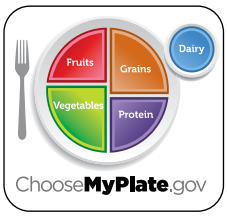
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10 tips
Nutrition Education Series

build healthy mealtime habits

10 tips for preschoolers



Preschoolers love to copy what their parents do. They mimic your table manners, your willingness to try new foods, and your preferences. Take a break from the TV or phone and build healthy mealtime habits together.

1 plan meals and snacks

Make time for three meals and one or two snacks every day. Offer choices from each food group—fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and protein foods—throughout the day so your preschooler gets the nutrition he or she needs.

2 make meals enjoyable

Eat meals with your children whenever possible. Let them help you prepare the meal. Make conversation about something that made them laugh. Keep mealtime upbeat and stress free.



3 try to get two food groups in a snack

Pair sliced tomato with low-fat cheese or add nut butter to a 100% whole-wheat mini bagel.

4 keep things positive

Talk about the color, feel, or flavor of foods so they sound appealing to your preschooler. Discourage others from making negative comments about foods during meals.



5 develop taste buds

When preschoolers develop a taste for many foods, it's easier to plan meals. Keep in mind that it may take a dozen tries for a child to accept a new food.

6 visit the market

Shopping can teach your preschooler about food and healthy eating—talk about where foods come from and how they grow.

7 let children practice serving themselves

Include smaller cuts of fish or meat and offer small serving utensils so they get just enough during meals. Encourage them to ask for more if they are still hungry.

8 beverages are important, too

Water helps to quench your preschooler's thirst, and milk provides nutrients for growth. Offer water or fat-free or low-fat milk as beverage choices instead of sugary drinks.



9 help them know when they are full

Encourage your child to stop eating when he or she is full rather than when the plate is clean. When your child is not interested in the meal, excuse him or her from the table.

10 reward with attention, not treats

Rewarding children with sweet desserts or snacks may encourage them to think that treats are better than other foods. Comfort and reward with care and praise, not food.