



Child Nutrition

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Effects Good Nutrition

Good nutrition and a healthful diet are necessary for both the physical and mental development of the preschool child.



Effects of Good Nutrition (continued)

The nutrients in food and the eating process should help the child to:

- Attain optimal physical and mental growth.
- Resist infection and disease.
- Develop motor skills.
- Grow intellectually and mature psychologically.
- Form good eating habits.
- Learn to socialize with others.



Development of Food Habits

Food habits are taught.

Food habits and attitudes established early in life can affect food choices and therefore one's nutritional status throughout a lifetime.

Children observe family members and imitate their attitudes toward food.



Creating a Positive Eating Environment

Encourage parents to:

- Eat family meals together regularly.
- Allow mealtimes to be relaxed, happy times.
- Avoid distractions such as having the television on during a meal.
- Assist and remind children to use spoons and forks



Positive Environment (continued)



Provide child-appropriate utensils, dishware, and sitting arrangements such as:

- spoons and forks: small handle that fits easily in the child's hand.
- cups and glasses: small enough to be easily grasped by the child.
- plates and bowls: sturdy and durable.
- chair: one that won't tip and is positioned so that food can be easily reached.

Fostering Healthy Eating Habits

Be a smart gatekeeper.

Variety is important, but only introduce one new food at a time.

Allow children to have the same freedom of choice that others have at meals.

Set a good example.

Encourage children to help with food preparation.



Eating Habits (continued)



- Offer foods from all the food groups daily.
- Serve small portions especially for children under age 4.
- Behavior that is rewarded is repeated.
- Avoid making dessert a “reward” for a clean plate.



Eating Habits (continued)

If the child goes on a “food jag” (requesting one food often), do not be alarmed.

Don't force children to eat.

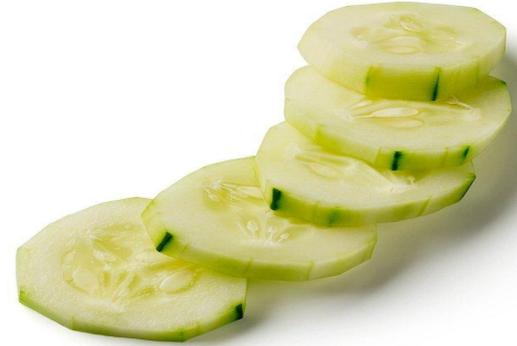
A healthy appetite depends on adequate play, rest, sleep, and regular mealtimes.



Introducing New Foods:

The parent should:

- Introduce only one new food at a time.
- Offer a very small amount at first, at the beginning of each meal.
- When appropriate, mix the food with another food the child likes.
- Allow plenty of time for the child to look at and examine the food.
- Do not try to introduce a new food when a child does not feel well or is irritable.



Food Dislikes:



The parent should:

Refrain from making an issue of the situation.

Try combining the food with other favorites.

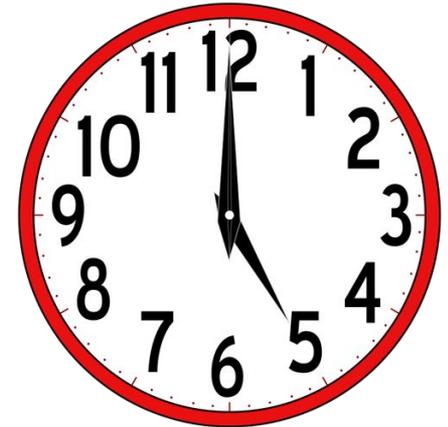
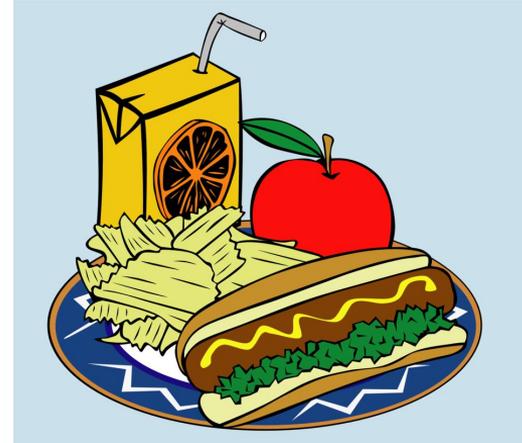
Prepare the food in a different way.

Set a good example.

The Child's Eating Habits

Parents/caregivers are responsible for:

- what their children are offered to eat
- where they eat
- when they eat.



