was mustard greens. And they wanted me to cook them up for the kids. In my mind even knowing what I know I'm like, "great! These kids." 'Cause mustard greens can get bitter and I'm like, "No one is going to eat these sauteed mustard greens with apple cider vinegar." And even myself was shocked how many kids, the majority, the vast majority of kids loved it. They came back for seconds and I was just even surprised by myself doing what I do that they were so happy to have this. And some ask, "I'm going to tell my mom, what is this? What is this?" I think we just don't give them enough credit. We don't give them enough options because a default is almost easier for us not to. Because it's not what we grew up knowing necessarily.

Katherine Cole: Michelle I want to ask you, we're kind of melding all of our topics together today which I love. I love it when they all overlap. But I wanted to ask you specifically about your cook book and your blog. It seems like we've been saying earlier, it seems to me like you are literally cooking up fresh mustard greens from the garden every night and your kids are eating them. First of all how do you do it? And second of all don't your kids go to friend's houses and have junk food and come home. And do they come home and say, "Mom, where are my chips, where are my French fries?"

Michelle Smith: Yeah. To your first point. No. Let me dispel that as Kelly said Pollyanna myth. We are not always perfect on that and we have room in our daily diets for things outside of that homegrown vegetables all the time. We eat at home pretty clean but when my kids go to school in their birthday parties. I don't care what they do. I want to give them freedom to make their own choices. Like I said, I don't demonize anything. If they want to go and have that cupcake and that pizza and that soda at that birthday party, I want them to. I want them to be making those choices. But when they go home, we also know that the majority of what we eat is good food so we can enjoy the rest.

Michelle Smith: We are not picture perfect but creating the The Whole Smiths Good Food Cookbook, it came about because I think sometimes eating well and eating whole foods can get a really pretentious feel. I think in the media you hear,

"Why only eat this, I eat raw." So often you have these images of clean eating. And I don't think it needs to be that way. I think it can be really approachable. I created this cookbook so that any home chef can make it. Because I think it can be intimidating. If you are coming to a diet that is full of whole foods and more minimally processed foods, it can be really intimidating when you're used to having that mac and cheese and heating something up. So it needs to be easy to get people on board. I think it can be fun.

Michelle Smith: Whole eating has changed so much. It's not about steamed broccoli and boiled chicken breast. That's not what healthy is today. That is what old healthy was when we were so afraid to use any cooking fats and therefore just erasing flavor from healthy foods. So it's really changed and I just want people to know that this is achievable because mentally when you have the bar set so high on this perfection of having to eat well and whole all the time and you're down low and you have to close that gap, you forget that there is a lot of healthy in the middle of that. You can be healthy without being picture perfect and I want to really erase that. It's not about being crossfit king or queen and this image that we see so often in the media of what healthy is, there's a huge array of what healthy is and it's not based on the parents. That's something that I feel personally very passionate about.

Kelly Montoya: Julie has mentioned something earlier that I feel like it's relevant to also what you're saying when you addressed that less people are cooking, less women are cooking, more men are cooking. We talk about this a lot at Little Sous. I was lucky enough to grow up essentially learning how to cook by standing next to my mom or my grandmother and the last two generations haven't had that luxury. I remember I started even when I was growing up. I remember in junior high being home alone, my mom kind of went back to work, I was home alone a few days after school and I started to sort fend for myself in that way but then more women started to work, more have to work. Our economy doesn't really allow for a lot ... Most families I know, they're two parents working.

Kelly Montoya: We have these two generations that have not had the ability to learn that way and so a lot of people don't know how and they've had to learn by trying to follow recipes and that works for some people and doesn't work so well for others. And if they follow a recipe and it doesn't then they're like, "I don't know how to do it." I think that we're at this place where people want to make healthy choices, they want to do the right thing but they don't always have the tools and it's intimidating.

Michelle Smith: Right absolutely and I think a lot of people ... Knowledge is power and people are talking about the power of whole foods and eating well but it's daunting. If you are coming from a box, it is daunting to walk into a grocery store and not know how to prepare a salmon filet or roasted chicken.

Katherine Cole: Especially when it's like \$25.

Kelly Montoya: When you buy that salmon filet.

