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FEEDING YOUR 1 TO 5 YEAR OLD

Building Good Eating Habits

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FEEDING YOUR 1 TO 5 YEAR OLD

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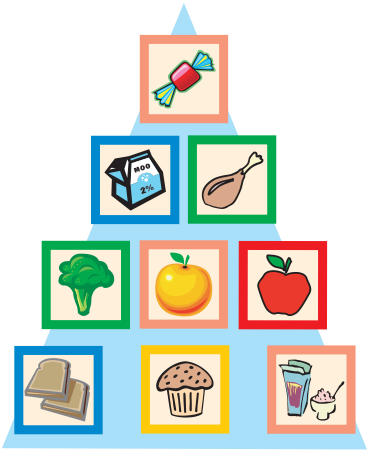

We gratefully acknowledge Ellyn Satter's permission to use her work in the preparation of this booklet. We also greatly appreciate the assistance of the Michigan Chapter of the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners in the revision of their original brochure.

The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Associates and Practitioners accepts this revision.

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Feeding Your 1 to 5 Year Old

Building Good Eating Habits

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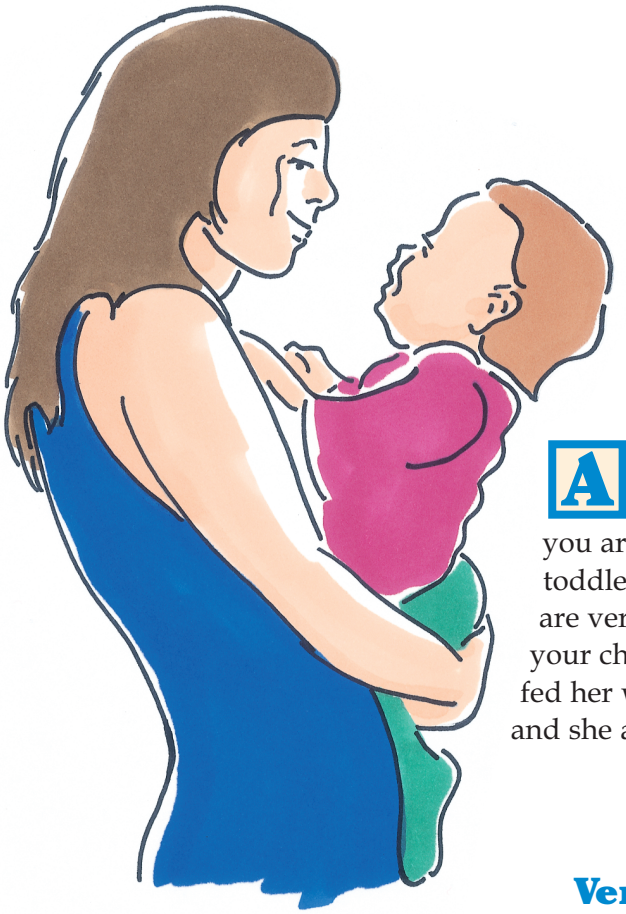


AS a parent or caregiver, you are discovering that toddlers and preschoolers are very independent! When your child was an infant, you fed her when she was hungry and she ate what you gave her.

Very simple.

Now feeding your child is not so simple!
Your toddler or preschooler wants to eat the same food three days in a row and the next day refuses to touch it! She refuses lunch, but fifteen minutes later is begging for a cookie. She insists on munching on crackers all afternoon, then picks at her dinner. What's going on here?

