

Parent/Child Mealtime Responsibilities

Parents' Responsibilities

What to serve:

- Parent decides what healthy foods to serve.
 - ✓ Do not be a short order cook: offer the same food for the whole family.
 - ✓ Plan at least one food everyone will eat

When to serve it:

- Have a routine of meals and snacks, about every 2-3 hours so your child knows when to expect to eat
 - ✓ Expect the child to be present at meals, even if he/she does not choose to eat – but do not force the child to eat.
 - ✓ Set reasonable time limits for the start and end of the meal, and then remove the plate quietly.

Children's Responsibilities

How much to eat:

- The child decides how much to eat
 - ✓ Remember to provide small servings
 - ✓ Do not force or bribe your child to eat everything on their plate; this could encourage overeating.

Whether or not to eat:

- The child decides *if* he/she wants to eat
 - ✓ Trust your child's appetite to know when he/she is hungry or full.
 - ✓ It's OK if your child skips a meal
 - ✓ Choosy eaters may not want to try new foods right away; encourage but don't force.