



FOSTERING NOURISHED FAMILIES

Guidebook^{*}



INTERACTIVE NUTRITION TRAINING
FOR RESOURCE FAMILIES

About *Fostering Nourished Families*

Fostering Nourished Families is a curriculum to provide nutrition training for resource foster families. This curriculum was developed to meet the continuing education requirements for foster and kinship caregivers in California but can be implemented outside of these settings. These three 3-hour sessions can be delivered individually or as a full series. The complete curriculum consists of this Guidebook, accompanying slide deck, and Instructor Guide. This training can be conducted virtually or in-person.

About *Leah's Pantry*

Leah's Pantry is a California-based non profit committed to a vision of all people being nourished, regardless of socioeconomic status. Our programs and products are designed to ensure all people have access to healthy food and feel competent preparing easy, nutritious meals for themselves and their families. We approach our work through the lens of trauma and resilience, and believe that positive, nourishing food experiences can heal individuals, encourage healthy community norms, promote nutritional security, and support the realignment of broken food systems in low-income communities. Learn more at leahspantry.org.

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This Guidebook belongs to: _____



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FAMILIES**

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**LESSON 1:
POSITIVE FEEDING
FOR RESOURCE FAMILIES**

The human body is built to handle stress...some of the time. Common symptoms of short-term stress include:

- The **brain** may get distracted with repetitive thoughts, making it difficult to concentrate
- The **head** may start to hurt; some people become extra sensitive to light and sound
- Vision** may get blurry, eyelids may twitch, or eyes may hurt
- Teeth** may clench and the mouth may dry out
- Heart rate** increases along with blood pressure; this makes it difficult to sleep
- Muscles** may tense or tremble
- Breathing** may speed up and become shallow; some people hold their breath
- Skin** may get pale, sweaty, or flushed
- Appetite** may go up or down; some people experience nausea or even stomach pain
- Bowel and bladder** control are reduced during extreme stress



Create safety by regulating yourself, helping children to regulate, and establishing a safe environment.

There are 3 types of regulation:

1. **Other-regulation:** Children are dependent on an adult for regulation, i.e. swaddling and rocking a baby, singing a song, holding or touching.
2. **Co-regulation:** Children are wired to imitate and emulate your actions, so if you are regulated that will help them regulate themselves. Dysregulated people cannot help others regulate.
3. **Self-regulation:** This is a taught skill, so children will need to have some guidance and practice as to what and how to self-regulate. They need to experience #1 and #2 in order to learn self-regulation.

Help yourself and others regulate by creating a safe environment that is:

- » Calm
- » Connected
- » Nonjudgmental
- » Predictable
- » Supportive

Remember

Children may feel internally unsafe even in safe environments. Trust and connection are built with your consistency over time.

| Positive Stress | Tolerable Stress | Toxic Stress |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
|-----------------|------------------|--------------|

This stress response isn't always damaging. Positive stress occurs with a change or situation you want, such as starting a new job or traveling to a new place. In these situations, a little stress can be motivating.

Tolerable stress occurs when our bodies respond to more serious threats, such as injury or arguments, but returns to a calm state easily. Coping skills, loving support, and good health help the body return to a calm state.

When stress is very severe or lasting, however, the body cannot easily return to a calm state. This is toxic stress. Over time, toxic stress can lead to poor physical and emotional health.

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A well-balanced diet is like building a fire with logs instead of sticks—your fire will burn brighter and stronger.

What can put out your fire too fast?

Our bodies crave sugar, salt, caffeine, or highly processed snacks when stressed, tired, or “down” because they provide quick energy and/or pleasure. But these foods can also cause a crash when the feeling wears off, ultimately making our energy or mood worse. We may also skip meals when anxious, tired, or in a hurry. This can cause mood or energy crashes, often leading to overeating unhealthy food later.

Improve your mood and energy with good food.

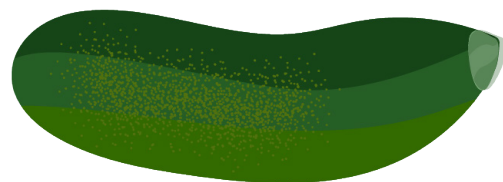
- » A diet rich in healthy fats and fiber found in whole grains, nuts, and seeds will help you stay full for hours so your energy doesn't crash.
- » Protein fills you up and provides amino acids needed for steady moods.
- » Vitamins and minerals from colorful fruits and vegetables can help the body stay strong and adapt to stress.
- » Eating balanced snacks or meals regularly during your day can keep your energy and mood from plummeting.
- » Drinking water improves mood and concentration. It also helps bring nutrients to your muscles so your body can feel more energized.

Flavored Water Recipe

- » Fill a pitcher with cool water
- » Add ½ cup thinly sliced cucumber and ½ cup fresh mint leaves
- » Chill in the refrigerator
- » Enjoy!

Try different combinations of flavors:

1. Thin slices: lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit, cucumber, apple, berries, melon, pineapple, fresh ginger
2. Fresh leaves/sprigs: mint, basil, rosemary, parsley



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A snack should be just as nutritious as the meals you serve.

- » Have sugary and salty snack foods as occasional treats. Or eat a small amount and balance it with something healthy— such as a cupcake with milk.
- » Avoid impulse purchases by planning ahead and carrying a healthy snack with you when you are going out for a long time.
- » Keep light and healthier snacks around such as frozen fruits, bananas, nuts, cheese sticks or slices, hummus, or whole grain crackers.
- » For mood and energy boosting snacks, pick something from each column:

Protein and Healthy Fat:

- » unsweetened nuts
- » peanut /almond butter
- » avocado
- » string cheese, cream cheese hummus or bean dip
- » low-fat ranch dip or yogurt hard
- » boiled eggs
- » baked tofu cubes

Fruits and Vegetables:

- » sliced apples, grapes, carrots, bell pepper, cucumber, cherry tomatoes
- » carrot sticks, and celery sticks

Whole Grains:

- » whole grain crackers, baked tortilla chips, whole wheat tortillas, popcorn, whole grain granola bars

Fun At-Home Snack Ideas

Inside-Out Sandwich: Spread mustard on a slice of deli turkey. Wrap around a breadstick.

Snack Mix: Mix together unsweetened ready-to-eat cereal, dried fruit, and nuts in a sandwich bag for an on-the-go snack.

Oatmeal: Prepare regular (not instant oats) unsweetened rolled oats in the microwave, lightly sweeten with honey, brown sugar, or fresh or dried fruit.

Fruity Cone Treat: Fill a waffle cone with cut-up fruit, top with low-fat vanilla yogurt.

Baked Potato: Microwave small baking potato. Top with sprinkle of cheese and salsa.

Cheesy Popcorn: Sprinkle grated Parmesan cheese on hot popcorn.

Mini Pizza: Half a whole wheat English muffin+1 oz mozzarella + 1/4 cup chopped tomatoes (canned or fresh)+dried basil. Bake until the cheese is melted.



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You can help reduce a child’s anxiety and stress around food when they are in an unfamiliar home.

- 1. Show them where everything is.** Take the child on a tour of your house-their new home. Include the places where they can find snacks, drinks, dishes, and utensils. Show older children how to use appliances you are okay with them using.
- 2. Clarify mealtimes and food access.** Share with the new child or teenager the time for family meals. Also, let the child know what access they may have to the kitchen or snacks in between meals and whether they can prepare their own snacks or meals. Consider designating a space where they can keep their own snacks.
- 3. Instead of rules, gradually introduce a new child to your household pattern.** Rules can come later once they are settled in. Patiently explain your routine, or household habits: Where do dirty dishes go? Is there a Sunday dinner or Pizza night? Should they help with dinner? Depending on the previous living situation of the child, they may not even be familiar with daily routines.
- 4. Learn about their previous food and meal routines.** Ask how food and meals were handled where they previously lived so you can help them adjust to what’s different in your home. Ask:
 - » What did you like about mealtimes? » When do you usually feel the hungriest?
 - » What did you not like about mealtimes? » How do you know you are hungry?
- 5. Help them ask for what they want and need.** Notice when a child is hesitating to make a request and help them find the words. Explain how they can ask for the things they need or make meal requests. Let them choose a special meal.



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Getting to know a child’s habits and preferences can help make them feel safe and supported.

Ask the case worker, birth parent, or child these questions.

| Preferences | Questions |
|----------------------------|---|
| Personal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Do you follow a special diet (vegetarian, vegan, etc.)? » What are some of your favorite foods to eat? » What are some of your least favorite foods to eat? » What are some familiar foods you would like to have in the house or be prepared at mealtime? |
| Cultural | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What are some foods that were/are typically prepared at home? » Are there specialty markets that I can buy familiar foods from? » What meals are prepared in your home for special celebrations? » What foods are served at (insert holiday) in your home? |
| Spiritual/Religious | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Do you have any foods that will need to be avoided, or served, for religious purposes? » Are there foods that will need to be avoided only for special holidays? » Will there be any times that you/your child will need to fast? » Are there specialty markets that I will need to get food from? |
| Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Are there any food allergies I need to be aware of? » Are there any foods that make you feel sick/give you a stomachache? » Is there a health condition I need to be aware of that influences what foods I can serve? |
| Sensory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What are your favorite textures (crunchy, soft, chewy, mushy)? » What are your least favorite textures? » What are your favorite flavors (salty, sweet, savory)? » What are your least favorite flavors? |
| Emotional | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » I can see that this food is upsetting you, would you like me to take it away or keep it on the plate? You don't have to eat it. » Are there any foods that you would rather I not serve at mealtime? Why not? » Are there any foods from home that bring you comfort? |

Learn more:

| Preferences | How To Get Help |
|---|---|
| <p>Personal Preferences and Beliefs: Ethical reasons like being vegan/vegetarian, personal preferences, or familiar foods from home that may be unusual to us, but comforting to a foster child.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ask the child directly (get to know the reason behind their preferences) » Reach out to the family directly or through the caseworker » Pay attention to the child's preferences |
| <p>Cultural: Children come into care from all cultural backgrounds and may end up in culturally different homes. It is important to embrace the child's cultural familiarity and celebratory foods because this is a source of identity and safety for them.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reach out to the family directly or through the caseworker » Locate a local cultural center » Locate a local market that specializes in ethnic foods » Reach out to a language or cultural studies department at a local college |
| <p>Spiritual/Religious: Some spiritual traditions have rules around food: Vegetarian or Vegan diets (Buddhists, Hindus, Seventh Day Adventists) Special rules around meat (Jews, Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses) Fasting Observances (Jews, Muslims, Christians)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reach out to local temples, mosques, churches, and religious community centers » Enroll in a religious youth group » Reach out to a department of religious studies at a local college |
| <p>Health: Children may avoid certain foods due to health reasons. They may have allergies (milk, egg, soy, wheat, peanuts, corn, other), intolerances (lactose), a condition like diabetes, a genetic condition, or digestive diseases that make digesting certain foods painful.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reach out to the family directly or through the caseworker » Reach out to a pediatrician or specialist (Allergist, Endocrinologist, Gastroenterologist, etc.) » Find a local/online support group |
| <p>Sensory Challenges: For some children, certain textures or flavors can be overstimulating to their senses and cause aversion.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reach out to a pediatrician » Reach out to an Occupational Therapist » Reach out to a nutrition professional (that specializes in feeding) |
| <p>Emotional: If certain foods are associated with fear or anxiety for a child, they may feel less open to trying new foods and may want to stick with "safe" foods. Food-related trauma often affects one's relationship with food and can lead to an eating disorder.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reach out to their pediatrician » Reach out to the child's therapist » Reach out to an Eating Disorder Specialist (RD, CNS, or other licensed nutrition professional) » Find a local/online support group |