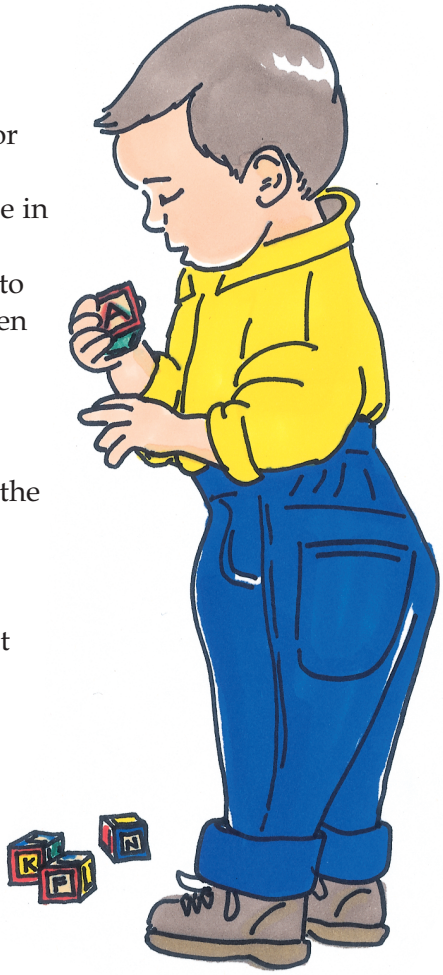
During the toddler and preschool years, your child is going through some very important changes:

INDEPENDENCE

She wants to do more for herself. This is not easy for her. She still wants the security of knowing you will always be there to help. Her struggle for independence often shows up in the way she eats. She may refuse to eat a certain food or refuse to eat at all. Don't worry — this is normal.

GROWTH

Now that she's older, your toddler or preschooler isn't growing as fast. Activity now plays an important role in her appetite and can cause appetite changes. It may be common for her to eat only one good meal a day, or even every other day.



How can you cope?

These changes can be upsetting but the key is for you to relax. With your support and encouragement, your child will eat the food she needs for growth and development — without hassles or battles!

This booklet offers tips to help you and your child survive these changes and make eating more enjoyable and healthful.

DIVIDING EATING RESPONSIBILITIES WITH YOUR CHILD

Your job is to decide:

WHAT food is offered.

WHEN the food is offered.

WHERE it will be eaten.

Your child's job is to decide:

IF he will eat or not.

WHAT he will eat from the food offered.

HOW much he will eat.

Remember that it is very important to let your child do his jobs. This may seem difficult to do, particularly if your child seems to be eating poorly. However, when young children eat poorly, the best way to help improve their eating behaviors is to stick to your jobs and allow your children to do theirs.

Don't worry, there is still plenty for you to do!

This booklet covers the details of your jobs: the **WHAT**, **WHEN** and **WHERE** of feeding your young child.

WHAT SHOULD I FEED MY CHILD?

MEALS

Choosing the food to serve your child is a very important job. Try to plan meals that include choices from four or five of the following food groups:

GRAIN (BREAD AND CEREAL)

Breads, crackers, biscuits, muffins, pancakes, noodles, spaghetti, rice, cereal, tortillas, etc.

VEGETABLE

Tomatoes, carrots, green beans, peas, squash, broccoli, sweet potatoes, cauliflower, spinach, corn, etc.

FRUIT

Oranges, apples, berries, melons, pears, peaches, bananas, apricots, grapefruit, pineapple, grapes, fruit juice, etc.

MILK

Milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, pudding, custard, ice cream, frozen yogurt, etc.

MEAT/PROTEIN

Beef, pork, eggs, chicken, turkey, lamb, veal, fish, peanut butter, baked beans, pinto beans, kidney beans, etc.

HABITS THAT BACKFIRE

Fat is needed for young childern to grow well. Children under the age of two should not be on low fat diets like some adults. Your child needs the energy provided by the fat in food or added fat like butter, margarine and oils.

SNACKS

Your child's stomach is small (about the size of his fist) and his energy needs are high. He can't get everything he needs in just three meals — he will also need a snack between meals and perhaps after dinner.

Choose snacks from food in the Five Food Groups and serve with a beverage such as milk or 100% juice.

SNACK IDEAS

- cheese and crackers
- peanut butter on toast
- cereal (iron-fortified) with milk
- fruit and cheese
- animal crackers and fruit

DESSERT

When you offer dessert, serve it along with the meal. Giving your child dessert at the end of a meal makes it seem like a reward and teaches him that dessert is more important than the other food.

