



# Feeding Children the Right Message

## Cook together, eat together, and make mealtime a family time!

Parents/caregivers decide the what, when and where of feeding.

### This means that you can:

- Have sit-down meals and snacks at about the same time each day
- Eat with your child, talk about fun and happy things at mealtime
- Focus on each other at the table, turn off the television, and take phone calls later
- Offer the same foods for everyone
- Teach by example - eat vegetables, fruits, and whole grains with your meals and snacks
- Let your child 2 years and older, serve himself
- Let your child decide how much to eat - avoid food battles and bribery
- Go shopping together, teach your child about food and nutrition
- Reward with attention, hugs and kisses, not food



Your child also has some responsibilities, he can decide how much and whether to eat.



### This means your children can:

- Decide whether or not to eat
- Decide how much to eat
- Eat a variety of foods
- Make do with less favorite foods
- Be pleasant at the table
- Stay seated at the table during snack and meal time
- Grow the way nature intended

# What to offer your child



## At Meals

- Use MyPlate as a guide for what foods to offer your child
- Put together meals with foods you and your family enjoy
- Allow your child to eat what tastes good to him and as much as he is hungry for
- Make mealtimes pleasant - don't scold or fight



## At Snack Time

- Space snacks so your child can eat every 2 1/2 - 3 hours - try to time them so he will be hungry at mealtime
- Plan sit-down snacks - you are in charge of the menu and where and when the food will be served
- Include 2 or 3 foods - work in foods you may have missed otherwise (including vegetables or sweets!)

Offer juice or milk with meals and snacks and water in between.



With the right messages children learn to eat when they are hungry, stop when they are full, and try a variety of food.