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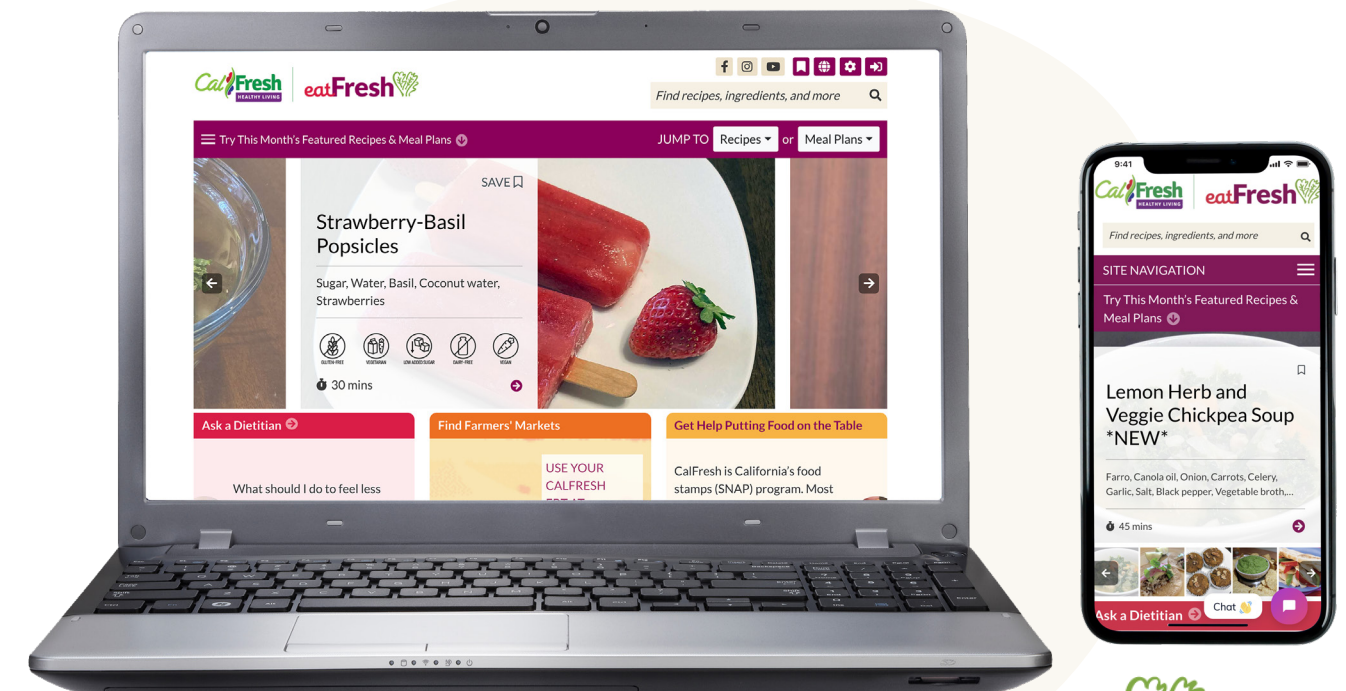
How do you find trustworthy nutritional information online?

Trustworthy sites typically do not have advertisements and come from a reputable medical, educational, or professional organization—the web address usually ends in .edu, .gov, or .org.

EatFresh.org is funded by CalFresh (USDA) and makes shopping and home cooking easy.

Go to www.EatFresh.org to start exploring!

- » Find healthy, inexpensive, and quick recipes.
- » Print, save, share, and text recipes to your mobile phone.
- » Learn lifestyle tips to keep you healthy and feeling your best.
- » Ask a question to the EatFresh.org dietitian.
- » Save time planning and shopping with meal plans.
- » Apply for SNAP/CalFresh.
- » Learn basic cooking skills and how to substitute ingredients to use what you already have at home.
- » View the website in multiple languages.
- » View nutritional information for each recipe.



How we feed can support good mental health and eating habits for everyone in the family.

Feeding styles that create stressful interactions and promote poor eating habits:

- » Are highly controlling, or too permissive, or neglectful
- » Regularly use food as a reward or to soothe
- » Use food to punish

The most balanced approaches to feeding feature:

- » Adults' behaviors and an environment that model desirable habits and warm interactions
- » Consistency and predictability around meals
- » Adults taking primary responsibility for offering a balance of foods
- » Adults who gently guide a child to make their own reasonable choices

Which of these feeding styles is most likely to promote balanced eating in children? Which ones create added stress for caregiver or child?

The “Clean Your Plate” Style

- » Telling a child how much and what foods they should eat
- » Having little trust in child’s innate ability to know when they are full/hungry
- » Bribing, counting bites, not letting the child leave a table until the adult decides
- » Punishing the child for not eating

The “Fly By The Seat of Their Pants” Style

- » Has very little structured support around food
- » Meals are often unplanned, untimely, and unreliable

The “Yes”/“Short-Order Cook” Style

- » Catering to the child’s wants at mealtime
- » Offering little structure to snacking, leading to child grazing throughout the day

The “Division of Responsibility” Style

- » Having reasonable expectations and structure to feeding
- » Responsive to a child’s needs but allowing the child to make food choices based on their fullness and preferences
- » Supporting children’s developing autonomy around what goes in their bodies

Being clear on the roles and responsibilities of the food provider (you) and the eater (the child) can be helpful in reducing stressful interactions around mealtimes.

Of course, as a caregiver, you can enlist others in your home to support your role!

| You are responsible for - <i>what, when, and where</i> | Children are responsible for - <i>how much and whether</i> |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Choosing and preparing the food » Providing regular and consistent meals » Modeling desired behaviors » Being considerate of children’s preferences and lack of food experience » Making mealtimes pleasant » Preventing mindless grazing between meals and snacks (except for purposeful grazing allowed by the parent for medical or sensory reasons) » Letting children grow into the right body for them. Remember, bodies vary! | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » What they will eat » Learning when their body tells them they are full » Learning from your role modeling » Growing predictably » Learning to try their best at mealtime |

This model was developed by Ellyn Satter, MA, RD, LCSW, BCD.

Self-Reflection:

- » Which feeding habits do you identify with?
- » Do you have a mixture of feeding styles?
- » How is your approach different or the same as how you were fed as a child?
- » Has your feeding style ever conflicted with a child in your home?
- » Has it caused stress for you?
- » Are there life circumstances that have influenced or changed your feeding style?
- » How have you adapted your feeding style?

Learn about children’s developmental skills and stages.

To have greater success in feeding, create opportunities for a child to grow and practice their developmental skills.

| Developmental Skills and Stages | |
|---|--|
| <p>TRUST <i>Stage of Development: Infancy (Birth to 12 months)</i></p> | <p>Children learn to trust by having their needs met with love and in a timely manner. Babies and young children who experience trust will exhibit bonding behaviors such as eye contact, smiling, mimicking, laughing, and needing to be near their caretaker. Separation from a primary caregiver often leads to mistrust. Babies who mistrust may no longer cry or exhibit other signs of hunger or need. Children who have not developed trust may have difficulties self-regulating at the table, reject foods offered by the caretaker, or overeat/hoard food.</p> |
| <p>AUTONOMY <i>Stage of Development: Toddlerhood (1-3 yrs)</i></p> | <p>During this stage, children experiment with boundaries, control over choice/likes, what they do/don’t want to learn, and hone in on their capabilities. Children who experience healthy autonomy will want to do things without help, stand their ground when they oppose a request, or want to exhibit control over their body and environment.</p> |
| <p>INITIATIVE <i>Stage of Development: Preschool age (3-5 yrs)</i></p> | <p>During this stage children use play to develop interpersonal and leadership skills. When children experience initiative, they learn to balance being a leader with consideration for others’ feelings and use these experiences to build their confidence in social situations.</p> |
| <p>INDUSTRY <i>Stage of Development: School Age (6-11 yrs)</i></p> | <p>During this stage, children begin to require more independence, learn from natural consequences, and develop their sense of competency by learning from their mistakes and successes. A child who develops this sense will be able to adapt and persevere when faced with a challenge, and look to their peers more for support.</p> |
| <p>IDENTITY <i>Stage of Development: Adolescence (12-18 yrs)</i></p> | <p>During this stage, children begin exploring their self-identity and developing a sense of their purpose in the world. Although adolescents need independence, this is also a time when they need their caretakers most, so lovingly lean in even when they appear to push away. Adolescents who have the opportunity to adequately explore their identity will develop a sense of what they believe in, who they want to be, and their role in society.</p> |

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Respond with these best practices.

Take into account a child’s emotional state, cognitive ability, and motor skills when trying these best practices.

| Best Feeding Practices: Infants (Birth to 12 months) |
|---|
| <p>Feeding plays a pivotal role in building trust. Build a baby’s sense of trust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provide formula or breast milk (milk bank) as a primary source of nutrition » Create a calm environment for baby » Calm and soothe baby » Pay attention to hunger cues (fussiness, hands to mouth, searching around with mouth) » Pay attention to fullness cues (pulling away from breast/bottle, taking long pauses, falling asleep on breast/bottle, pushing breast/bottle away from face) » Respect sleep and wake cues » Follow baby’s lead for timing, tempo, frequency, and amounts for feeding » Hold a shirt the mom has worn near the baby when feeding, for mom’s scent. If an infant is coming to your home from the hospital, ask the on-call nurse or inquire when you pick them up |

| Best Practices: Toddlers (1-3 yrs) |
|---|
| <p>Build a toddler’s sense of autonomy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Don’t be deterred by picky eating, it is normal at this age » Offer safe foods (appropriate sizes, amounts, consistency) for developmental stage » Allow the child to eat how they choose: offer a spoon, allow fingers, let them “play” with food-just keep clean up supplies around » Offer small portions of food (tablespoon) » Allow to choose what and how much to eat » Give many chances to try new foods » Allow to determine when finished » Offer a mix of favorites and foods you would like them to eat, in small amounts » Offer foods in divided plates, ice cube trays, or bento boxes so it is less intimidating » Keep consistent feeding times to prevent drops in blood sugar = hangry! » Sing songs about food, eating, and cooking » Pretend cook |

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Best Practices: Preschoolers (3-5 yrs)

Guide feeding to support a healthy initiative and internal motivation.

- » Offer 3 meals a day at set times
- » Offer 1-2 snacks at consistent times
- » Sit down and eat with child
- » Consider child's preferences without catering
- » Allow child to self serve and eat how the child wants, and in any order
- » Allow child to eat as much or as little as the child wants
- » Serve food family style allowing free choice (learn about preferences/portions)
- » Include children when cooking and baking; if they help prepare it and it smells good, they are more likely to try it!
- » Talk with your child about the food: what color is it? How many items are there on the plate? How does it smell? (Steer clear of language that suggests YOU want them to try it, we want them to self motivate to try)
- » Sing songs about food, eating, and cooking
- » Pretend cook

Best Practices: School Age (6-11 yrs)

Support a child's sense of industry.

- » Don't allow eating in front of TV/electronics/homework (distracts from feeding cues and important social-emotional development at the table)
- » Teach how to make a satisfying snack
- » Serve food family style. Allow child to eat what they want from what you provide
- » Eat at the dinner table to stay connected
- » Include children in snack preparation and encourage them to initiate their own snack making when hungry
- » Talk about basic nutrition i.e. Healthy foods for strong bodies, energy, and mood

Best Practices: Adolescents (12-18 yrs)

Support an adolescent's identity development.

- » Use mealtimes for connecting
- » Practice with your child: basic meal planning strategies, how to read a recipe, where to look online to find recipes, how to use a variety of kitchen tools, how you budget for the week, and your favorite cooking tips and tricks
- » Take a family cooking class or follow along together with a cooking video
- » Share with your teen about your food history, preferences, beliefs, and what food means to you and invite them to do the same
- » Give teens plenty of opportunities for tasks/responsibilities around food/meals

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Special Considerations for Foster Children

- » Try to be relaxed around food; it decreases the pressure a child feels around feeding
- » Learn about your child's food history and favorite foods from them, their caseworker, or their birth parents
- » If possible, reach out to your child's caseworker or birth parents for support with understanding feeding needs and preferences
- » If you are worried about your child's nutritional intake, speak to their doctor or a nutritionist about whether they need supplementation or medical support
- » Foster children may need to be completely independent by the time they age out of care. Take the time to offer extra support to develop strong self-nourishment and independent living skills.



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LESSON 2: NUTRITION FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Do you get enough rest?

Getting enough sleep is one of the most important requirements for mental and physical health. If you answer yes to any of these questions, you may be sleep deprived!

- » Do you regularly fall asleep within five minutes of laying down?
- » Have memory trouble?
- » Want to take a nap right now?
- » Do you crave caffeine to get going in the morning and junk food later in the day?