DESSERT IDEAS

- yogurt
- fruit
- graham crackers
- pudding
- animal crackers
- ice cream

MILK, JUICE, AND OTHER DRINKS

Serve milk* with meals so your child gets enough calcium and other important vitamins and minerals. Serve milk or juice at snack time. Children may get thirsty between meals and snacks. Water is the best choice at these times because drinking too much juice may make your child feel full and he may not be hungry for meals.

SAMPLE MENU

BREAKFAST cereal (iron-fortified) with milk
juice

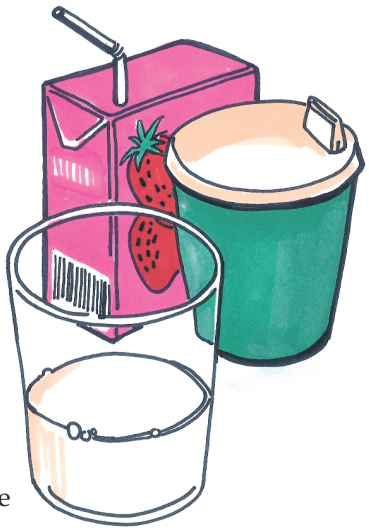
SNACK peanut butter on toast
juice

LUNCH tuna sandwich
peas
peeled apple slices
milk

SNACK soft fruit with yogurt dip
crackers
water

DINNER chicken
mashed potatoes
cooked carrots
milk
roll with butter or margarine
brownie

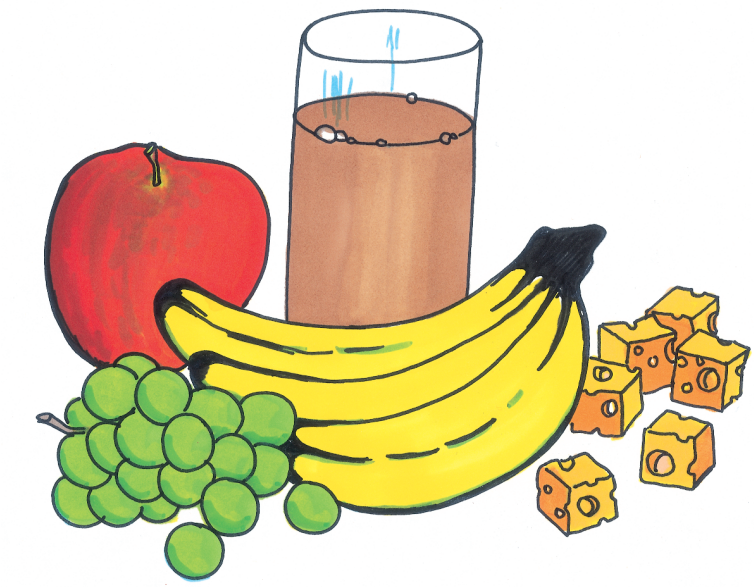
SNACK graham crackers
milk



*Nonfat and low-fat milks are not recommended for children one to two years old. Children at this age need fat to grow and develop properly.

If your child doesn't like white milk, try flavored milk. Flavored milk has the same amount of vitamins and minerals as white milk and just a few more calories (not a problem for active children).

ENCOURAGE VARIETY



Vary the food you offer your child from each food group. For example, offer different kinds of fruit during the day.

Let her try all kinds of food — even those that you don't like! She needs to decide for herself what food she likes or dislikes.

HABITS THAT BACKFIRE

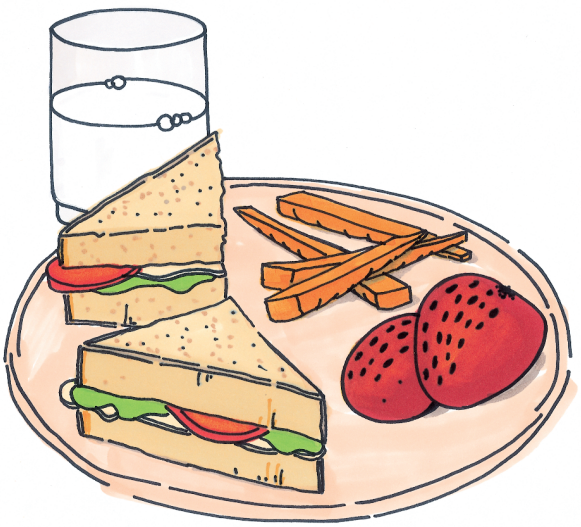
You can't expect your child to eat a variety of food if you don't! Set a good example: eat many different kinds of food.

