

Make Healthy Eating Easier for Children and Youth

Adults play an important role in making healthy eating easier for kids. The most helpful way to do this is to create an environment where healthy eating is the norm and easy to do.

- **Have healthy foods options in your home and available for school lunches.**
- **Have regular meal and snack times** each day and minimize grazing in between.
- **Eat together** as a family whenever possible.
- **Involve kids in all things food.** Let kids help out with food preparation and planning, help them learn about where food comes from, cultural foods and family food traditions.
- **Remove Pressure around eating.** Pressuring children to eat certain foods when they don't want to can create bad memories. As a result, kids may avoid eating these foods now and in the future. Pressuring children to eat more than they want can also teach them to ignore feelings of hunger and fullness. So allow children to decide what and how much to eat from the foods you have offered.
- **Let Kids learn to enjoy foods at their own pace.** It can take time for kids to learn to like new foods. So be patient, remove pressure and introduce new foods more than once along with familiar foods.
- **Don't use food as a reward or punishment** as this can lead children to overeat when they are not hungry and eat to feel better. Using food as a punishment can also lead to negative feelings about food and eating and distrust.
- **Role model how and what you want children and youth to eat.** Choose a variety of healthy foods and drinks; talk positively about food, bodies and eating; and practice healthy eating behaviours such as putting away screens at meal time, making time to cook, eating meals together, and enjoying your food.



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