Fill in the Blanks:

1. You may eat _____ when you're tired.
2. Most adults need at least 7-9 _____ of sleep per night, even seniors. Children need more.
3. Your brain can _____ itself during sleep by getting rid of waste.
4. Sleep helps the brain form _____.
5. During deep sleep your _____ pressure drops. Breathing slows and blood flows to the muscles.
6. The Challenger shuttle disaster and Chernobyl nuclear accident have been blamed on errors related to _____ deprivation.
7. It should take about 10-15 _____ to fall asleep. If you always fall asleep faster, you may be sleep deprived.
8. _____ are the only mammals that delay sleep on purpose.
9. While you're asleep, your _____ switches from cleansing your body to rebuilding it.
10. Growth _____, which help the body grow and heal, are released during sleep.

WORD BANK

- humans
- liver
- blood
- sleep
- clean
- memories
- hormones
- more
- hours
- minutes

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How colorful is your plate?

Fill in the chart with the fruits and vegetables you and your family eat the most. Which colors are missing?

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Green | Red |
| | |
| Yellow/Orange | Blue/Purple |
| | |
| White/Brown | Others |
| | |

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ANSWER KEY FOR PAGE 24

- 1. more
- 2. hours
- 3. clean
- 4. memories
- 5. blood
- 6. sleep
- 7. minutes
- 8. humans
- 9. liver
- 10. hormones

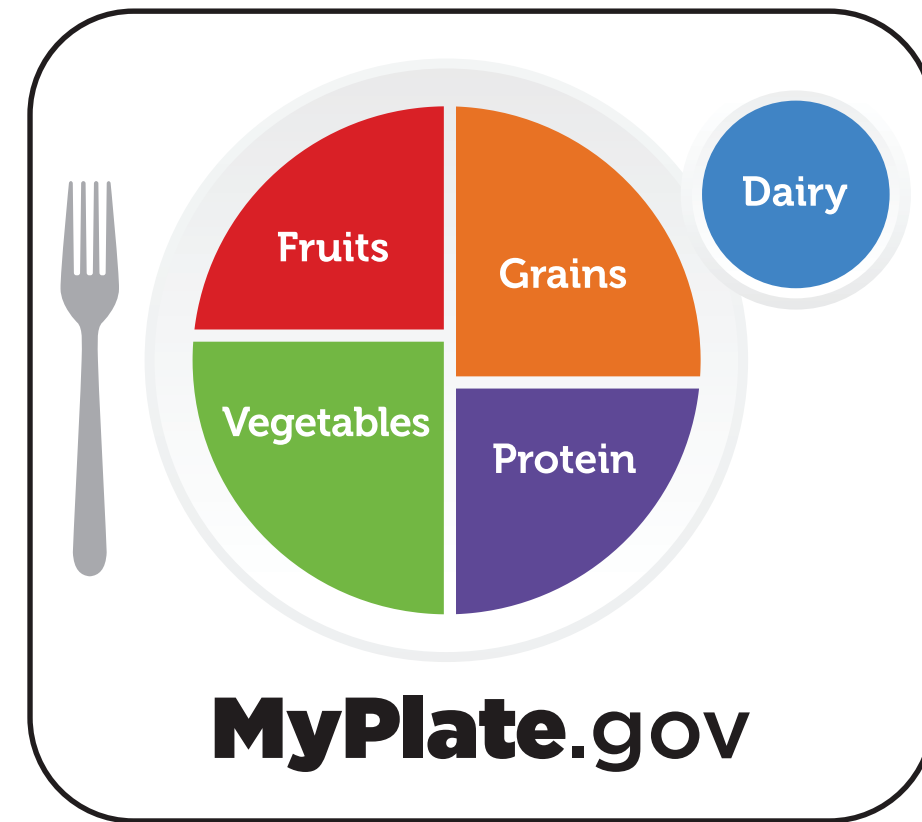
Which color do you eat the most?

Different colored fruits and vegetables are full of nutrients. How can you add variety throughout your day?

| Green | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lower your chance of getting cancer » Keep your eyes healthy » Keep your bones and teeth strong | <i>Spinach, celery, green beans, broccoli, cabbage, bok choy, cucumbers, asparagus, kale, artichokes, honeydew, green grapes, green apples, limes, avocados</i> |
| Yellow and Orange | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Keep your heart healthy » Keep your eyes healthy » Lower your chances of getting cancer » Keep you from catching colds | <i>Carrots, sweet potatoes, yellow peppers, pumpkins, pineapple, papayas, cantaloupe, tangerines, mangoes, oranges, lemons, peaches</i> |
| Red | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Keep your heart healthy » Keep your bladder healthy » Keep your memory strong » Lower your chance of getting cancer | <i>Tomatoes, red peppers, red cabbage, strawberries, cherries, watermelon, red onion, red apples, beets</i> |
| Blue and Purple | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Stay healthy as you age » Keep your bladder healthy » Keep your memory strong » Lower your chance of getting cancer | <i>Eggplant, purple cabbage, raisins, blueberries, blackberries, purple grapes</i> |
| White/Brown | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Keep your heart healthy » Have good cholesterol levels » Lower your chance of getting cancer | <i>Onion, green onion, cauliflower, chives, mushrooms, ginger, garlic, jicama, fennel</i> |

What goes into a balanced diet?

You might be familiar with this model from the USDA. What foods fall in each category?



MyPlate recommendations.

- » Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables.
- » Eat different kinds of vegetables—dark green as well as other colors.
- » Eat whole fruits.
- » Make half of your grains whole grains.
- » Vary your protein sources to include beans and peas, tofu, nuts, seafood, eggs, and lean meats.
- » Choose foods and beverages with less added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium.
- » Consume low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or yogurt (or fortified, non-dairy versions).

Source: www.dietaryguidelines.gov

What are your “go-to” healthy food categories? Do you see any of your favorites here?



Whole Grains & Other Complex Carbohydrates

Some carbohydrates are “complex.” That means they take a lot of work for your body to break down. They also provide your body with more nutrients and help you feel full longer.

Examples: brown rice, whole wheat products (bread, tortillas), oatmeal, quinoa, amaranth, lentils, beans, starchy fruits and vegetables



Protein from Plants

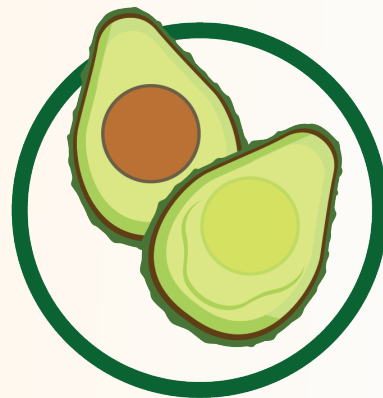
Whether you’re a vegetarian or not, enjoy some protein from plants. These foods often have more fiber and less saturated fat than foods that come from animals. They can also be cheaper and last longer.

Examples: beans, lentils, nuts and nut butters, seeds and seed butters, tofu, and tempeh

Healthy Fats

The human body needs different kinds of fats for health. Without fat, the body cannot use some vitamins. Children’s brains need healthy fats too. Fats are also slow to digest. This can help you stay full for a long time. Choose fats that have been minimally or not at all processed.

Examples: avocados, whole nuts and nut butters (low-salt or unsalted), peanuts and peanut butter, olives and olive oil, seeds, fatty fish like salmon and sardines



Whole Fruits

The small amounts of naturally occurring sugars in fruit give quick energy. Fruit also has vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Eat a rainbow of fresh or frozen fruits. Enjoy raw or minimally-cooked.



Colorful Vegetables

Different colored vegetables and fruits have different nutrients. To get a variety, try to “eat the rainbow” every day. Enjoy them raw and cooked in different ways, too. Enjoy leafy greens as often as possible.



Healthy Beverages

Water is the perfect drink for a healthy body. If you want something else for a change, drink beverages made with clean water, unsweetened milk or milk substitutes, and whole, natural foods. They can be flavored with fruits, herbs, spices or vanilla extract.

Examples: water, water flavored with fresh fruit, iced or hot herbal teas, unsweetened milk and milk substitutes (e.g. almond, soy, and rice)





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How would you make the following meals healthier using the *Do Eat* list?

See listed examples then adjust beneath to improve the nutrition of these numbered meals.

| Meal 1 | Meal 2 | Meal 3 | Meal 4 | Meal 5 |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Fried chicken | Hamburger on white bun | Pasta with tomato sauce | Instant ramen | Stir-fry with beef |
| White rice | French fries | Garlic bread with butter | Chips | White rice |
| Salad, with lettuce and cucumber | Milk shake | Soda | Juice | |
| | | | | |

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Babies should get all of their nutrition and hydration from breast milk or iron-fortified formula at least until they are 6 months old or longer. Introducing solid foods is about giving their palates and eating muscles practice as they continue to grow.

■ When are babies ready for solid foods?

- » Can hold up its head independently
- » Shows interest in the food you are eating
- » Sits up with help
- » Accepts spoon-fed food without tongue thrusting

Start with soft, mild, and unsweetened foods. Iron-fortified cereal, oatmeal, banana, avocado, peas, squash, and sweet potatoes are great foods to introduce first (mash and mix with water, breastmilk, or formula only). Eggs, yogurt, well-cooked meat, mashed fish, and other mashed vegetables can be added soon after. Babies can be introduced to nut products including peanuts as long as they are not choking hazards (skip hard whole nuts). Finger foods like Cheerios, tofu, grated cheese, cooked green beans, or pieces of soft or cooked fruit can be given at 7 months or later with close supervision.

■ Tips

1. Add new foods and flavors every 4-5 days. Introduce herbs or spices sooner rather than later. Watch for any food allergies.
2. Non-pureed foods can be introduced right after your baby begins to get the hang of eating solids, or even as a first food for some babies, if prepared properly. The more texture a baby experiences, the better it is for their eating habits.
3. Sometimes it takes 8 to 10 tries before a baby is interested in eating the food.
4. Do not chew food yourself before giving it to your child.
5. Spoon feed at the beginning of a meal; finger foods at the end.
6. Encourage drinking from an open cup, sippy cup, or straw cup.
7. Breastmilk, formula, or sips of water are the best drinks for your baby. Cow's milk/non-dairy milk, juice, soda, tea, and sugar-sweetened drinks should not be given to infants under 12 months because this can lead to poor health or illness.
8. Avoid honey until after 12 months.
9. Never leave a baby alone with food.

■ Save Money: Make Your Own Baby Food

- » Prepare homemade food with a blender, food processor, or food mill.
- » Put brown rice or oatmeal in a blender for 2 full minutes. Add to water in a saucepan and simmer for 10 minutes. Whisk or stir.
- » Wash/peel then cut up some fruits or vegetables. Simmer until soft then mash or puree.
- » Store homemade baby food in the fridge for up to 3 days. For longer storage, freeze in ice cube trays, then transfer to a plastic bag.



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Young children learn by imitation. Enjoy eating fruits, veggies, and whole grains, and eventually, your kids will, too!

■ Toddlers...

- » are growing teeth, but are still at high risk for choking.
- » may change tastes and appetite from day to day.
- » may prefer foods in their simplest form (without sauce or mixed with other foods).
- » like to “play” with food using all their senses; plan for this rather than discouraging it.
- » can practice self-feeding, drinking from a regular cup, and using utensils. It might be messy at first, but they will learn to feed themselves—saving you some effort later on.

■ Preschoolers...

- » may need to be exposed to new foods many times before acceptance.
- » are ready for more structured mealtimes and food routines.
- » are more exposed to processed foods outside the home but can begin to learn about healthy decision-making.

■ What to Offer

- » 16-24 oz whole milk per day for kids 12-24 months. Switch to low-fat at 24 months.
- » If a child has a cow's milk allergy, choose unsweetened and fortified milk alternatives or toddler formula.
- » After age 1, tummies can handle berries, tomatoes, citrus, and honey.
- » Three meals plus two healthy snacks per day at predictable times.
- » Mild versions of whatever the rest of the family is eating. It's not necessary to cook a separate menu.
- » Offer cut-up fruit instead of juice. Fruit juice is not necessary and can harm children's teeth. If you do serve juice as a treat, dilute no more than 1/4 cup (4 oz) of 100% fruit juice with water and serve in a cup, not a bottle.

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Older kids want to do things and eat as their peers do but still need you to provide guidance and nourish their brains and bodies.

Elementary School Kids...

- » Are beginning to understand where food comes from and that some foods are good for growing bodies.
- » Need to be active every day for physical and mental health.
- » May feel guilty about eating animals.
- » Benefit from structured mealtimes as they develop decision-making skills.