HOW MUCH IS A SERVING?

Here are some ideas to help you decide how much of each food to offer your child:

Offer one-fourth to one-half of an adult serving size (for example, ¼ or ½ of a sandwich)

OR



Offer one tablespoon of each food for each year of your child's age (for example, you would offer a two-year-old two tablespoons of applesauce as a part of the meal).

Start with these amounts and give her more if she's still hungry. Your child may eat more or less. Don't worry — trust your child's appetite.

If you would like more information on serving sizes, please see the inside back cover of this booklet.

HABITS THAT BACKFIRE

Pressuring, bribing, playing games or forcing your child to eat does not get your child to eat more. In fact, it usually makes them eat less.

WHEN SHOULD MY CHILD EAT?

Toddlers and preschoolers eat better when they are given meals and snacks at about the same times each day. Schedule meals and snacks two to three hours apart and allow your child to eat only at these times.

For example:

Breakfast	**7:00 a.m.**
Snack	**10:00 a.m.**
Lunch	**12:30 p.m.**
Snack	**3:00 p.m.**
Dinner	**6:00 p.m.**
Snack	**before bedtime**

Work out a meal and snack schedule that fits your daily routine so you and your child can eat together as much as possible.

Keeping the meal and snack schedule regular can be one of the toughest parent jobs, but it really helps your child eat better.

WHERE SHOULD MY CHILD EAT?

SERVE MEALS AND SNACKS AT THE TABLE

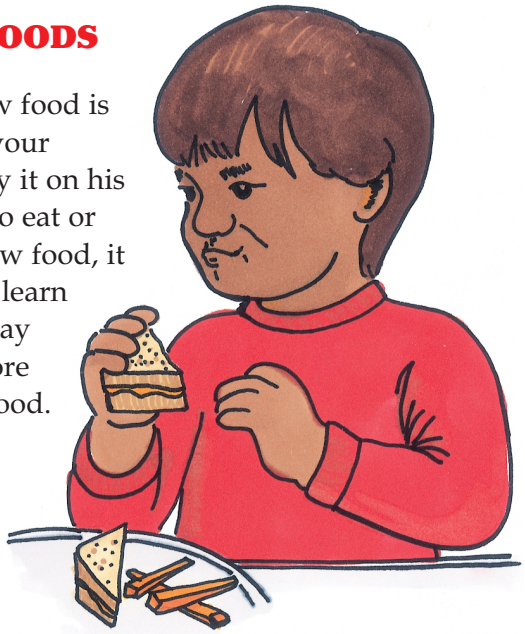
There is no reason for a toddler or preschooler to carry food or drinks around the house. Insist that food be eaten at the table or another spot that you have agreed on. This will keep your child from thinking that eating goes with watching TV or playing with toys.

MAKE MEALTIMES RELAXING AND ENJOYABLE

The mood in which food is served is also important. Provide your child with the meal and then sit back and enjoy your food. Let your child eat at his own pace and in his own way. Turn off the TV! Talk about something besides food and eating; like what you did that day.

MORE ABOUT BUILDING GOOD EATING HABITS

OFFERING NEW FOODS



The best way to offer a new food is to put a small amount on your child's plate and let him try it on his own. If you pressure him to eat or reward him for trying a new food, it will take longer for him to learn to like it. Be prepared; it may take eight to ten times before your child will eat a new food.

Your child learns about new food by tasting. Your child may taste a food by putting it in his mouth but may not swallow it. Encourage your child to taste food by giving him permission to politely spit it out into a napkin if he doesn't like it.

If your child doesn't like a food, offer the food again in a few days. Children need to taste a food several times before they can decide if they like it.