Joolie O'Toole: And we often forget how challenged families are who don't have a lot of resources to find good food even if there's whole foods on every block maybe especially, if there's a store like that on every block. It's intimidating, it's expensive, it's culturally not appropriate. All of those things can be big challenges for some families. But I personally think one of our biggest challenges as a society is that we forget that man does not live by bread alone and that in fact eating together in the spirit of joy as a family is more important than what you eat.

Kelly Montoya: Yeah, absolutely.

Katherine Cole: Well, thank you all. We are going to go around now and have a little dessert course. In which we each share something food or beverage related that we have been enjoying this week. I am going to ... You guys are going to draw and quarter me and drag me through the streets for what my dessert ... My dessert just came to me as we were talking about being busy and being a working mom and that kind of thing. I was driving, carpoled the other day and my kid asked what we were having for dinner and I said risotto. And this cute kid in my carpool started describing the recipe for risotto. He said you get some wine, you get some chicken broth, you get some shallots and you stir ... And I was thinking, yap. Then my daughter said, "Yeah but we're going to have Trader Joe's risotto."

Katherine Cole: I have to say when you are in a hurry, don't read the ingredient list but they have a very nice asparagus risotto that you just warm up and your kids are happy and then they can get to soccer on time. I'm sorry.

Michelle Smith: But we get the same. We buy it too.

Kelly Montoya: It's in my freezer. It's in my freezer.

Katherine Cole: I just thought it was so funny that this 10-year old he knew exactly how to make it and I was not going to try ...

Kelly Montoya: You should just smile and nod. Okay. We're ...

Katherine Cole: Anyway that's my dessert. Kelly did you bring a dessert for us today?

Kelly Montoya: Yes. So dessert is and the listeners can't see what I'm holding up.

Katherine Cole: It's very attractive.

Kelly Montoya: One of the things that I've been talking about a lot this week as I've been talking about Little Sous is this knife set from Opinel. We've partnered with them, they are a French knife company and I don't know if you have this?

Katherine Cole: I don't.

Kelly Montoya: Oh my gosh! You should have it. If we talk about the barriers to cooking with kids one of them is, one perceived barrier is time. Another barrier is inspiration and safety is the third, the way we look at it. When you're really, really busy the last thing that you want is your seven-year old wielding the largest knife that they of course want to take.

Joolie O'Toole: The Chinese meat cleaver.

Kelly Montoya: So Opinel has it's called La Petit Chef and it's a real knife, it's not a toy. But it's a knife and it has a finger guard. It really is like a trainer and it creates a safer environment so your child can be with you in the kitchen and you don't have to be freaking out.

Katherine Cole: That is so cool.

Kelly Montoya: We love this product and I'm excited that we're partnering with them. We are giving it away with a year-long subscription. So if you subscribe to Little Sous you get this. But I'm sure you can get it on Amazon.

Katherine Cole: I was going to say that's my default answer.

Kelly Montoya: Amazon.

Joolie O'Toole: Get it on Amazon.

Kelly Montoya: And listeners you can't see this adorable package but Opinel is spelled O-P-I-N-E-L I'm sort of looking over at the table here if you want to Google it.

Katherine Cole: Thank you. Dr. Julie O'Toole did you bring a dessert item for us?

Joolie O'Toole: I did. I brought a book a cookbook from the 50s that I gave my daughter many years ago because I was so taken with a very politically incorrect title of Cook My Darling Daughter. It was written by a woman named Mildred Knopf of the publishing family for her daughter. Every section of the cookbook it starts out with a letter from mother to daughter about the ingredients and about how important it is to eat together as a family and she talks a lot about, does cooking mean love? And what does cooking have to do with love? Do we have a second for me to just read the sentence?

Katherine Cole: Sure.

Joolie O'Toole: When you curve, curve at the table. It is a one sure way to conserve the freshness of cooked meat. The family will sit and wait, eager and interested and without their knowing it, the children will be absorbing a lesson in family unity and love and how important this is.

Katherine Cole: I love that.

Kelly Montoya: That's wonderful.

Joolie O'Toole: It's amazing, 1958.

Katherine Cole: I have to take a photo of the label and put it on our Facebook page.

Joolie O'Toole: It's long out of print but the glory of the Internet, you can find anything and you can find this too.