Adolescents...

- » Need to be active every day for physical and mental health.
- » May start to see connections between diet, physical appearance, and health.
- » May be more adventurous with food choices.
- » Are vulnerable to peer pressure around what to eat and how to look.
- » May gain weight more rapidly with the onset of adult hormones.

Make Fruits and Vegetable Fun

- » Keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the kitchen table.
- » Put washed and cut fruits and veggies on a shelf in your refrigerator where your child can see them.
- » Let them pick fruits and veggies at the store.
- » Experiment with dips and powdered spices to make these foods more interactive.



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Feeding special needs children can be overwhelming or confusing. Learn about some common needs and how to find support.

Infants

Infants in foster care have access to a choice of breast milk or formula. If it is safe, the infant's mother will provide the breast milk; otherwise, a milk bank may be an option. Baby formula is also an option.

Things to remember:

- » **Do not** offer cow or plant-based milk before one year (milk is very hard on an infant's kidneys and can cause anemia!) When you introduce milk, make sure you are providing whole milk and not skim/low-fat. Babies need the fat for their developing brains.
- » **Consult the pediatrician if an infant has a cow's milk allergy.**
- » **Do not** give solids until at least 4-6 months old.
- » When introducing foods, offer a small amount of a single new food over the course of 3 days to assess for a potential allergy.
- » **Do Not** feed your infant honey before they are 1 year old, due to the potential for botulism infection.
- » **Do not** use water to hydrate your infant, babies should only take in breast milk or formula for hydration. At 6 months, water can be slowly introduced (4-6 oz daily) but breast milk and formula should still be prioritized.

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)

Some babies are exposed to opioids/psychoactive drugs during pregnancy. Due to this, and the sudden cessation after birth, babies will experience withdrawal. This can affect how well babies feed and digest their food.

You may encounter:

- » Poor feeding (frequent feedings/small amounts)
- » Regurgitation (vomiting)
- » Loose stools
- » 90% of birthweight
- » Poor sleep after feeding
- » Excessive irritability

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Food Allergies

Common food allergies include peanuts, milk, soy, wheat, eggs, tree nuts, shellfish, and fish.

Signs of an allergic reaction:

- » Hives
- » Swelling (lips, tongue, mouth, face)*
- » Vomiting*
- » Diarrhea
- » Wheezing/difficulty breathing*
- » Itchiness/Tightness in throat*
- » Eczema

Additional signs of an allergic reaction in infants:

- » Frequently fussing (Colic)
- » Blood in stool
- » Poor growth
- » Rashes

**If you see any of these signs, seek emergency care.*

Autism or Sensory Challenges

Children who are sensory sensitive or sensory seeking may have challenges with eating a varied diet, or may need extra food exposures to satisfy their need for sensory input.

Some sensory experiences to try with your child:

- » Allow children to play with their food to increase sensory exposure
- » Do not force a child to eat
- » Take note of preferred textures, flavors, and temperatures and find ways to offer a variety of foods while meeting these preferences
- » Offer new foods in small and less intimidating amounts
- » Offer frequent non-food sensory exposures to a variety of textures, flavors, smells, sounds, etc.
- » Depending on their capability, have conversations with your child about their foods (What does the food look/small/sound/feel like, etc?)

Tube Feeding (Enteral Feeding)

Children who have chronic health conditions, aren't getting adequate nutrition through oral intake, or have challenges with chewing or safely swallowing their food will be fed through tube feedings.

Signs you need to contact a pediatrician:

- » Redness, swelling, oozing, or a foul smell from entrance site
- » Choking, wheezing, coughing
- » Swelling or redness around nose
- » Tube is dislodged or not aligned properly
- » Abdominal pains or constipation
- » Dry mouth or oral infections

Seek professionals who can support special feeding needs:

- » Pediatrician or the Pediatric unit of your local hospital
- » Licensed Dietitian with training in medical nutrition therapy
- » Specialists: Diabetes Educator, Endocrinologist, Allergist, Gastroenterologists, Speech and Language therapist, Occupational Therapist
- » For infants: neonatologist, lactation consultant (even if you are not breastfeeding)

Contact a pediatrician if you notice:

- » Increased thirst
- » Frequently eating non-food items after age 2
- » Frequent urination, possible bed-wetting in a toilet-trained child
- » Extreme hunger
- » Unintentional weight loss
- » Fatigue, irritability or behavior changes
- » Fruity-smelling breath, vinegar smell
- » Frequent choking on foods or liquids
- » Insatiable hunger; hyperfocus on food and eating
- » Body odor or body fluids that do not smell typical (i.e. sweet, vinegary, maple syrup, musky, ammonia, etc.)

If you would like more information on your child's special feeding needs or would like more information to discuss with your doctor, check out the following links.

- » **Feeding a Child With Special Needs**
<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/childrens-hospital/nutrition/special-needs.aspx>
- » **Ellyn Satter Institute:**
<https://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/family-meals-focus/67-my-child-has-special-needs/>
- » **Special Diets For Children**
<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/childrens-hospital/nutrition/diets.aspx>
- » **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics - Feeding Autism**
<https://www.eatright.org/health/diseases-and-conditions/autism/nutrition-for-your-child-with-autism-spectrum-disorder-asd>



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Do you know?

- » Where are the healthiest foods located?
- » Are products displayed at the ends of aisles always on sale?
- » Is there usually a difference in price between name brands and generic products? What about quality?
- » Why are candy and magazines always near the register?
- » Where are the most expensive products located on the shelves? What about cereals marketed to kids?

A few tips:

- » Unit prices allow you to compare the price of two packages that may contain a different amount of food.

Yogurt A




| 6 OZ LOWFAT YOGURT | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Unit Price | You Pay |
| \$0.12 | \$0.72 |
| Per oz | |

Yogurt A has a retail price of **\$0.72** and has **6** ounces in the container

$\$0.72 / 6 \text{ ounces} = \0.12 per ounce

Yogurt B



| 32 OZ LOWFAT YOGURT | |
|---------------------|---------|
| Unit Price | You Pay |
| \$0.05 | \$1.62 |
| Per oz | |

Yogurt B has a retail price of **\$1.62** and has **32** ounces in the container

$\$1.62 / 32 \text{ ounces} = \0.05 per ounce

- » Larger packages often have lower unit prices; however, be sure to consider whether you'll be able to eat the entire amount before it goes bad. Find stores that carry bulk foods.
- » Generic products are often identical to name-brand products in everything but price.
- » Often, foods sold from the bulk bin are less expensive by weight than foods sold in packages.

Think About It

- » Why do you think canned and boxed foods are placed in the middle aisles?
- » Which foods are furthest from the door?
- » Why do you think so?

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Planning your meals ahead of time saves time, saves money, and encourages healthier eating. It's also a great way to teach your kids about the "real world," so get them involved!

How do I do it?

- » Plan your meals for a few days. Using [EatFresh.org](https://www.eatfresh.org), you can work together, or with your child in mind, to find recipes with ingredients you both enjoy and agree on.
- » Make a grocery list that includes all of the ingredients for each dish or recipe. Make sure to check your kitchen for staple ingredients you already have; olive oil, salt, and pepper. You probably don't need to buy everything.
- » Sort your grocery list according to the type of food: produce, meat, dairy, and dry goods. Try to guess how much of each thing you need to buy.
- » Grocery shop! Save the receipt to help create a budget for the future.
- » Review your receipt afterward. Do you see anything surprising?

A Sample Meal Plan and Grocery List:

| Sample Meal | Grocery List |
|--|--|
| <p>E.g. Hearty Egg Burritos <i>(eatfresh.org/recipe/main-dish-breakfast/hearty-egg-burritos)</i></p> | <p>Produce 1 head garlic 1 bunch green onion 1 bell pepper-green or red</p> |
| | <p>Protein Eggs</p> |
| | <p>Dairy Low-fat cheddar cheese</p> |
| | <p>Grains, Fats and Dry Goods; Canned, Boxed and Packaged 1 package whole wheat tortillas Canola Oil 1 can black beans</p> |

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Creatively add more fruits and vegetables to your dishes

- » Use lettuce to wrap cooked meats like a taco, or make mini-sandwiches with cucumber slices as the "bread".
- » Mix shredded carrots or other finely chopped vegetables into your rice/ground meat.
- » Cut fruits and vegetables into different shapes. Use dipping sauces or spreads.
- » With your kids, come up with creative and memorable names for foods and meals.
- » Leave cut-up fruits and/or vegetables out on the table for casual grazing, or set a bowl next to the child while they are doing something else. Try this without saying anything or cajoling.
- » Serve foods you want your family to eat more of as a first course or while the rest of the meal is being prepared.



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Here are some important things to consider when it comes to your child's body size and weight.

Children's weight may fluctuate due to:

- » **Growth spurts** - children's bodies will naturally need more food before a growth spurt to get the nutrients and energy needed to fuel the growth process.
- » **Puberty** - along with growth spurts, boys and girls have hormonal changes that may change their bodies and weight.
- » **Medications** - some medications for mental health and other conditions can alter body composition, metabolism, and hunger cues. If you are concerned about your child's medication, speak with your prescribing doctor.

Beware of weight-loss approaches that encourage an extremely restrictive diet and lifestyles that are difficult to maintain long term. Over time, they may slow down metabolism and hurt your child's relationship with food and their body.

Seek advice from a registered dietitian who can work with you and your child more closely to build a healthy relationship with food and support health goals.

Caring for Our Bodies:

There are important and joyful ways to care for our bodies that can improve our confidence, strength, and energy, as well as contribute to a healthy weight:

- » Moving as much as possible—even for short bursts during the day
- » Paying attention to how certain foods impact mood and energy levels
- » Getting a good night's sleep
- » Exposing our bodies to nature and sunshine
- » Noticing when media images and advertisements promote negative thoughts about one's own body—feel free to block them!
- » Giving appreciation for what our bodies can do
- » Giving and getting physical touch and affection, like hugs



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Here are some responses to guide your conversations about your child's body size and weight.

| Concern | Responses |
|--|--|
| Your child says: "I am fat" - OR - "I need/want to lose weight" - OR - "I hate my body" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » "How do you feel about the word fat or skinny?" » "Why do you think having a different body would be better?" » "Thank you for sharing your feelings with me. It's normal to sometimes feel dissatisfied with our body, want to make changes, or compare ourselves with others." » "How do you see yourself? Do you like who you see?" |
| A family member brings up concerns about your child's weight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » "I appreciate your concern but their pediatrician is happy with their health status at this time. We aren't concerned with body size issues, just their health." » "I would appreciate it if we did not discuss the topic of weight or size in front of my child. In our home, we focus on health rather than body size." |
| The pediatrician brings up concerns about your child's weight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » "I understand you are concerned. Are there lab markers, or current health issues I need to be aware of, that are driving your concerns?" » "I would be happy to discuss any medical concerns through email or a private phone call. Then, we can discuss how to appropriately address them." |
| Another child calls your child fat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » "What do you think about the comment?" » "I can hear that comment was hurtful to you. I am so sorry that happened." » "I hear you are worried about how other kids see you, but how do you see yourself?" |
| You are concerned about your child's weight | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Evaluate why you are concerned (are there external influences that inform your concern?). » Avoid any mention of weight or body size. If you are wondering whether there might be a health issue, talk to the pediatrician, not the child. » If needed, ask your health provider for resources. If available, talk to a weight-neutral nutritionist. » Focus on healthy living, getting energized and active, and eating nourishing food rather than body size. » Include the entire family in healthy changes. But don't shame each other's food choices. |
| Your child makes a negative comment about someone else's appearance | <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Do you make comments about other people's body or appearance? » Do you make comments about your own body or appearance? » Are there other people in your child's life that comment on the bodies or appearance of other people, or your child? |

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LESSON 3: TOXIC STRESS, TRAUMA AND NOURISHMENT

■ Why do you like to move?

For good health, kids need 60 minutes of exercise daily. Adults need 150 minutes of moderate activity per week or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week.

- » Limit screentime (mobile devices, computer, TV, video games. The hours of screen time per week is directly connected to poor health.
- » Physical activity builds strength and endurance. It also improves mood, sleep, energy, and concentration!
- » If you have a tough time getting motivated, look for ways to be active with others—find a class, go for walks, dance with a buddy, or add physical games to a family party. Anything that involves movement is better than sitting and watching a screen.