Eating will be much more pleasant and relaxing if you handle new food this way.

EATING MADE EASY

Serve food in ways that are easy for your child to eat:

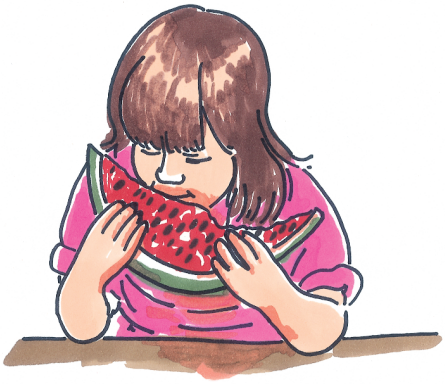
- Cut food into bite-size pieces*, cut meat up finely (see section on SAFETY).
- Include soft food that is easy to chew and swallow.
- Substitute ground beef for steaks or chops.
- Try finger foods such as salad, cheese cubes, or peas (see section on SAFETY).
- Make soups thin enough to drink or thick enough to stay on a spoon.
- Make food attractive and colorful.
- Give a child-size spoon and a small fork with dull prongs.
- Give unbreakable dishes.
- Use a plate or bowl with raised sides.
- Seat child in a chair that is high enough so her elbows can rest comfortably on the table and make sure her feet are supported.
- Encourage your child to feed herself. This will help her become self-confident. She will probably use her fingers some of the time, but she will get better at using silverware with practice.

Adapted from *How to Get Your Kid to Eat. . .But Not Too Much* by Ellyn Satter, 1987, p.185 (used with permission).

* ¼ to ½ inch pieces

DEALING WITH CHALLENGING EATING BEHAVIORS

Children need to learn how to behave at the table. Set rules that both you and your child can live with. Here are some suggestions:



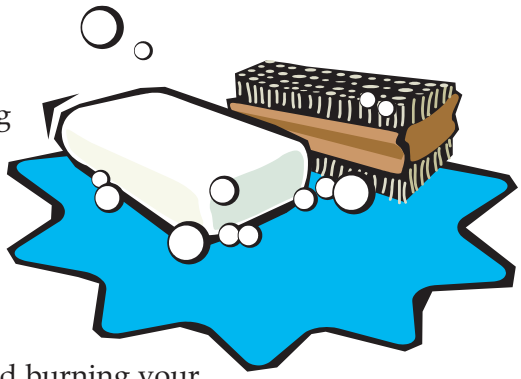
- Learning how to eat can get a little messy. However, deliberate messiness like throwing food or dumping it on the floor should not be allowed. This is a sign that your child is probably not hungry and should be excused from the table.

- Stick to your schedule of meals and snacks. It will only be two to three hours before you offer food again. If you are firm, your child will learn not to beg for food. She will also be more likely to eat at meals and snacks because she knows she will have to wait to eat again.

HABITS THAT BACKFIRE

Don't be a short-order cook for your child. You can avoid complaints by making sure meals include at least one food she likes, then let her choose what she wants to eat from the food you have offered.

SAFETY



Before eating or touching food, have your child wash her hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (you can time this by singing the ABC song).

Let hot food cool to avoid burning your child's mouth. Be especially careful to cool food that has been heated in the microwave. Stir the food and check the temperature before serving.

Have your child sit down while eating and sit with her. She needs to be supervised, and besides, she will enjoy your company.

TO AVOID CHOKING:

Don't give nuts, hard candy, popcorn or raw vegetables to children under age three. Many children under the age of three cannot chew well and are more likely to choke on these foods.

Don't allow your child to run or play with food in her mouth. Don't allow others to distract your child while eating. This is when many children choke.

Cut hot dogs lengthwise into quarters, cut grapes and meatballs in half, cook vegetables until tender. Young children are more likely to choke on small, round, hard foods with slippery surfaces.

Learn the Heimlich Maneuver in case you need to help someone who is choking. This is a basic first aid procedure for treatment of choking that you can learn from the Red Cross or the American Heart Association.

