tips Nutrition Education Series

be a healthy role model for children



10 tips for setting good examples

You are the most important influence on your child. You can do many things to help your children develop healthy eating habits for life. Offering a variety of foods helps children get the nutrients they need from every food group. They will also be more likely to try new foods and to like more foods. When children develop a taste for many types of foods, it's easier to plan family meals. Cook together, eat together, talk together, and make mealtime a family time!

show by example
Eat vegetables, fruits, and whole grains with meals or as snacks. Let your child see that you like to munch on raw vegetables.

go food shopping together
Grocery shopping can teach
your child about food and nutrition.
Discuss where vegetables, fruits,
grains, dairy, and protein foods
come from. Let your children
make healthy choices.

Get creative in the kitchen

Cut food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.

Name a food your child helps make. Serve "Janie's

Salad" or "Jackie's Sweet Potatoes" for dinner. Encourage
your child to invent new snacks. Make your own trail mixes
from dry whole-grain, low-sugar cereal and dried fruit.

offer the same foods for everyone
Stop being a "short-order cook" by
making different dishes to please
children. It's easier to plan family meals
when everyone eats the same foods.

reward with attention, not food
Show your love with hugs and kisses. Comfort with hugs and talks. Choose not to offer sweets as rewards. It lets your child think sweets or dessert foods are better than other foods. When meals are not eaten, kids do not need "extras"—such as candy or cookies—as replacement foods.

focus on each other at the table

Talk about fun and happy
things at mealtime. Turn
off the television. Take phone
calls later. Try to make eating
meals a stress-free time.

listen to your child

If your child says he or she is hungry, offer a small,
healthy snack—even if it is not a scheduled time to eat.

Offer choices. Ask "Which would you like for dinner: broccoli
or cauliflower?" instead of "Do you want broccoli for dinner?"

Allow no more than 2 hours a day of screen time like TV and computer games. Get up and move during commercials to get some physical activity.

encourage physical activity
Make physical activity fun for the
whole family. Involve your children
in the planning. Walk, run, and play
with your child—instead of sitting on
the sidelines. Set an example by being
physically active and using safety gear,
like bike helmets.

be a good food role model
Try new foods yourself. Describe its taste,
texture, and smell. Offer one new food at a time.
Serve something your child likes along with the new food.
Offer new foods at the beginning of a meal, when your child is very hungry. Avoid lecturing or forcing your child to eat.



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