

Tips to support positive mealtimes

It's natural for kids to pick and choose which foods to eat. Our goal is to help kids have a positive relationship with food. The division of responsibility in feeding helps children build trust around food.

Caregivers jobs are to decide what foods to serve, when to serve them and where to serve them.

- Caregivers decide **what** foods are offered. Offer basically the same foods you prepare for the rest of the family. When possible, prepare meals with 2-3 options of food at a meal. When introducing a new or non-preferred food, offer a small amount, and pair it with a familiar food.
- When possible, keep to a routine of **when** you eat meals and snacks.
- When possible, keep to a routine of **where** you eat meals and snacks.
- When possible, eat **together** with your child so you can be a role model.

Your child's job is to decide if and how much they are going to eat.

- Give your child time to **explore** foods and lots of opportunities to smell, touch and taste different foods.
- Trust your child to know when they are hungry or full.
- Rather than putting pressure on your child to eat, try to keep mealtimes **positive**. You can make comments like:
 - "Bananas are sweet"
 - "The cucumber is crunchy"
- If your child turns something down, try not to worry. Offer it again another day. It takes lots of **time** to learn to enjoy different foods.
- Let your child "**help**" with preparing food to increase their interest in foods.



Let us know if you have any more questions or want more information.