



Healthy Hints from Earth's Best Parent Practices that Promote Healthy Eating in Kids

1. **Be a good role model:** “Do as I say, not as I do”, doesn’t work when it comes to promoting healthy eating habits in children. It is very apparent from research that what and how parents eat greatly influences eating habits in their children.
2. **Have Family Meals:** Children who eat family meals eat more fruits and vegetables, eat less fried food and soda, are leaner, have better communication skills, and are less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety.
3. **Grow a Family Garden:** Children involved in gardening are more willing to try new vegetables and will improve their liking of vegetables.
4. **Read Books:** Children’s books with references to food provide a good opportunity to talk about food and their qualities. Studies of children’s books show that messages about food were more often positive than negative.
5. **Regulate but don’t restrict foods:** Forbidding foods increases children’s preference for those restricted foods, heightens their response to them, and promotes overeating them when they are available.
6. **Schedule Snacks and Meals:** Children who eat at scheduled times are leaner than children who eat randomly. Snacks need to be viewed as important as mealtime for making a nutritional contribution to your child’s diet.
7. **Make Healthy Foods Available and Accessible:** Keep your kitchen well stocked with healthy foods, and make them readily accessible. That means have the fruits and vegetables washed, peeled, cut, etc. and in view for snacks and meals.
8. **Involve kids in the decision:** Allow children, even toddlers, to choose which foods (given a limited choice of healthy items) and have them participate in shopping and meal preparation
9. **Don’t force your child to eat:** Forcing a child to eat when they are not hungry diminishes their ability to self-regulate their intake to meet their needs and may promote overeating when they get older. Forcing a child to eat foods they don’t like or don’t want to try turns meal times into power struggles and takes food out of the realm of nourishment and turns it into an emotional one.
10. **Have Active Family Time:** Limit inactive activity like television viewing and increase time spent physically active as a family. Low levels of physical activity have repeatedly been related to increased overweight in children.

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