



A Physical Activity Resource



# FEEDING PRESCHOOLERS

## Just try it

*It is very normal for young children to refuse some foods.* Here are some ways to help your child accept different tastes and textures:

- Offer a new food along with a familiar food.
- Offer new foods first, at the beginning of a meal, when your child is most hungry.
- Let your child see you tasting and enjoying new foods.
- Ask your child to taste the new food.
- Allow your child to spit out a food he/she doesn't like.
- Try avoiding labeling foods as "foods my child likes" and "foods my child doesn't like."
- Keep trying! It might take up to 12 times before your child accepts a new food.

## Physically active kids...

- Learn good habits early in life.
- Have a positive outlet for their natural energy.
- Struggle less with maintaining a healthy weight.



## Family meals

*Family meals help to create strong family bonds.* Families feel more connected to each other when they eat together.

### MAKE FAMILY MEALTIMES FUN

- Keep it simple.
- Enjoy positive table talk.
- Listen to your children.
- Turn off the TV, radio, computer, and phones.
- Remember, kids love to eat what they help to cook! Make preparing the meal a family affair.
- Below are some easy ways kids can help. Check out our fact sheet *Cooking with Kids* for more tips to include your child in the kitchen.

## How kids can help

2-YEAR OLDS CAN:	3-YEAR OLDS CAN:	4 to 5-YEAR OLDS CAN:
<b>WASH</b> veggies and fruit	<b>ADD</b> ingredients	<b>PEEL</b> bananas
<b>TEAR</b> lettuce	<b>STIR</b>	<b>MEASURE</b> dry foods
<b>PRACTICE</b> wiping tables	<b>SPREAD</b> peanut butter	<b>SET</b> the table
<b>PLACE</b> things in trash	<b>NAME &amp; COUNT</b> foods	<b>MASH</b> potatoes

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EXTENSION

## Eat safely

- Cut foods into small pieces – no larger than ½ inch.
- Cook vegetables until slightly soft.
- Spread nut butters thinly.
- Have your child sit while eating; stay with your child until he/she is finished.
- Show your child how to chew and swallow small amounts of food.

## Prevent choking

All children are at risk for choking, but children under the age of 4 years are more likely to choke because they:

- Like to put objects in their mouths.
- Have narrow throats and airways.
- Cannot chew as well as older children – they may not have a full set of teeth.

## Food that may cause choking:

- Apple chunks and slices
- Grapes (OK if cut into halves or quarters)
- Cheese sticks
- Hot dogs (OK if sliced lengthwise)
- Sausage (OK if sliced lengthwise)
- Peanut butter (OK if spread thinly on a cracker)
- Popcorn
- All nuts and seeds
- Hard chunks of uncooked vegetables like carrots

## The Sweet tooth

It may seem impossible to get your kid to like broccoli but convincing them to eat sweets is as easy as pie. Kids just tend to like sugary foods. Unfortunately, too much sugar can cause cavities and weight problems in small children. Here are some tips to enjoy sweets in moderation:

- You've heard it before - out of sight, out of mind - the same thing is true for sweets!
- Enjoy eating smaller servings of sweet foods every once in a while.
- Offer nutritious snacks with a sweet taste.
- Avoid beverages with added sugars such as sports drinks, energy drinks, sweetened coffee and tea beverages, and sodas.
- Limit 100% fruit juice to 4 ounces or less each day, or eat a piece of fruit instead.



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