

## KIDS, SWEETS AND TREATS

Restricting “forbidden foods” (those that are high in fat or sugar and relatively low in other nutrients) sets children up to overeat them when they get the chance, whether they are hungry or not. On the other hand, if we give kids free reign with their food choices, their diet will likely become imbalanced.

Children need to learn how to manage “forbidden foods.” You can help children do this, and to see forbidden foods as a normal part of eating, by offering them frequently in a matter-of-fact way, and providing structure and limits around these foods.



### HOW TO MANAGE “FORBIDDEN FOODS”

- 1 When having chips or fries at mealtimes, make enough for everyone to get their fill and allow children to decide how much of these foods they’ll eat.
- 2 Offer desserts with the meal. Allow children to choose what to eat first, even if it is the dessert. There are no seconds on desserts at meals, which does break one of the rules of the division of responsibility. This is because desserts, unlike chips or fries, tend to compete with other nutritious mealtime foods.
- 3 If desserts are only offered after a meal, children may over eat twice: once when they eat their dinner to get to the dessert, and again when they eat the dessert after they’re already full.
- 4 Don’t use sweets or treats as a bribe to get children to eat all or some of their meal. This leads to children believing sweets and treats are more important, or better, than other foods.
- 5 Occasionally include “forbidden foods” at snack time and sometimes allow children to have as much as they want at snack. It is OK to occasionally offer unlimited amounts at snack time because these foods aren’t competing against other nutritious mealtime foods.
- 6 You can have a no “forbidden foods” rule in your house since it is your choice to decide what your kids are offered. However, if your child goes out to a party or special occasion and there are “forbidden foods” around, allow them to enjoy these foods without having a negative reaction.

Initially your child might eat dessert first or eat a lot of “forbidden foods” at snack. But after time and once the newness wears off, your child will learn to manage and moderate their intake of “forbidden foods.”

The feeding advice in this handout is based on Ellyn Satter’s principles and guidelines. For more about Satter’s work, visit [ellynsatterinstitute.org](http://ellynsatterinstitute.org).



United Way  
for Southeastern Michigan

# WEEK 4: LEARNING AND GOALS

## What I Learned

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

**Instead of,** “I will be more lenient about desserts.”

**Try,** “When we have dessert, I will offer a portion with dinner and let my child eat it no matter how much (or little) of their meal they’ve eaten.”

## My Goals

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## WEEK 4: THINK, PAIR, SHARE

How do you manage “forbidden foods” in your home?

**THINK** about this topic quietly on your own.

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**PAIR** with a partner and discuss your thoughts.

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**SHARE** your thoughts with the group.

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