■ Movement for everyday life:

- » Jump rope
- » Jumping jacks
- » Dance parties
- » Housework
- » Stairs instead of the elevator
- » Stretching while you brush your teeth
- » Take a walk while you are on the phone

"Nothing happens until something moves."
- Albert Einstein

■ Want to increase your movement?

Make an easy to accomplish goal:

This month I will _____, _____ times, every _____.



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■ Awareness

Some stress is normal and can even be healthy to a point. But stress begins to harm our health when it is recurring or drawn out over a long time.

Toxic stress is the body's response to severe or lasting stress. This may also be known as chronic stress. Children in foster care experience higher levels of toxic stress on average than the general population.

Taking care of ourselves and families with gentleness and compassion can help reduce the effects of toxic stress and build resilience. There are many causes of toxic stress.

For example, toxic stress can occur when the following happens:

- » Home, work, or school feels unsafe
- » Exposure to violence, threats of violence, or witness to domestic violence
- » Food or basic necessities are not available or consistent
- » A close family member is incarcerated
- » Worries about having a place to live
- » A family member is in poor health or is disabled
- » Caregivers are unreliable or a support system is lacking
- » Sexual abuse or emotional abuse/neglect
- » A caregiver suffers from substance abuse
- » A caregiver has a mental illness
- » A primary caregiver dies

■ Living with Toxic Stress

It may be hard to recognize that these symptoms in children and adults are the result of toxic stress. Growing up/living with toxic stress may cause stress responses such as:

- » Easily feeling overwhelmed and feeling not able to cope
- » Aggression or shutting down/withdrawal (dissociation)
- » Numbing out with substances or activities (including with media and screens)
- » Hormone disruption leading to early puberty, excessive weight gain, other health issues
- » High blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease
- » Trouble staying focused or learning, impulsivity (ADHD-like behaviors)
- » Mood swings
- » Sleep issues (inability to fall asleep, sleeping more than expected, nightmares)
- » Compulsive behaviors or addictions
- » Fear and anxiety
- » Frequent or chronic illnesses (chronic colds, headaches, or generalized physical pain)
- » Self-harming or suicide ideation/suicidality
- » Younger children may express clinginess, shyness, startling easily, meltdowns, headaches, stomachaches, and indiscriminate affection.

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Self care

During meal times:

- » Eat with others; cook with others
- » Cook an enjoyable meal
- » Listen to music while cooking or eating
- » Celebrate with friends and family (for some, large groups can be overwhelming)
- » Eat brain-boosting, whole, and minimally-processed foods
- » Hold hands or practice gratitude before a meal, or anytime
- » Ask for help with meal duties or cleanup; clean up together
- » Other ideas?

Other times:

- » Talk to a trusted friend
- » Ask for help
- » Get good sleep (try weighted blankets)
- » Get and give hugs (or other physical touches-remember to ask first)
- » Spend time outdoors
- » Exercise, play, move your body
- » Sing (Try: "Opera" singing when you want to yell)
- » Other ideas?

Support:

There are ways to get support so you can reduce the impact of toxic stress on your health and family:

- » It is important that you get help and support. Talk to your doctor or a counselor.
- » Many areas have 211 or 311 services that can connect you with services such as food assistance, housing assistance, and legal help.
- » Check out acestoohigh.com; childmind.org
- » Apps like Calm, Headspace, Happy Inside, HeartMath, Curable, PTSD Coach, and Shine can provide ways to practice regulation and calm the stress response.

Impact on Eating

- » Gastrointestinal conditions (e.g., Irritable Bowl)
- » Selective/"Picky" eating (less open to trying new foods when not "safe")
- » Overeating, undereating, eating disorders
- » Sensory challenges/gagging



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Vagus Nerve

When we feel frazzled or overwhelmed we look for ways to calm our nerves, like soaking in a warm bath or sipping a warm cup of tea. But sometimes we only have one nerve to calm and this nerve likes calm served cold! This is the vagus nerve and it regulates our stress response and our digestion. Stimulating the vagus nerve can help "train", or tone the nerve so that when we are stressed it may respond better.

Techniques:

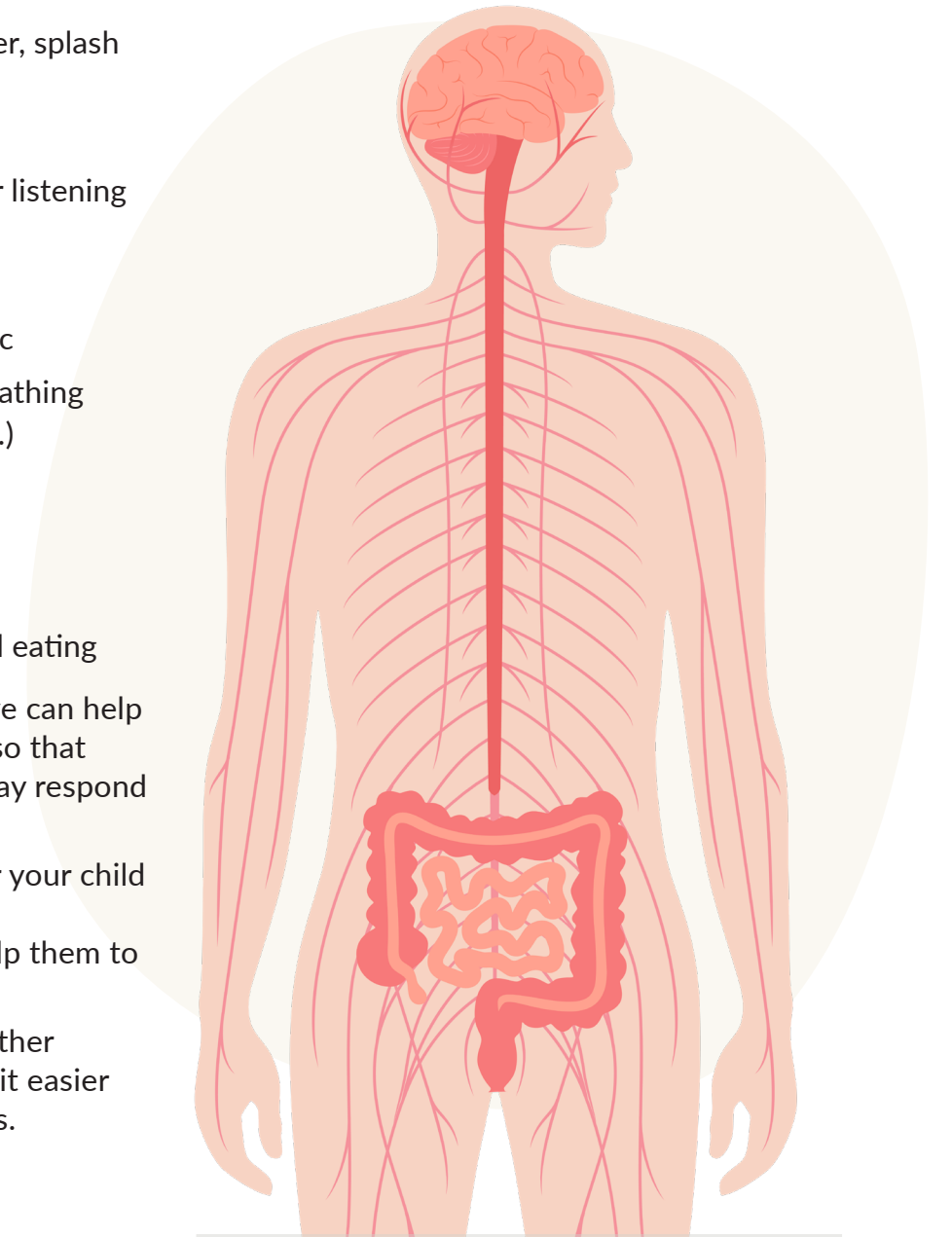
- » Cold water (drink, shower, splash on face)
- » Singing or humming
- » Playing an instrument or listening to music
- » Rhythmic activities
- » Gargling water for 60 sec
- » Deep diaphragmatic breathing (4x4 belly breathing, etc.)
- » Laughing
- » Dancing and exercising
- » Yoga, Meditation
- » Mindfulness i.e., mindful eating

Stimulating the vagus nerve can help "train", or tone, the nerve so that when we are stressed it may respond better.

For instance, when your or your child is dysregulated, deep belly breaths may help them to calm down.

Taking a few of these together before a meal might make it easier for a child to try new foods.

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Vagus Nerve Brain Gut Connection

Quiz yourself!

Which of these are beneficial for gut health?

- » Light to moderate exercise a few times a week.
- » Reducing stress in your life.
- » Eating the same thing every day.
- » Eating highly processed foods.
- » Avoiding fish.
- » Drinking caffeine-free soda.
- » Eating lots of foods that come from plants.
- » Eating red meat every day.
- » Being fed breast milk as a baby.
- » Eating foods that have live beneficial bacteria.

Things to know

1. The body should be in a relaxed state to produce the gastric juices it needs to be able to digest food and adequately absorb the nutrition required to support a healthy body and brain. Deep breathing before eating and getting help to manage stress help the nervous system to more easily reach the “rest and digest” state.
2. Depression, anxiety, gastro-intestinal (stomach) problems, indigestion, and heartburn are often related. Eating balanced meals and addressing issues affecting mental health can improve these conditions by creating a more diverse microbiome in the gut.
3. Prebiotics are foods that feed the beneficial microorganisms in our gut and help them grow. Several whole foods such as oats, beans, nuts, barley, apples, garlic, onions, and jicama are prebiotic.
4. Probiotic foods contain live bacteria that are safe to eat and have the ability to help restore balance in our microbiome. Examples include yogurt (labeled with live or active cultures), kefir, unpasteurized sauerkraut, curtido and kimchi, miso, and tempeh.
5. Ultra-processed foods, such as soda and snack foods, can cause inflammation and disrupt the healthy bacteria in the gut.
6. Drinking water to stay hydrated can aid digestion. Water helps break down food so our body can absorb nutrients. Water also helps to protect the lining of the gut and move waste products quickly out of the body.
7. Children who were breastfed for at least six months were found to have more beneficial bacteria compared to those who were fed infant formula.
8. Omega-3 fats found in fatty fish, such as salmon or tuna, can increase beneficial bacteria in the gut. Omega-3 fatty acids help decrease inflammation and protect the nervous system (check with a doctor before supplement use to make sure they are safe with certain medications).
9. Maintaining a diverse diet can increase the microbial richness in the gut.
10. Fruits and vegetables are high in plant compounds, vitamins, and minerals, all of which feed healthy gut microbes, decrease inflammation, and support the nervous system.
11. All whole foods provide the necessary vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients needed to support a healthy gut microbiome, the vagus nerve, and nervous system function.

Answers to page 48 quiz:

- Light to moderate exercise a few times a week.
- Reducing stress in your life.
- Eating the same thing every day.
- Eating highly processed foods.
- Avoiding fish.
- Drinking caffeine-free soda.
- Eating lots of foods that come from plants.
- Eating red meat every day.
- Being fed breast milk as a baby.
- Eating foods that have live beneficial bacteria.

Whole Foods for a Healthy Gut and Healthy Brain:

Whole foods such as eggs, lean meats, fish, dairy, nuts/seeds, beans/lentils, fruits and vegetables, and whole grains provide a wide array of nutrients that support neurotransmitter production, nervous system regulation, and healthy nervous system function.

Eating meals prepared primarily with whole foods is associated with better gut health and better mental health.



Here are some tips for making health purchasing decisions at the grocery store.

1 Can you tell what plant or animal it came from?

Choose foods made from ingredients you can picture in their raw state or growing in nature. If you see something you can't pronounce and think it was made in a lab, beware.

2 Don't be fooled by big health claims or slogans on a package.

They can distract you from something less healthy, such as the sodium or sugar content.

3 Avoid foods with sugar listed in the first three ingredients.

Also, look for "added sugars" on the nutrition facts label. Be aware that sugar can have a variety of names. Look at the list on the right for some examples.

4 Look for 100% whole grain foods.

Look for the whole grain label or the word "whole" in the first ingredient. Examples include whole wheat, whole oats, whole grain corn, or brown rice.