Well, there it is: the **WHAT**, **WHEN**, and **WHERE** of feeding your toddler or preschooler. Caring for a child this age can be a challenge. We hope these suggestions will make your life a little easier so you can enjoy and appreciate your amazing, independent, frustrating, wonderful child!

FOR more information, we encourage you to refer to the following books by Ellyn Satter:

Child of Mine: Feeding With Love and Good Sense. Bull Publishing, Palo Alto, California, 1991.

How to Get Your Child to Eat. . .But Not Too Much. Bull Publishing, Palo Alto, California, 1987.

SERVING GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN 1 TO 5 YEARS OLD

These guidelines will help you decide which foods and how much to offer from the Five Food Groups. You may need to add more servings of food to meet your child's calorie needs, especially during periods of rapid growth.

Some children between ages 1 and 2 may have smaller appetites. Offer smaller serving sizes, but increase the number of servings offered during the day.

Food Group	Food	Daily Servings	Suggested Serving Size
Bread/Cereal *Offer at least one serving of an iron-fortified food from this group every day.*	For Example: ready-to-eat cereal cereal, cooked noodles spaghetti roll bagel bread rice muffins crackers	**8**	1 serving = ½ slice bread ¼ bagel ¼ cup cooked cereal ½ cup ready to eat cereal ¼ cup, noodles, spaghetti or rice 2 2" square crackers
Vegetable *From either the Vegetable or Fruit group, offer:* *• a vitamin A source every other day and* *• a vitamin C source every day*	For Example: **Vitamin A Sources** carrots sweet potato spinach squash greens broccoli **Vitamin C Sources** tomato potato green pepper cabbage green peas	**3**	1 serving = ¼ cup cooked ½ cup raw leafy ½ cup juice
Fruit 	For Example: **Vitamin A Sources** cantaloupe peaches apricots **Vitamin C Sources** oranges grapefruit strawberries cantaloupe	**2**	1 serving = ¼ cup canned or in jars ½ small, raw ½ cup juice
Milk *Offer whole (vitamin D) milk for children 1-2 years old*	For Example: milk cottage cheese frozen yogurt cheese yogurt ice cream	**3-5***	1 serving = ½ cup milk 1 1" square cheese cube 1 slice processed cheese ½ cup yogurt
Meat 	For Example: beef chicken, turkey peanut butter beans (cooked) pork fish egg dried peas	**3**	1 serving = 1 oz. lean meat, fish or poultry 1 egg ½ cup cooked, dry beans/peas 2 Tbsp. peanut butter

Fats/Oils	For Example: bacon, butter, margarine, salad dressing, vegetable oils, etc.	Fat is needed for young children to grow well. Children under the age of two should not be on low fat diets like some adults. Your child needs the energy provided by the fat in food or added fat like butter, margarine and oils.

Sweets: Foods such as cake, pie, donuts, candy, sugar, pop, and most fruit flavored drinks provide mainly calories and are not a good source of vitamins and minerals.

*children aged 1-3 years need at least 3 servings, children aged 4-5 years need at least 5 servings.

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Unfold to Reveal Serving Guidelines for Children 1 to 5 Years Old

NUTRITION INFORMATION

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AIRPLANE, CHOO-CHOO & OTHER GAMES PARENTS PLAY

A brochure that provides guidelines and helpful advice for feeding children from infancy to two years of age. Includes step-by-step tips on introducing solids and cow's milk along with serving recommendations.

EAT THE FIVE FOOD GROUP WAY

An interactive handout for elementary age children featuring cartoon drawings of the Five Food Groups. Also available in poster size.

MILK MELODIES

An audio cassette tape of eight original sing-a-long songs that make learning about food a lot of fun for young children. Includes songs about grocery shopping and snacking.

GUIDE TO GOOD EATING

A handout featuring color photographs of food in the Five Food Groups and recommended number of servings for older children and adults. Also available in Spanish.

DAILY FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID

A handout for teens and adults featuring color photographs of the Five Food Groups in pyramid format. Includes recommended number of servings and information about combination foods. Available in handout and poster sizes.

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