

To Eat Right, Children Must Have Help from Adults

Your child needs **YOU** to help him make good decisions about eating. To do this, there are six things **YOU** are responsible for.

- **Choose and prepare good food.** Parents get to choose WHAT food they will make for their children. Make sure that you choose foods that will help your child get the nutrients he needs to have a lot of energy.
- **Provide regular meals and snacks.** It is important for parents to feed their children on a schedule so they know that they will not go hungry. When kids are not fed on a schedule they get worried about when they will eat again and then eat more food than they need. Try to eat meals at around the same time each day.
- **Make eating time pleasant.** Meals should be eaten at home with the whole family, or as many people as possible, as often as you can. Make sure that your conversations are fun. Do not use eating time a time to lecture or punish your child.
- **Expect appropriate behavior at mealtime.** Teach your child manners and how to behave at a meal. This will help to keep eating time pleasant. Children need structure and limits to feel emotionally secure.
- **Do not let your child "graze" for food or drinks between meals.** When children snack between meals it interferes with their ability to tell when they are really hungry. Give your child plenty of water, but not snacks, throughout the day. **Kids younger than 6 years old need 2 small snacks a day and kids older than 6 years old only need 1 small snack per day.**
- **Accept your child's shape and size.** Every person is different. We all grow to be different heights, weights, hair colors and have different shoe sizes. Our personalities are different too. Accept your child for his natural shape and size. **Do not have unrealistic expectations about your child's size.**



Every day is a new opportunity to help your child make good choices about eating. Start from wherever you are and try to improve each day.