WORDS FOR SUGAR

- » Honey
- » Brown sugar
- » Dextrose
- » Sucrose
- » High fructose corn syrup
- » Fruit juice concentrate
- » Barley malt
- » Cane juice
- » Molasses
- » Brown rice syrup
- » Glucose
- » Caramel



Selective eating, or "picky" eating, exists on a spectrum. It generally shows up in the toddler years as children are testing out their autonomy. At this stage it is developmentally appropriate.

Why might a child be stuck in selective eating?

- » Food options were limited
- » Food was punitively forced on them (counting bites, negative consequences for not finishing food)
- » Sensory challenges (texture or flavor preferences)
- » Traumatic food experiences (choking, gagging on foods, violently vomiting)
- » Food has become a source of control and security (associated with dysregulation, trauma, and food insecurity)

How do I help a selective eater?

1. Feed Positively

- a. Focus on providing an enjoyable experience of connecting.
- b. Normalize new foods outside of mealtimes with:
 - › Sensory play and art projects using food
 - › Handling food such as picking, washing, and chopping
 - › Help with shopping and cooking—encourage smelling along the way
- c. Avoid bribes, punishment, or ultimatums.
- d. Sensory Tasting (doing this out of meal times may be less anxiety-provoking): What colors are there? How does it look? How does it smell? How does the food feel to the touch? In the mouth? How does it sound? Do you like the food? Why or why not?
- e. Let kids help with meal planning, shopping, food prep, and cooking.

2. Offer Strategically

- a. Give children limited choices about what they eat ("Would you like peas or broccoli?" Vs. "What do you want?").
- b. Offer small amounts of foods you would like them to eat but do not expect them to eat, simply model the behavior you would like to see.
- c. Offer their "safe" or preferred foods along with your desired foods.
- d. Offer an incentive for trying something new such as a chance to choose the next family activity or dinner menu.
- e. Don't allow snacks close to dinner, and avoid allowing an after-dinner meal to compensate for refusing the prepared dinner.* (Note: This may not be appropriate for kids with some eating disorders.)

3. Self-Regulate and Get Help

- a. Be neutral about food- don't beg, bribe, or badger–Pretend you are not bothered if you have to! Trust that your child will eat and grow at their own pace.
- b. If malnourishment is a concern, speak to a dietitian or your doctor about whether they need supplementation.

Note: Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID), an extreme form of selective eating, is an eating disorder that requires the support of trained professionals (mental health, nutrition, etc.) and many typical approaches for picky eating may not work with a child who has ARFID.

It is always recommended that your child see a professional for appropriate treatment especially if they have poor growth, digestive issues, emotional disturbances around food, and/or stress/anxiety while eating.



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Food hoarding and binge eating (overeating) have many features in common and are often triggered by childhood food insecurity and/or starvation. Binge eating is also associated with the impulsivity seen in ADHD and poor mental health.

■ What might food hoarding look like?

- » Secretly keeping food in unusual places (under the bed, in drawers, in the closet)
- » Stealing food when food is readily and consistently available
- » Eating until uncomfortable or to the point of vomiting
- » Becoming upset when food is limited, or taken away
- » Becoming emotional if asked to share food with others
- » Anxiety and rigidity around food

■ What are signs of bingeing or overeating?

- » Eating until uncomfortable or to the point of vomiting
- » Eating rapidly over a short period of time
- » Feeling a lack of control, or loss of time, when eating
- » Constantly asking for food, even after just eating
- » Shame and guilt after overeating
- » Eating alone because embarrassed by food intake

■ How do I help a child?

- » Let them know you understand this is a coping behavior and it makes them feel safe.
- » Have food readily available and easily accessible at all times; do not lock food away!
- » Encourage them to join in meal planning, shopping, food prep, and cooking.
- » Let them see there is always food available, and experience having consistent access to food normalized.
- » Set regular meal and snack times to prevent hunger or drops in blood sugar.
- » Provide a weekly meal chart that lets your child know what and when they will be fed.
- » Help your child identify triggers of binge/overeating behavior.
- » Help your child learn self-regulatory techniques.
- » Let them know, within reason, hoarding food is okay. Talk with your child about perishable vs non-perishable foods (how they can affect their health, how they can attract pests, etc.) Example: “I understand that keeping food near us can make us feel safe; knowing it will be there when we want it, but I worry about food going bad and whether bugs have gotten into it. What are some ways you would feel comfortable keeping food near you that will also keep you healthy?” Work together to find a compromise that helps them feel safe and addresses your concerns.
- » Help your child who overeats or binges to tune into their hunger and satiety cues (ask them how they feel before/after eating); help them practice mindful eating role modeling.

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Although eating disorders (ED) often present as an obsession with food rules, weight, and body shape, they are symptoms of an underlying problem that needs support from a doctor.

Foster youth are at high risk for eating disorders

- » 2.9% of foster youth suffer from Bulimia, this is over 7 times higher than the general population.
- » 21.5% of foster youth experience PTSD, this is almost 5 times higher than the general population. This puts them at greater risk of developing an eating disorder.
- » 80% of foster youth experience significant mental health issues. This puts them at greater risk of developing an ED.
- » Eating disorders do not discriminate between age, race, ethnicity, social status, or even gender. However, there are some factors that place youth into high-risk categories.

| High Risk Groups |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » LGBTQ+ Youth » Youth with a history of sexual abuse » Youth with a history of any trauma » Youth with neurodivergence such as autism and ADHD |

Myths Vs Facts

Myth: "People with eating disorders look sick"

Fact: Many people who suffer with eating disorders are able to hide their disorder and may even reside in an average or larger sized body. Less than 6% of people with eating disorders are medically diagnosed as "underweight." In fact, athletes are more likely to screen positive for an eating disorder than non-athletes, but percentages across all probable eating disorder diagnoses are similar. For many people, the damage caused by their eating disorders is internal, and may not be visible until there is a medical emergency.

Myth: "Eating disorders only affect girls"

Fact: Although girls and women are the general focus when discussing eating disorders, men are at risk as well but are less likely to talk about it or seek treatment.

- » According to the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA), 1 in 3 people suffering from an eating disorder is male.
- » Men are also more likely to develop muscle dysmorphia, which is characterized by an obsession with being adequately muscular.

Myth: "Only adolescents are impacted by eating disorders"

Fact: Eating disorders can affect anyone at any age. Some research has found that children as young as 5-6 years old, as well as individuals into their midlife and older, are increasingly being diagnosed with eating disorders or being treated for a relapse.

Myth: "Eating disorders are a way to seek attention"

Fact: Eating disorders are medical and psychiatric illnesses that are driven by genetic, biological, environmental, and social influences. They are not a way to seek attention.

Myth: "A child's eating disorder is the parents' fault"

Fact: It was once believed that controlling/overbearing parents were one trigger for developing an eating disorder. However, research suggests that this is not the case! Instead, research currently supports that genetics and biology play a large role in the development of EDs. Although parents may not be able to prevent an eating disorder, they have a pivotal role in creating an environment that supports recovery.

Myth: "Eating disorders are a choice"

Fact: Eating disorders are NOT a choice! It is common for EDs to co-occur with other mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, social phobia, PTSD, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and trauma/abuse. There is also evidence that EDs run in families.

Binge Eating Disorder (BED): Characterized by frequent episodes of eating large quantities; feeling out of control of eating; shame for eating; and no compensatory behaviors.

Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder (OSFED) (Previously: Eating Disorder Not Otherwise Specified-EDNOS): Individuals who do not meet the strict criteria for anorexia or bulimia but still suffer from a significant eating disorder are given this diagnosis (i.e. anorexia in a normal/bigger body).

Bulimia Nervosa (BN): Characterized by patterns of binge eating (to the point of pain) and compensatory behaviors such as vomiting or excessive exercise (compulsive exercise).

Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID): Previously known as “Selective Eating Disorder”, describing very restrictive food preferences that are not associated with fear of weight gain.

Rumination Disorder: Characterized by the regular regurgitation of food for over a month; weight loss is not a concern. Food may be re-chewed, re-swallowed, or spit out.

PICA: Individuals (over 2 yrs) will consume non-food items that contain little to no nutritional value (hair, dirt, chalk, drywall, paint chips, ice, paper, talcum powder, soap, pebbles, metal charcoal, ash, clay, starch, string, wool).

Orthorexia: Characterized by an obsession with “healthful” or “clean” eating to the point of extreme restriction of types of food that are acceptable to eat.

Diabulimia (ED-DMT1): An eating disorder seen in Type 1 Diabetics who will purposefully restrict insulin intake to lose weight or prevent weight gain.

Anorexia Nervosa (AN): Characterized by weight loss, inability to maintain appropriate body weight, starvation, and distorted body image.

Laxative abuse: Repeated and frequent use of laxatives to eliminate unwanted calories, lose weight, “feel thin” or “feel empty.”

Sometimes weight loss efforts can lead to eating disorders.

Be aware if your child adopts strict eating rules that interfere with normal activities; obsessively counts calories, nutrients, or macros, obsessively exercises, or is constantly trying new diets.

When you suspect there is an eating disorder (ED)

Things To Do:

- » Don't Panic! Eating disorders are associated with dysregulation, and adults who model emotional regulation help children mirror this.
- » DO NOT blame yourself! EDs are the product of many factors, some biological and some environmental; you did not cause your child's ED.
- » Find a support group for your child, yourself, and/or your family.
- » Reach out to your child's pediatrician or a mental health professional who can diagnose your child and refer them for treatment.
- » Your child's ED is a coping mechanism (it makes them feel safe and in control), so approach conversations from this perspective.
- » Making peace with their ED and making changes is HARD for your child-respect and support their process. Most of all, be patient with them.

Things To Avoid:

- » Malnourishment can distort cognitive function, so approach conversations gently and don't take things personally; that is likely their ED talking, not your child.
- » Lecturing will push your child away-you want to appear safer than the ED. Be honest about your concerns but tread lightly.
- » Avoid commenting on their appearance, you may be eager to see them gain or lose weight but they are not.
- » Ultimatums and shame/blame statements (“you just need to eat”/”you are looking for attention”) do not support connection and can create resentment. Instead: Use “I” statements (“I get scared when I see you not eating”) to redirect the conversation to you and open up the line of communication.

Don't Forget To Take Care Of You!

- » Eat regular and balanced meals to maintain your energy level.
- » Take time to rest and recuperate from the stress.
- » Find ways to incorporate movement into your day.
- » Seek a mental health professional.

■ Questions for the Doctor

- » What is my child's diagnosis?
- » Who can I call for help when there is a crisis or relapse?
- » What will be the treatment plan be?
- » What are the health concerns I need to be aware of?
- » What level of care does my child need?
- » What physical signs do I need to monitor? What signs should I be concerned about?
- » What behavioral signs do I need to monitor? What signs should I be concerned about?
- » What resources (books, websites, professionals) can you recommend to help our family?

■ Getting Support

- » **National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA):** www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
 - › Online chat and HELPLINE: (800) 931-2237
 - › Spanish language option
- » **National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders (NCEED):** www.nceedus.org
 - › Learn about ED
 - › Spanish language option
- » **Your Local Hospital**
- » Many hospitals have ED programs (inpatient and outpatient)



Practicing mindfulness techniques can help us be present and better handle moments when we are feeling overwhelmed or stuck. You can do them before bedtime, before mealtimes, or any time you need them. Keep these activities near your bed, in the kitchen, or somewhere accessible.



TRY AT HOME ACTIVITIES

5-4-3-2-1

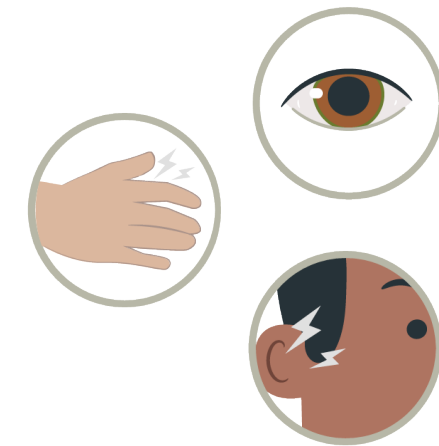
Put your feet flat on the ground and take a breath in and out through your nose.

Silently, to yourself name:

- » 5 things you can see in the room...
- » 4 things you can hear in the room...
- » 3 sensations you feel in your body...
- » 2 things you can smell...

