

# Nurturing Healthy Eaters

Help children learn to make healthy choices on their own. It's a lesson they will use for life.

## Have healthy foods ready to eat.

- Want kids to reach for healthy foods? Make sure healthy foods are in reach.
- Keep plenty of fruits and vegetables in the house to add to meals and snacks.

## Let kids learn by serving themselves.

- Follow a regular meal and snack schedule so kids know what to expect.
- Serve foods family-style.
- Teach them to take small amounts at first. Use smaller bowls and plates so they don't take too much at once.
- Tell them they can get more if they are still hungry.

## Be patient. It works better than pressure.

- Kids don't always take to new foods right away. Offer them many times, and try serving them in different ways.
- When you offer children new foods, let them choose how much to eat. Kids are more likely to enjoy a food when eating it is their own choice.

## Let kids help in the kitchen.

- Kids like to try foods they help make. It's a great way to support trying new fruits and vegetables.
- Name their dish ("Karla's Salad"). Make a big deal of serving foods they help create.

## Use encouraging words.

- As a parent, what you say has a big impact on kids' eating habits.
- Gently guide your kids to make healthy choices with positive words.



*Continued >>*

**Nurturing Healthy Eaters Continued >>**

<b>Change negative phrases...</b>	<b>...into positive, helpful ones!</b>
<p>Avoid phrases that teach children to eat to win your favor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat that for me.</li> <li>• If you do not eat one more bite, I will be mad.</li> </ul>	<p>Support trying new foods by connecting them to the senses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is kiwi fruit. It's sweet like a strawberry.</li> <li>• These radishes are very crunchy!</li> </ul>
<p>Avoid phrases that teach children to ignore fullness to win your favor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You're such a big girl. You finished all your peas.</li> <li>• You have to take one more bite before you leave the table.</li> </ul>	<p>Help children to tell when they are full to prevent overeating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is your stomach telling you that you're full?</li> <li>• Is your stomach still making its hungry growling noise?</li> <li>• Has your tummy had enough?</li> </ul>
<p>Avoid phrases that imply children are wrong to refuse a food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See, that didn't taste so bad, did it?</li> </ul>	<p>Let children explore the taste of the food and decide what they like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you like that?</li> <li>• Which one is your favorite?</li> <li>• Everybody likes different foods, don't they?</li> </ul>
<p>Avoid phrases that teach children to eat to feel better.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop crying and I will give you a cookie.</li> </ul>	<p>Reward children with support and kind words.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am sorry you are sad. Come here and let me give you a big hug.</li> </ul>
<p>Avoid phrases that make some foods, like dessert, seem better than others, like vegetables and phrases that emphasize children's dislikes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No dessert until you eat your broccoli.</li> <li>• I know broccoli isn't your favorite, but can you give it a try?</li> </ul>	<p>Let children make the choices about when to try new foods. They will be more likely to enjoy it when they do. Help children understand that learning to like new foods may take time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can try broccoli another time. Next time would you like to try it raw instead of cooked?</li> </ul>

# ELLYN SATTER'S DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY IN FEEDING

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Children have natural ability with eating. They eat as much as they need, they grow in the way that is right for them, and they learn to eat the food their parents eat. Step-by-step, throughout their growing-up years, they build on their natural ability and become eating competent. Parents let them learn and grow with eating when they follow the Division of Responsibility in Feeding.

## **The Division of Responsibility for infants:**

- The parent is responsible for *what*.
- The child is responsible for *how much* (and everything else).

Parents choose breast- or formula-feeding, and help the infant be calm and organized. Then they feed smoothly, paying attention to information coming from the baby about timing, tempo, frequency, and amounts.

## **The Division of Responsibility for babies making the transition to family food:**

- The parent is still responsible for *what*, and is *becoming* responsible for *when* and *where* the child is fed.
- The child is *still* and *always* responsible for *how much* and *whether* to eat the foods offered by the parent.

Based on *what* the child can *do*, not on how *old* s/he is, parents guide the child's transition from nipple feeding through semi-solids, then thick-and-lumpy food, to finger food at family meals.



For more about raising healthy children who are a joy to feed, read Part two, "How to raise good eaters," in Ellyn Satter's *Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family*. For the evidence, read [The Satter Feeding Dynamics Model](http://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/).

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## **The Division of Responsibility for toddlers through adolescents**

- The parent is responsible for *what*, *when*, *where*.
- The child is responsible for *how much* and *whether*.

Fundamental to parents' jobs is trusting children to determine *how much* and *whether* to eat from what parents provide. When parents do their jobs with *feeding*, children do their jobs with *eating*:

### **Parents' feeding jobs:**

- Choose and prepare the food.
- Provide regular meals and snacks.
- Make eating times pleasant.
- Step-by-step, show children by example how to behave at family mealtime.
- Be considerate of children's lack of food experience without catering to likes and dislikes.
- Not let children have food or beverages (except for water) between meal and snack times.
- Let children grow up to get bodies that are right for them.

