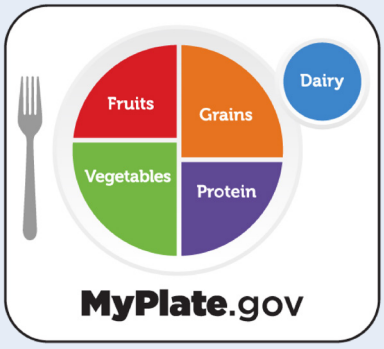
Encouraging Excellent Eating Early

Interested in giving your small child a taste for healthy eating right from the start? Kids can react strongly to the foods they are offered – healthy or not! They may push them away, refuse to open their mouth, shake their head, or more. What is a parent or caregiver to do?

Nobody's perfect, but with a few child-feeding tips and advice on how to set a positive tone for balanced, healthy eating, anyone can be a child-feeding pro!



MYPLATE CAN HELP!

Make every bite count with MyPlate by offering a variety of nutritious options from each food group – fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein foods – including those that provide unsaturated fats and are low in added sugar and sodium. From apples to avocados, corn tortillas to queso fresco, and pork to parsley, you can offer your child a variety of colors, textures, and flavors.

Once you know what to feed, it's time to master how to do it. Read on for our best tips to help small kids build healthy plates.

SETTING THE TABLE FOR SUCCESS

Mealtime is family time. Even ten minutes of eating together can increase children's fruit and vegetable intake. Start this habit with your baby or toddler by bringing them to the table with you!

Your child may only be eating baby food but include them at meals to increase their exposure to table food by seeing the foods you eat.

It can take up to 15 exposures before a food is "trusted" and tasted. Use the exposure time to describe the food.*

Tasting is just the first step – it can take 10 to 15 more exposures before they like the food. This means it could take 30 exposures in total before your child enjoys the food.*



If your child eats the same foods as you, ensure their food has no added sugar or sodium. If adding these to your food, set aside their portion first.

Each exposure can look different. Meats, like pork, can be ground or shredded while vegetables, like avocado, can be cubed or mashed.

*Scagliono, S et al. Factors Influencing Children's Eating Behaviours. Nutrients 2018,

MEALTIME IN ACTION

This pork looks juicy, feels soft, and is warm!



The tortilla is crispy, what colors do you see on it?

The vegetables are different colors, which ones do you see?

This avocado is green, sounds squishy, and feels smooth.

GOING BEYOND 'YUCK' and 'YUM'

What does it look like?

Colorful
Dry
Juicy
Runny
Gooey
Bumpy
Shiny

What does it feel like?

Chewy
Creamy
Crunchy
Dry
Wet
Mushy
Smooth
Sticky

What does it taste like?

Neutral
Spicy
Sour
Sweet
Tart

What does it smell like?

Strong
Fresh
Minty
Spicy
Fishy

What temperature is it?

Cool
Cold
Freezing
Hot
Warm

What does it sound like?

Crunchy
Crispy
Sizzling
Squishy

POWERFUL WORDS TO USE DURING MEALTIME

"Good job trying a new food!"

"Wow! Did you notice everybody likes different foods on their plate?"

"What vegetable would you like to eat tomorrow?"

REFUSING FOOD? TRY THESE NEUTRAL PHRASES

"We can try this fruit together again another time."

"Next time, would you like to try your potatoes soft and smooth like mashed potatoes instead of roasted in pieces?"

"When you are ready, you can give it a try."

TIPS TO REMEMBER WHILE YOU PRACTICE YOUR NEW POWER LANGUAGE

- As a parent or caregiver, you decide what, when, and where the child eats; the child decides if and how much they will eat.
- Introduce new foods with current favorites – this may help acceptance.
- Small children don't eat a lot of food at a time, so they do not need to eat a certain amount at each sitting.
- Add 1-2 tablespoons of each food at the table on your child's plate. Follow their lead, if your child eats a food, offer more - one tablespoon at a time.
- Because they eat small amounts at a time, make every bite count with healthy choices.

pork checkoff

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