Finally, [pick one]

- » ...1 thing for which you are grateful
- » ...1 thing that inspires you.
- » ...1 person you appreciate
- » ...1 wish for the world
- » ...1 hope or dream for yourself



Self Holding Exercise

- » Get into a comfortable position either seated or lying down.
- » Place one hand on your forehead. Place the other hand on your heart.
- » Gently place your attention on the area between your two hands, the area inside yourself between your head and heart.
- » Just feel what goes on in the area between your hands.
- » Gently breathe in and out.
- » Do this for as long as you can or need to in order to feel yourself shift into a more relaxed state.

Soup Bowl Breathing

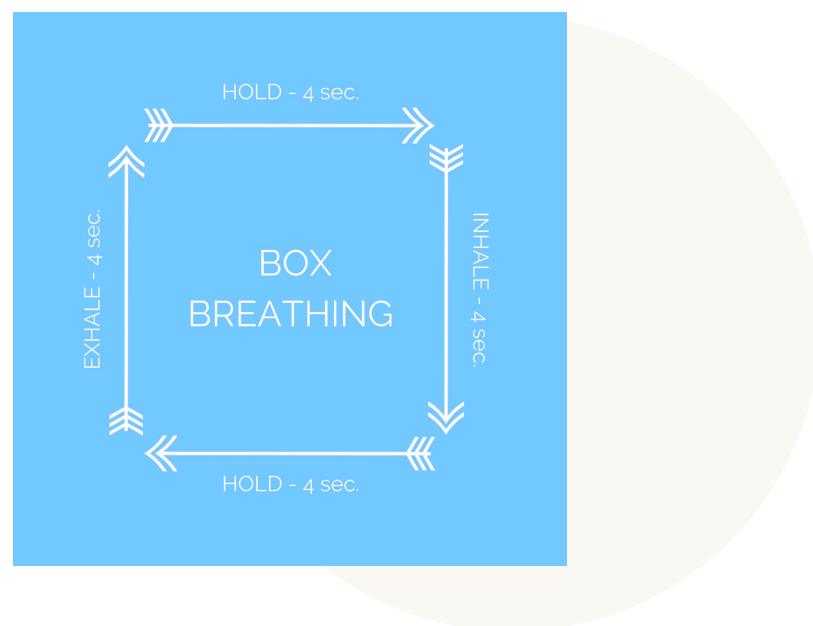
- » Think of your favorite soup.
- » Gently cup your hands like you are holding your favorite soup. You can also just put your hands down in your lap. Sit up tall, like your spine was made of a stack of pennies, with both feet on the floor. Close your eyes or glance down.
- » Imagine breathing in through your nose like you are smelling a delicious bowl of soup, and breathing out like you are blowing on it to cool down—careful so as not to splash soup everywhere!
- » Breathe in for four seconds. Breathe out for eight seconds. Repeat three times.



Box Breathing

Try this one if you need to be more alert.

- » Place feet flat on the ground or lie down. Roll back shoulders.
- » Place hand on belly.
- » Take a deep breath in through your nose for 4 counts, allowing your belly to expand.
- » Hold the breath for 4 counts.
- » Exhale deeply through the mouth for 4 counts, contracting belly.
- » Hold for 4 counts.
- » Repeat 4 times.



Stir up an interesting conversation with your family using these questions in the car, at home, via text, or at the table. Let everyone pick a question they want to answer first. Then others can answer if they wish. Don't force anyone to answer a question they don't want to.

■ **For all ages**

1. If you could be anyone in the world for a day, who would it be and why?
2. What is something you want to learn that they don't teach you in school?
3. What are three things you learned in school today?
4. If you could grow up to be famous, what would you want to be famous for?
5. What do you like most about yourself?
6. What is the most unusual thing you have ever eaten?
7. Finish this sentence: I am really good at.....
8. If you could have any talent, what would it be and why?
9. If you could invent something that would make life easier for people, what would it be?
10. If you could ask your favorite animal a question, what would you ask?
11. If you could make any food in the world, what would you make?
12. If you could change one rule, what would you change?
13. If you could have special powers, what powers would you want to have and why?
14. What is the funniest thing you have ever seen?
15. What is one thing you wish adults understood better about being your age?
16. What is one thing you wish you understood better about adults and why?
17. What is one thing people don't know about you that you wish they knew?
18. What kind of food best describes your personality?

■ For ages 12+

1. What is the scariest thing about becoming an adult?
2. Why do you think people give up on their dreams?
3. What is your most important goal right now?
4. What is one lesson that you had to learn the hard way and what did you learn?
5. What are your three best and worst qualities?
6. If you could teach any class, what would it be and why?
7. What is your biggest accomplishment and why?
8. What are three traits you look for in a friend?
9. Would you rather have a job with average pay you love or a job with great pay you dislike? Why?
10. What makes you happy and why?
11. What is one thing you are afraid of and why?
12. Do you consider yourself an optimist or a pessimist? Why?
13. Who is someone that you admire and why?
14. What is an essential life skill you need in order to live on your own?
15. What is one goal you want to achieve in the next year?
16. If you could meet one historical figure, living or dead, who would it be and why?
17. If you had 5 minutes to meet with the U.S. President, what would you say?
18. What is one thing people don't know about you that you wish they knew?

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Materials: Paper (big or small) and crayons/markers

Directions: On pages 69 and 70 have your child draw their favorite foods as a meal or design a balanced MyPlate meal they would like to have.

Purpose: Learn about their preferences and food story.

Encourage them to be as creative and colorful as possible. (You can suggest they draw inspiration from their favorite cuisines, cultural traditions, religious holidays, or a meal that they enjoyed at home.)

1. You can ask: What healthy foods would be on this plate? What "fun" foods would be on this plate?
2. When they are finished drawing, ask them about their meal:
 - » Why did you choose this meal?
 - » What is your favorite ingredient in this meal? Why?
 - » Do you have a memory of this meal that you would like to share?
 - » How do you feel when you eat this meal?
 - » What colors are in this meal?
 - » Describe the flavors of this meal, either real or imaginary.
3. Optional: make your child's meal.
 - » Work together to create an ingredient list and make the meal together.
 - » Enjoy!

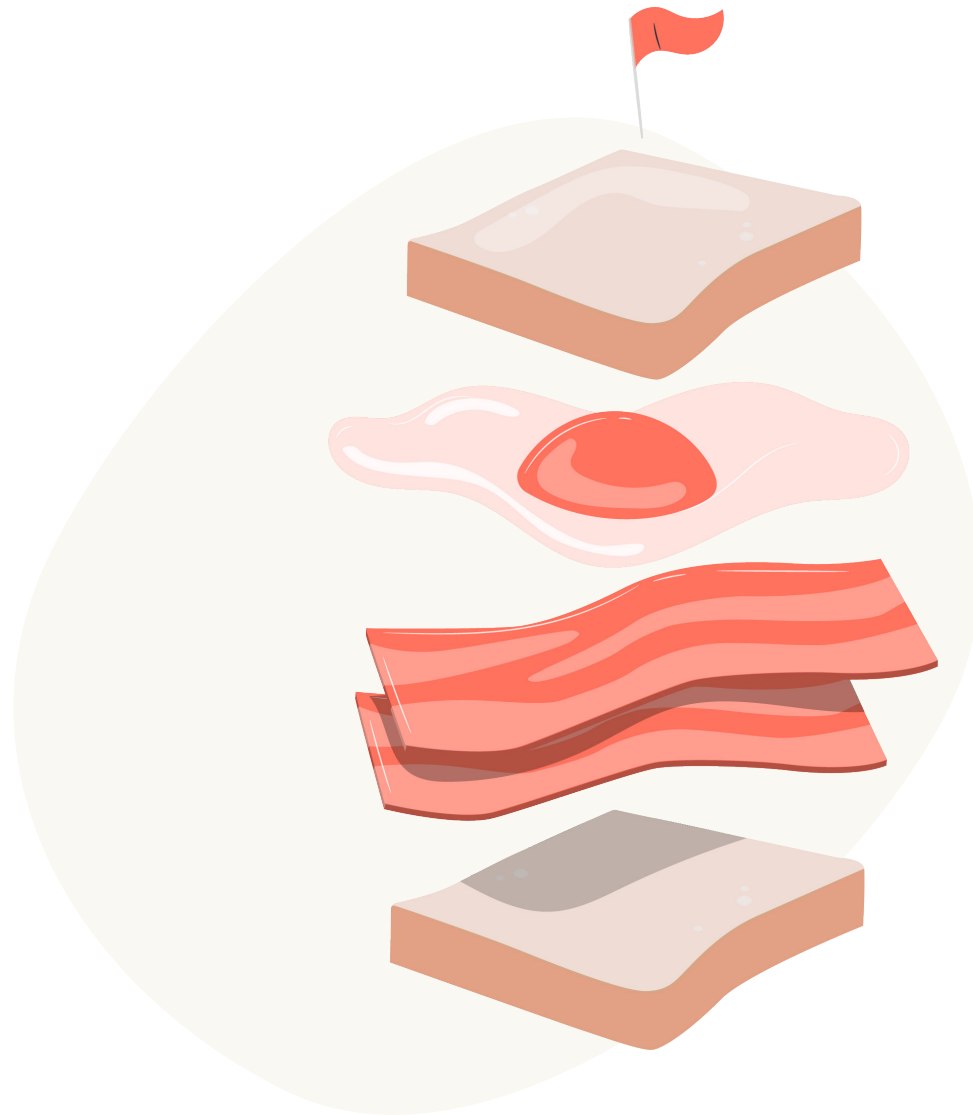


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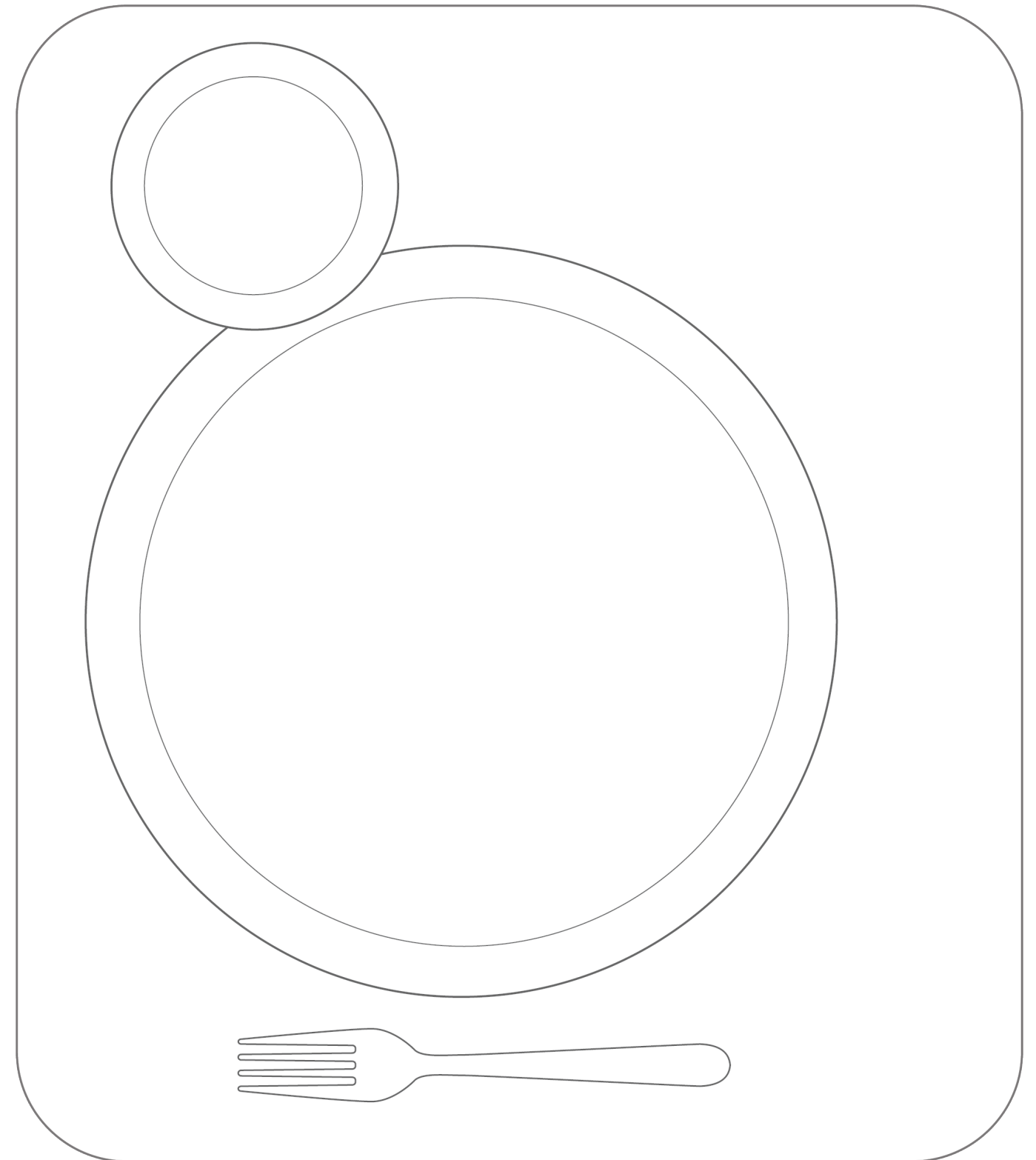
Use these questions as a way for you and your child to learn about each other's food choices/preferences and create a mutual connection. Take turns interviewing each other and let your child interview you first.

