**R.E.C.I.P.E.**
for growing healthy children

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**Role model**

What we want children to be, say, and do

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What are some things we do as adults that contradict things we tell children?

Kids are the BEST Copy Cats.

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How do we teach healthy behaviors such as eating vegetables?

- Teaching via rewards and punishments.
- Teaching by explaining.
- Teaching via structured experiences.
- Teaching by example.

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Being a role model

“Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression.”

-Haim Ginott

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How do adults’ beliefs, attitudes & behaviors relate to children’s health?
Ask:
What are things adults do at meals that are **negative** role modeling?

Ask:
What are things adults do at meals that reflect **positive** role modeling?

**Exercise**
Children need to get outdoors & connect with nature!
Children need 30-60 minutes of active play daily!
For every hour of sedentary time, they need 2-3 minutes of activity.

What will you **personally** do to begin better Role modeling positive attitudes and behaviors about food, eating, physical activity, and overall health?

**Environment**
Encourages healthy behaviors

The best goal is to set up a mealtime environment that encourages healthy behaviors and promotes well-being!
Mealtime environment includes:
- the physical surroundings
- the mealtime routine
- the procedures for serving food
- social interactions during meals

What is the optimal mealtime environment?

Children serve themselves.
Physical surroundings, equipment, routine & instruction allows for children to be successful!

This is family-style service!

“Family-style service is the best practice and is recommended by USDA’s CACFP, Head Start, and experts in childcare.”
At your home, around your table is perfect for this!

Mealtime is more than a time to feed children:

Children learn new skills.
Children practice getting along with others in a community setting.
Children learn manners.
Children practice art of conversation.
Children learn from adults & other children in a relaxed & pleasant setting.

What are obstacles for successful family-style meals?

Proper size table & chairs.
Serving bowls & utensils.
Skills needed for children to serve themselves without spilling or contaminating food.
Allowing children to determine how much to take.
Involving children in all aspects of meal service & clean-up.

Create delicious, nutritious meals & snacks focusing on variety, nutrient density, and amount!
Follow a healthy eating pattern:

Make half your grains whole grain foods.
Eat a rainbow of colorful fruits.
Eat from the 5 vegetable subgroups: include dark green, red and orange, legumes – also known as beans and peas – starchy, and other Focus on lean meats
Think low-fat or fat-free dairy for calcium, protein, and vitamins D, K, E or milk substitutes as appropriate.

Watch consumption & why:

Sodium – no more than 1,500 mg daily for children and 2,300 mg for adults
*watch use of processed foods, snack foods, and fast food, etc.

Sugar – no more than 10% of total daily calories
*focus on fruits & vegetables and limit consumption of sodas, candy, desserts, etc.

Involving

Let children have fun with food!

Young children have tremendous potential for establishing lifelong healthy eating habits when provided positive and engaging learning experiences!

Some of your concerns

“You struggle serving foods you think the children may not like.”
“How to maintain a neutral demeanor while offering food, w/o pressuring children to eat it.”
“How to deal with the waste that occurs the first few times a new food is tried.”

Food & Nutrition Service

Requires that sufficient food is on each table to provide the full required portions of each food.

Adults are to offer the children everything showing them how much a full portion is and encourage them to try.
What about food waste?

When trying something new, expect higher degree of waste.

Think of it as a learning experience in which the left over supplies are discarded!

Meals are learning time!

Instead of asking, if they like the food, ask questions about the food.

Ask descriptive questions:

• Ask questions about the colors, shapes and sizes?
• Ask to identify what is in the food?
• Ask to describe sensory qualities—smell, texture, sound, mouth feel, etc.?

More descriptive questions…

• Ask about the flavors – sweet, sour, spicy, salty, etc.
• Ask what foods might taste really good served together?
• Talk about where foods come from.
• Talk about how foods are made.

Children can assemble their own food.

Saves time & effort while at same time builds independence and self-help skills!

Children as young as 2 and all 3-year olds can:

mix, pour, dip & spread, begin serving themselves & feed themselves with age-appropriate utensils!
Ways to involve children at meals

“Food assembly” ideas
Food preparation activities
Food & nutrition activities: games, books, etc.
Food crafts

Encourage parents and families to have meals together!

Parents can enhance nutrition & education efforts, if they are provided with information & support!

Remember every parent wants...
Happy, healthy, smart, successful children.
To be seen as experts about their children.
Parenting to be easier.
To be good parents!

Enjoy eating together!

Take a moment to write down 1-2 ideas that you have learned today that you will try with your family.

Questions?
Thank you for making a difference in the lives of young children!

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