Katherine Cole: Wonderful thank you for sharing that. Michelle Smith did you bring a dessert item for us?

Michelle Smith: Yes I did and it unintentionally fits in beautifully with what you were saying, is that a discussion my husband and I have been having lately is about really bringing back dinner parties and family dinner parties and inviting families over to break bread together and have that sense of community. I think we're losing it so much in this digital era of phones and running from practice to this to get friends and family together. We're trying to do a weekly basis, I know it's kind of hard but that's our goal to come together, bring food and enjoy because we've just lost that so much. Then it ends up being after soccer practice pizza which is great sometimes but just putting more thought into it and creating those moments around food is just so important to have that healthy relationship within it.

Michelle Smith: I really want to bring that back to our communities and just have that love there. It folds in and it was pretty perfect.

Katherine Cole: Something I always have to remind myself, you don't have to clean your house to have a dinner party. Just invite people over. Don't clean up.

Michelle Smith: I'm the dodo who does.

Katherine Cole: Me too.

Michelle Smith: Fruitlessly every time and then afterwards. It's a messy again.

Katherine Cole: No one cares.

Michelle Smith: No one cares either. I've never cared going to someone's house if it's not pristine.

Katherine Cole: I love that.

Michelle Smith: Just have them over, call them out, text them, say, "Come over for dinner." It's what we do sometimes. "What are you doing for dinner? Let's have dinner."

Come over." Bring some little sea recipes and put everyone to work, put the kids to work.

Katherine Cole: I love that. You just inspired me. I'm going to do that. Be more spontaneous.

Michelle Smith: Just be like, "Come over for dinner what are you guys doing?" Then usually no one has plans. Great. You want to feed me, great we're in.

Katherine Cole: I love that, thank you for bringing it. And thank you all of you panelists today, you were all fabulous. Michelle Smith, just wrapping up your book tour for The Whole Smiths Good Food Cookbook in a 90 degree afternoon, you zoomed here from the airport and I just looked over and realized I forgot to offer you a glass of water.

Michelle Smith: I'm fine. Thank you though. I'm good.

Katherine Cole: Thank you so much for joining us. Our listeners can check out your recipes online at the wholesmiths.com is that correct?

Michelle Smith: Correct. Yeah.

Katherine Cole: Thank you for being here.

Michelle Smith: Thank you for having me Katherine.

Katherine Cole: And Dr. Julie O'Toole, author and expert on the subject of child eating disorders and the founder of the Kartini Clinic for Children and Families. I learned so much today from you Julie thank you for being here.

Joolie O'Toole: My pleasure.

Katherine Cole: And Kelly Montoya, our host today at the headquarters of Little Sous. And can you tell our listeners how they can find Little Sous online and maybe sign up to get Little Sous box deliveries. With also interesting things recipes and cooking tools and-

Kelly Montoya: Yes. Recipes, cooking tools, activities, world maps, word games. We are available right now on Kickstarter. We launched the products through Kickstarter earlier this month and we met our goals in a week. So it was very exciting. Yes. Very exciting and the campaign runs through July 6th after that, you can purchase the box experiences on mylittlesous.com.

Katherine Cole: Mylittlesous.com. And that's S-O-U-S, as in Sous chef.

Kelly Montoya: As in Sous chef.

Katherine Cole: Thank you so much.

Kelly Montoya: Thank you so much Katherine.

Katherine Cole: Today's episode was recorded in the high fiber protein-packed City of Portland, Oregon at Little Sous HQ. You can read all about us on the OPB website. Our editor and sound supervisor today is Alex Ward. Our assistant producer is Izzy Kramer and our theme music was performed by the incomparable wine importer Kermit Lynch. Okay everybody I know I say this every time but please rate our James Beard Award winning show and please leave a comment if you have time. I would be most honored if you would go to our Facebook page because not only do we have a survey for all our listeners right now but you can also check out Izzy Kramer's artwork she's a talented artist as well as assistant producer and she's been posting artwork that relates to each of our episodes. It's kind of fun.

Katherine Cole: You can also tweet us on post on our Instagram feed or visit our Instagram feed. We'd love to hear from you however you do your social media. Bye bye now.