Child's responsibility:

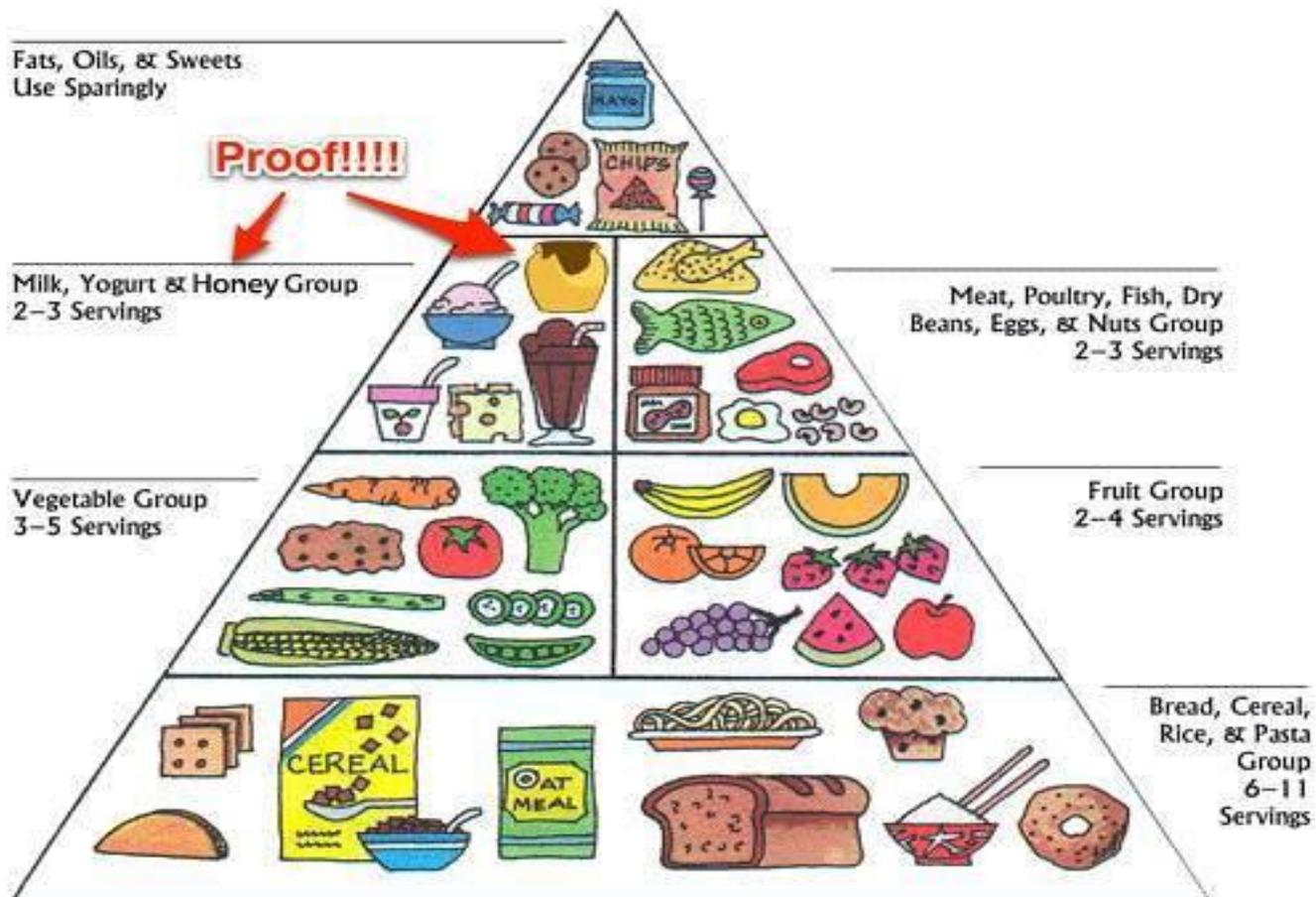
Do not cater to food choices.

Offer vegetables at meal time.

Children are responsible for how much of the food they want to eat.

Offer portions according to age.





The Food Guide Pyramid

- The Food Guide Pyramid is a general outline of what a person should eat each day.
- **Milk, Yogurt & Cheese Group**: the foods in this group come from animals. These foods are important sources of protein, calcium, and some vitamins.
- **Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, & Nuts Group**: the foods in this group come from animals and some plants. These foods are important sources of protein, iron, zinc, and some vitamins.

The Food Guide Pyramid (continued)

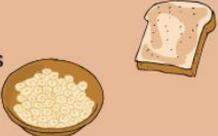
Vegetable Group and Fruit Group: the foods in these two groups come from plants. Most people need to eat more of these foods for the vitamins, minerals, and fiber they supply.

Bread, Cereal, Rice, & Pasta Group: the foods in this group are from grains. You need the most servings of these foods each day. These foods are important sources of B vitamins, iron, and energy

Serving Sizes

Serving sizes are smaller for young children than for older children and adults. They are usually about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ the size of an adult portion.



