

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AT MEALTIME

Children are born knowing how much food their bodies need to grow in a way that's right for them. When adults offer too much or too little control during mealtime, they can disrupt a child's natural ability to self-regulate food intake.

Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility in Feeding explains that for children to eat well, adults must provide the right support, structure and opportunities. Children can then be trusted to eat the amount they need and learn to be comfortable with unfamiliar food.



ADULTS DECIDE:

WHAT to eat

- Offer a variety of foods — both familiar and unfamiliar.
- Always have something at the table your child likes.
- Offer the same menu to everyone. No special orders!

WHEN to eat

- Have meals at the same time daily.
- Provide planned, sit-down snacks in between meals.
- Discourage food and drinks (aside from water) between meals and snacks.

WHERE to eat

- Sit down with children to eat meals and snacks, when possible.
- Avoid letting children eat while playing or moving around.
- Remove all distractions (TV, iPad, games, phones).

CHILDREN DECIDE:

HOW MUCH to eat

- Will choose what foods to eat from what is offered.
- Will eat when they are hungry and stop when full.
- Should not be asked to eat more than they desire.

WHETHER to eat

- Can choose to eat (or not eat) any meal or snack.
- Can respectfully decline any foods offered.
- Will decide there are foods they do not like.

By following the division of responsibility, parents help children:

- Feel good about eating.
- Learn to like the foods their family eats.
- Enjoy family meals and behave well at mealtime.
- Eat the amount that will support their own healthy growth pattern.

WEEK 1: LEARNING AND GOALS

What I Learned

FOCUS ON MAKING GOALS TO CHANGE SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS (BIG OR SMALL). FOR EXAMPLE:

Instead of, "I will use the division of responsibility in feeding."

Try, "I will start to let my child be in charge of how much to eat by not asking them to try foods or take a certain number of bites."

My Goals

WEEK 1: THINK, PAIR, SHARE

Think about your experiences with eating growing up. What kind of memories come to mind? How has your experiences with eating, or the way that you were fed growing up, shaped how you feed your children today?

THINK about this topic quietly on your own.

PAIR with a partner and discuss your thoughts.

SHARE your thoughts with the group.