### **Children's eating jobs:**

- Children will eat.
- They will eat the amount they need.
- They will learn to eat the food their parents eat.
- They will grow predictably.
- They will learn to behave well at mealtime.

# Stage-by-Stage Feeding

Children's feeding behaviors will change as they develop physically, emotionally, and cognitively.

Life Stage	Key Developmental Features	How It Relates to Feeding
Infant (Ages 0–1) 	Forms attachment to primary caregivers	Needs consistent care
	Developing trust in the world	Needs feeding on demand
	Explores with mouth	Needs protection from choking hazards and poisonous substances
	Developing sense of self and effect on environment	Wants to set the pace in feeding
Toddler (Ages 1–3) 	Expanding sense of self	Refuses even well-liked foods
	Beginning to express self verbally	Can express hunger, fullness, and food likes and dislikes
	Engages in intensive exploration of environment	Plays with food, may be more interested in playing than eating
	Developing fine-motor control	Will get frustrated if self feeding is too hard because of the wrong equipment; will still be messy
	Tends to be suspicious of anything new	Will usually refuse new foods
	Has short attention span	Cannot sit still for a long meal
Preschooler (Ages 3–5) 	Eager to cooperate and try new experiences	More likely to try new foods
	Has stronger relationships with peers, family members, and special adults	Food choices are influenced by teachers and friends
	Developing self esteem	Needs to have food preferences respected; likes to help with mealtime chores
School-aged child (Ages 6–12) 	Mastering physical skills and may play sports	May have a large appetite
	Increasingly influenced by peers and school environment	May be more influenced by what friends eat than family eating patterns
	May have a hectic schedule, especially if involved with extracurricular activities	May skip meals, especially breakfast
	May watch a lot of television	May be less active and have more exposure to advertising for unhealthy foods

# Snacks in a Snap

Let kids help you make tasty snacks\* that will power them through the day.



## Avocado Crunch

Let children mash 1 ripe avocado in a bowl. Add juice from half a lemon, 2 teaspoons of sunflower seeds, and a pinch of salt. Spread over Cucumber Sammies (right), or serve with vegetable slices or whole wheat crackers.

## Cucumber Sammies

Cut cucumbers into 1/8-inch slices. Help children top with egg salad, tuna salad, Avocado Crunch (left), or turkey and cheese. Cover with another cucumber slice.

## Baked Apples

Core apples and place in a microwave safe dish. Each child can fill their apple with about 1/2 teaspoon of butter, brown sugar, and cinnamon. Add a few raisins, if desired. Cook for about 6 minutes in the microwave. Allow to cool before serving with toasted whole wheat pita wedges dusted with cinnamon.

## Kabobs

Cube different cheeses and slice a mixture of fruits. Invite children to make snack kabobs on coffee stirrer "skewers" or pretzel sticks.

## Seasonal Fruit Salad

Let children help you wash and peel fruits that are in season. Cut into bite-size pieces. Combine in a large bowl. Squeeze the juice from half a lime over the fruit. Drizzle with a Tablespoon of honey if you like. Serve family-style with graham crackers.

## Banana Crunch

Ask for help mashing one large, very ripe banana in a bowl. Add 1/4 to 1/3 cup of low-sugar granola, a dash of cinnamon, and mix. Spread onto thin wafers or graham crackers.

## Roasted Vegetables

Preheat oven to 375°. Wash and cut several types of root veggies (beets, carrots, parsnips, sweet potatoes, turnips, etc.) lengthwise, into "fingers." Toss in a large bowl with 2 Tablespoons of canola oil, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, and 1/2 teaspoon of pepper. Place in a single layer on a baking sheet in preheated oven. Roast for 35-45 minutes, until tender. Serve over brown rice.

## Smoothie

Have children help add ingredients to a blender. Use 6 ounces low-fat milk, 2/3 cup of frozen fruit, and 1/2 teaspoon of honey, if you like. Little fingers can press buttons to be sure everything is blended well. Pour and serve with whole oat granola bars.

\*Snacks are for kids aged 2 and older. Adjust the ingredients as needed so that each child receives the age-appropriate amount to meet CACFP requirements.

# Set Goals: Creating Positive Mealtime Attitudes

## Key Messages

- As a caregiver, you play a big role in helping kids learn lifelong healthy food habits.
- Introduce fun mealtime rituals and activities for kids.
- They take their lead from you. Eat healthy foods and kids will too.
- Let kids learn by serving themselves. Be patient as they learn to make healthy choices.

## Challenge Yourself

My goal is to...

**Introduce at least one mealtime ritual to the kids in my care.**

What are some of the mealtime rituals we talked about in class today? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Which of these rituals would be the most special for the kids in my care? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When will I introduce it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Model at least two new healthy mealtime behaviors for the kids in my care.**

A handout from my book that has ideas of healthy behaviors to model is on page: \_\_\_\_\_

Which of these behaviors would I like to model for the kids in my care? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do I want to model these behaviors? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_