1. What is one food you associate with your childhood? Why?
2. What is most important to you about food?
3. What is your favorite comfort food—something you crave when you are stressed or emotional? Why?
4. What is a food that you have always wanted to try but haven't yet?
5. How did you learn about food and cooking? Who did you learn from?
6. Describe a favorite food memory. What made that moment special?
7. What are some foods that celebrate your culture?
8. What are your favorite and least favorite food textures?
9. How have your eating habits changed throughout your life?
10. What is something you dislike eating that other people love?

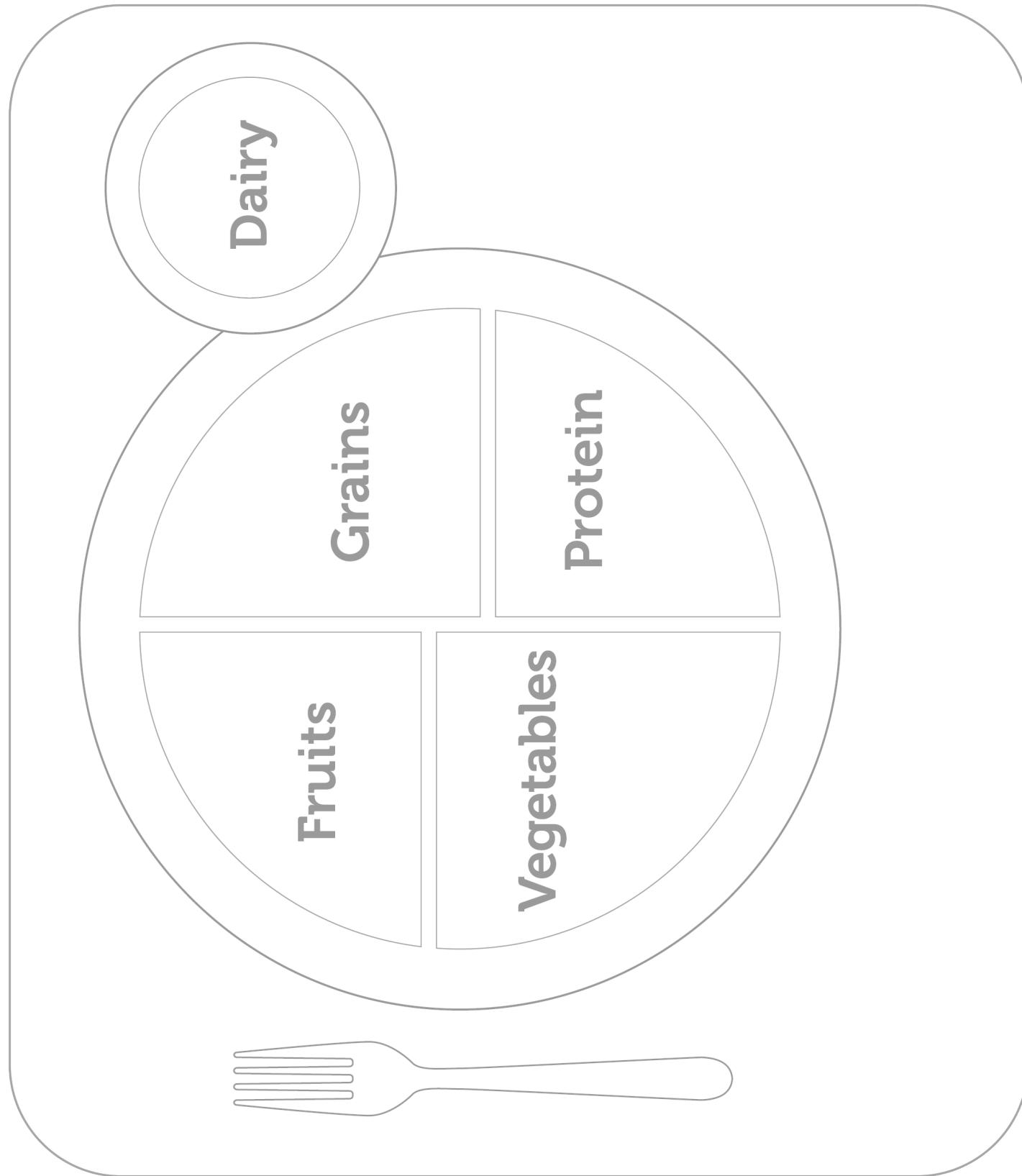


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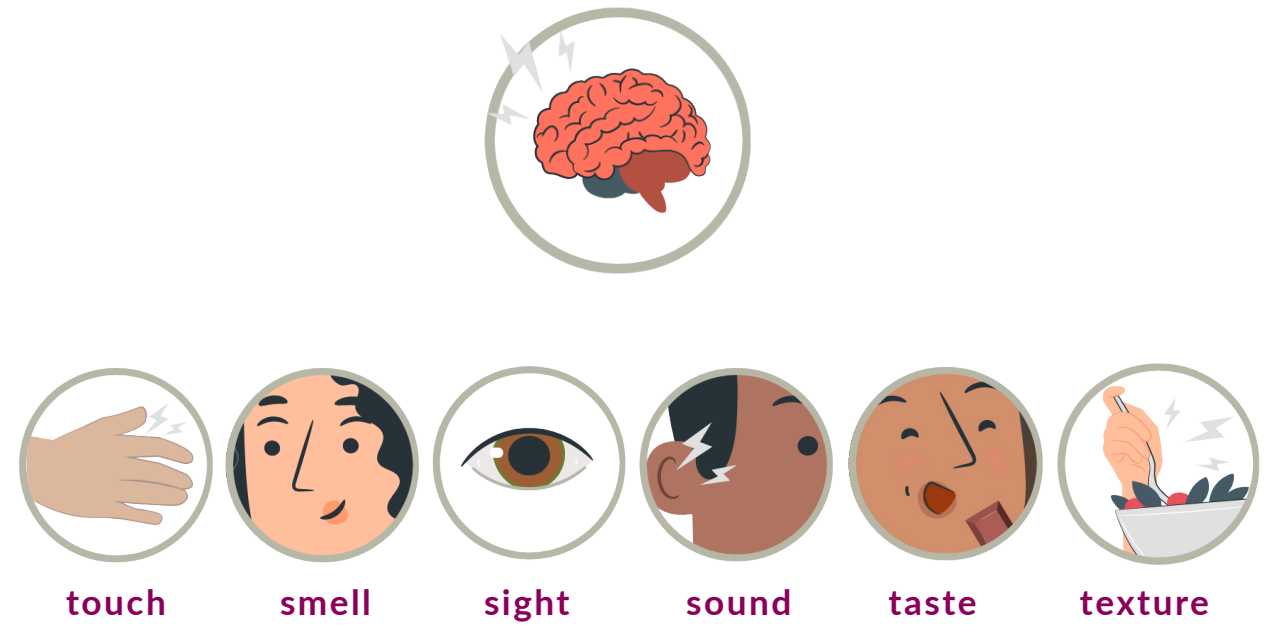
Directions: Have your child draw their favorite meal or design a meal they'd like to have.



Directions: Using the USDA MyPlate diagram, list or draw some foods to fit the sections.



Pretend you are chefs judging a cooking competition. Together, observe and explore a food with all your senses. What did you learn about the food? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about other people?



1

2

3

■ Kids are more likely to try foods they've helped choose and prepare. (Adults too!)

Review these tips for involving the whole family in meal planning and preparation. Check off any you could do in your home.

■ Preschoolers

- » Spread nut butter or cream cheese on bread
- » Help wash veggies and fruit
- » Help select foods at the grocery store
- » Carry unbreakable items to and from table
- » Serve themselves at the table (with help)
- » Pour liquids into batters (you measure)
- » Stir or mix the batter, or other wet or dry ingredients
- » Knead bread dough; press cookie cutters into dough or bread
- » Use a damp sponge to wipe counters, tables, and chairs after eating

Remember: Preschoolers want to learn and explore what you are exploring. While they may not eat the food they help prepare, touching, smelling, talking about the food, and seeing others eat it will help them learn to try new things.

■ Elementary school kids

- » Tell other family members what's in a recipe, or why foods are healthy
- » Practice cutting softer ingredients with a butter knife, strong plastic knife, or a paring knife (supervise when using sharp knives)
- » Grate or mash soft fruits, veggies, and beans; juice lemons or limes; crack eggs
- » Serve themselves and others at the table
- » Begin to read recipes and measure with cups and spoons
- » Begin to learn stovetop and oven basics (with supervision)
- » Set or clear the table; help with washing, drying, and putting away dishes

Remember: Encourage kids to be “produce pickers” by choosing fruits and veggies at the store. Try reintroducing foods they might not have liked when they were younger. As they get older, they are more likely to eat stronger flavored foods.

■ Older kids, teens, and adults

- » Find and choose recipes; prepare a whole meal; help meal plan
- » Help grocery shopping, making lists & budget
- » Wash, dry, put away dishes
- » Set/clear table
- » Read food labels for ingredients, nutrients, and health claims
- » Chop ingredients with a knife (supervise as needed)
- » Use kitchen appliances

Remember: Youth are naturally curious about cooking and like to be creative. This may seem like a hassle at times, but it means they're paying attention to food—which is healthy in the long run!

■ Anyone

- » Say “grace” or offer thanks for a meal
- » Decorate or make the table look special
- » Help clean up

Keep in Mind: Children who have experienced trauma may not follow a typical developmental trend, so your child may need extra support to do these tasks.

■ _____'s _____ and _____ Oven-Baked Omelette
(name someone special) (vegetable) (another vegetable)

Serves 6

■ Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a big bowl, whisk 8 eggs with ½ cup of _____.
(milk or non-dairy alternative)
3. Heat 2 tablespoons of butter or oil in a large oven-proof skillet over medium heat. Then add 1–2 cups of chopped _____.
(your chosen vegetables)
4. When the vegetables are tender, add 1 teaspoon _____.
(dried herbs or spices)
5. Pour the egg mixture over top the other ingredients in the skillet. Allow to cook, without stirring, for 1–2 minutes.
6. Sprinkle with a handful of crumbled _____,
(cheese)
7. If desired, then bake in the oven for 15–20 minutes or until the center is just firm.
8. Remove the frittata from the oven and let cool a little before slicing and serving.

■ **Tip:** If you don't have an oven-proof skillet, oil or butter the bottom of a baking pan. Spread vegetable mixture on the bottom and pour in beaten eggs before baking.

IDEA BANK

Vegetables

spinach
squash
mushrooms
Swiss chard
asparagus
peas
corn kernels
onion
broccoli
bell pepper

Herbs & Spices

basil
oregano
thyme
parsley
tarragon
chile powder
turmeric
cilantro

Cheese

Parmesan or Romano
cheddar
mozzarella
Swiss cheese
Jack cheese

■ Lesson 1: Positive Feeding for Resource Families

The Division of Responsibility Style of Feeding

Satter, E. (2008). *Secrets of feeding a healthy family: how to eat, how to raise good eaters, how to cook*. Madison, WI: Kelcy Press.

Developmentally Responsive Feeding

Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. New York: Norton.

Satter, E. (2008). *Secrets of feeding a healthy family: how to eat, how to raise good eaters, how to cook*. Madison, WI: Kelcy Press.

Lesson 3: Nourishment and Stress

Good Nutrition for Gut Health:

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