

Healthy from the Start

How feeding nurtures your young child's body, heart and mind



Feeding is one of a parent's most important jobs. It is how we help our children grow healthy and strong. But mealtimes are about much more than food. Meal and snack times give you a chance to help your baby or toddler:

- Learn healthy eating habits
- Feel important and loved
- Feel understood and respected
- Trust that others will care for her
- Feel good about her body

To see full booklet on feeding, go to www.zerotothree.org

Here are some ways to help your child become a healthy eater:

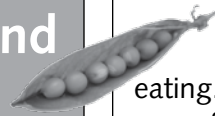
1. Remember: Meals are about more than food. They are a time to connect with your child and to support her overall development. Talk with your child during meals and don't let her eat alone. This helps build strong family relationships.

2. Create routines around mealtime. Routines make children feel loved and secure. Establish regular meal and snack times beginning when your child is 9-12 months old. Rou-



tines help children look forward to each meal.

Healthy eating and exercise go hand in hand.



3. Offer 3 to 4 healthy food choices (that your child likes) at each meal. Research shows that children will choose a healthy diet when they are offered a selection of different healthy foods.

4. Don't force your baby or toddler to eat. This often results in children refusing the food and eating less.

5. Don't give up on new foods! Patience is the key. You may have to offer your child a new food 10 or 15 times

before he will eat it.

6. Turn off the TV (computers, etc) at mealtime. The television can distract children from eating. It also takes time away from talking as a family.

7. Healthy eating and exercise go hand in hand. So make active play a part of everyday family life.



8. If you are concerned about your child's weight or activity level, talk to your child's health care provider. To learn more about feeding and young children, visit www.zerotothree.org.

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