



EATING AT SCHOOL

What School Educators and Parents Need to Know

Parent's job:
WHAT food to pack

School's job:
WHEN & WHERE

Child's job:
WHETHER & HOW MUCH

TRUST CHILDREN TO KNOW HOW MUCH THEY NEED TO EAT

Let children choose to eat as much or as little as they like. Never take away food from a child's packed lunch or snack.

Let children eat food in any order they choose.

Believe children when they say or indicate that they are hungry or full.

PROVIDE STRUCTURE AROUND MEALS and SNACK TIMES

Have set meal and sit-down snack times for each classroom.

Plan school parties that will involve food during meal or snack time.

Provide water to drink between meals and snacks.

Avoid using food as a reward.

LET CHILDREN FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEIR BODIES

Messages about weight or dieting are harmful to children of all ages.

Teach children that people come in all sizes. Avoid making comments about anyone's weight, size, and shape – including your own!

Children like to move. Let them find enjoyable ways to move their body and learn new skills. Recess should not be taken away as a punishment.

Do not give children the idea that they should change their body for any reason.

TEACH ABOUT FOOD, NOT NUTRITION

Provide regular opportunities for children to explore different foods and allow them to look, smell, touch, taste, and decide whether or not to eat the food.

Stay neutral toward all foods, and avoid any talk that categorizes food as "good" and "bad" or "healthy" and "unhealthy."

Teach about different foods and food groups in a neutral way that is age appropriate. Nutrition concepts are too advanced for children younger than age 12.