Food group	2 year olds	3 year olds	4 and 5 year olds	What counts as:
Fruits 	1 cup	1 - 1½ cups	1 - 1½ cups	½ cup of fruit? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped fruit ½ cup 100% fruit juice ½ medium banana 4-5 large strawberries 
Vegetables 	1 cup	1½ cups	1½ - 2 cups	½ cup of veggies? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped vegetables 1 cup raw leafy greens ½ cup vegetable juice 1 small ear of corn 
Grains Make half your grains whole 	3 ounces	4 - 5 ounces	4 - 5 ounces	1 ounce of grains? 1 slice bread 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal flakes ½ cup cooked rice or pasta 1 tortilla (6" across) 
Protein Foods 	2 ounces	3 - 4 ounces	3 - 5 ounces	1 ounce of protein foods? 1 ounce cooked meat, poultry, or seafood 1 egg 1 Tablespoon peanut butter ¼ cup cooked beans or peas (kidney, pinto, lentils) 
Dairy Choose low-fat or fat-free 	2 cups	2 cups	2½ cups	½ cup of dairy? ½ cup milk 4 ounces yogurt ¾ ounce cheese 1 string cheese 

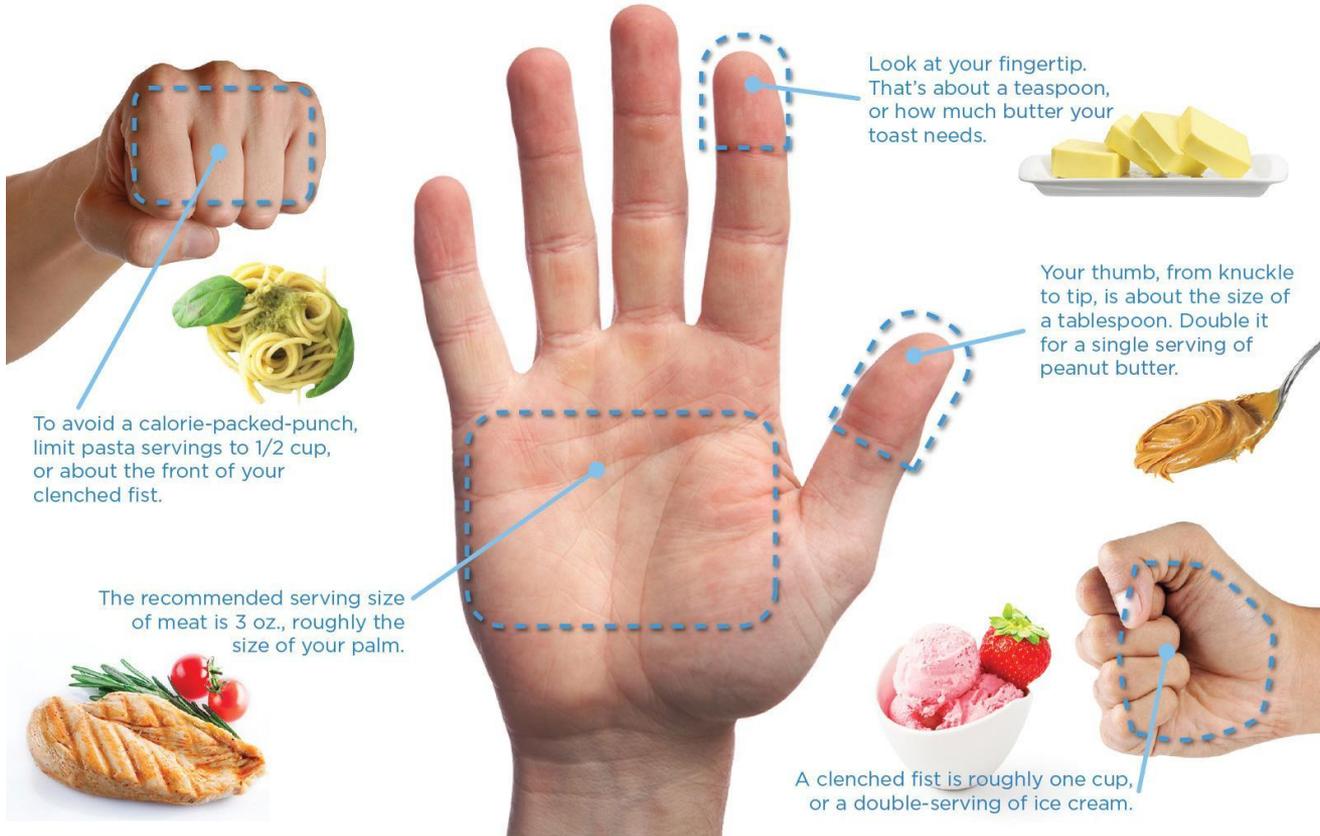
A Guide to Daily Food Choices for Children

Meat Group:

2-3 oz/day for 1 year olds; 3-4 oz/day for 2-3 year olds; 5 oz/day for 4-5 year olds

Serving Sizes for:	<u>1-3 years</u>	<u>4-5 years</u>
Milk: 4 servings/day	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Fruit: 2-4 servings/day	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Vegetable: 3-5 servings/day	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Grain: 6-8 servings/day	1/4 cup	1/2 cup

Hand Guide to Portion Control



References:

Florida Department of Health Bureau of WIC and Nutrition Services Revised December 2003

WIC Services and Guidelines

USDA:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/nutrition-education-coordination-report-congress-fy-2022>

NIH:

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11018312/>

USDOE:

<https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf>