

Feeding
our
Children
with
Love





Why Think About How We Feed Our Children?

The information in this handout can help you:

- Figure out what foods are good for your child.
- Know if your child is eating enough or too much.
- Feed your child in a healthy and loving way.
- Get your child to be more active.
- Solve some common problems that parents have when feeding children.
- Talk about changes you are making with grandparents and fathers.



Children are a very important part of Indian families. We love our children and want them to grow up healthy and strong. But there is a big problem in Indian communities with children getting diabetes at a very young age.



As parents, we can help prevent diabetes and other health problems in our young children.

How can we help our children?

Children need to be given healthy foods that are provided in a positive way. They also need lots of time for active play and less television time. This will help them grow up well and strong without diabetes or heart problems.





Your Child Knows Best How Much to Eat

Your child may eat a lot one day and not a lot another day. You may worry about your child getting enough food and vitamins.

You can relax! If you are feeding your child reasonably healthy food, your child is probably doing well.

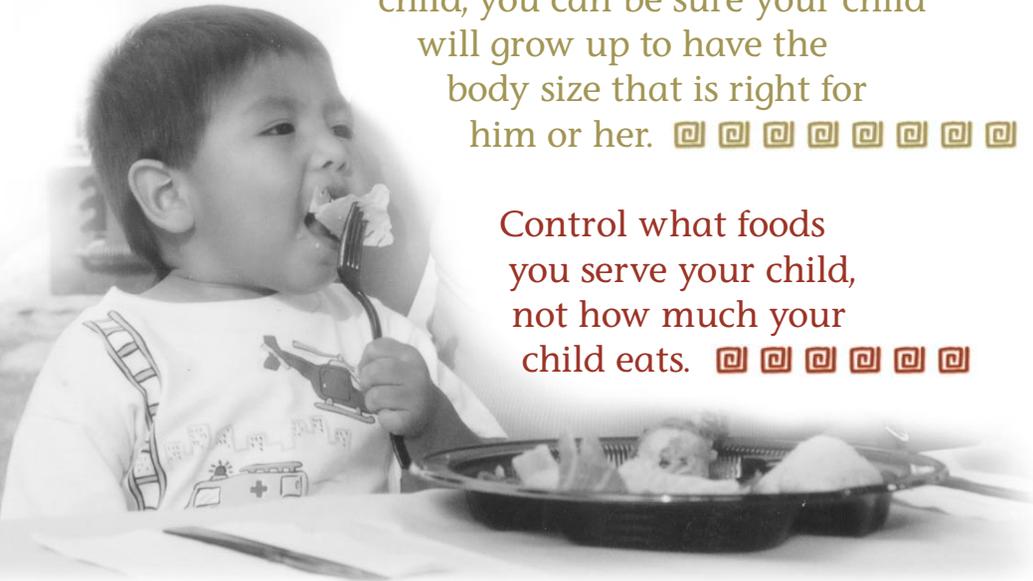
It is important to know your job in feeding your child and your child's job in eating.

- Your job is to give your child a variety of healthy foods at regular meals and snacks.
- Your child's job is to decide which of the foods you serve to eat and how much to eat.



If you do a good job of feeding your child, you can be sure your child will grow up to have the body size that is right for him or her. 

Control what foods you serve your child, not how much your child eats. 



Sharing Jobs during Meals and Snacks

Your job is to:

Serve healthy foods at regular meal and snack times.

- Control what food comes into the house.
- Making and presenting meals.
- Insist that children show up for meals.
- Make mealtimes pleasant.
- Teach children how to behave at the table.
- Decide when snacks will be served.
- Decide what will be served at snacks.



Your child's job is to:

- Decide what food to eat.
- Decide how much to eat.





WHAT FOODS are GOOD for Your Children?

Ever wonder how to be sure your child is eating the right foods? It helps to plan ahead so you can buy healthy foods and keep them handy for the whole family to eat.

Giving your child healthy foods to choose from now will help keep them healthy and active.

The Most Important Things To Do

- Serve lots of grains, fruits and vegetables.
- Limit high fat foods such as fried foods, chips and donuts.
- Limit high sugar foods and drinks such as candy, cakes, Kool-Aid, soda pop, and sports drinks.
- Serve small amounts of milk or juice only with meals. Serve water between meals.



Include foods from each food group listed below in your child's meals and snacks every day.

Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta: 6 servings

Fruit: 2 servings

Vegetables: 3 or more servings

Milk, Yogurt and Cheese: 3-4 servings

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans and Eggs: 2 servings

A serving of food is about 1 tablespoon for each year of life.

A serving for my child is _____.

My child should drink _____ cups of milk each day.

My child should drink no more than _____ ounces of juice per day.



Show Your Children You Love Them by Setting Limits



We all love our children. So it can be hard to say "No" to them. Especially if they start to cry, whine or throw a tantrum.

So how can we set limits with food and keep our children happy?

Here are some ideas...

Make rules about food and eating. Then when a problem comes up everyone should know the rule. Some rules could be:

- We only have soda pop on Saturday.
- In this house we don't watch T.V. while we are eating.
- Our rule is that we only drink water between meals.

Repeat the rules. When your child wants a soda pop on Wednesday afternoon, you can just say, "Too bad it isn't Saturday, remember the rule is that we have soda pop only on Saturday."

Stick to your rules. If your child knows that you won't change your mind about the rule, he or she won't keep bothering you about it.

Offer your child some choices. Offer some other options that may be appealing such as drinking water in a fun bottle or through a fancy straw.

Set a good example. It is important for everyone in the family to follow the rules. Children will follow the rules more willingly if everyone else does.

But even if the other adults in your home don't follow the rules, children should be expected to follow them.





Making Mealtimes Happy

We all love to eat good food with friends and family. Everything tastes better when you are happy, relaxed and part of a group.

Young children enjoy eating in a happy, relaxed group, too. Meal time is an important time for them to learn how to talk with other people and enjoy food.

Helpful Hints

for making meal times more enjoyable:

- **Children have small stomachs.** Serve 3 small meals and 2 to 3 healthy snacks every day.
- **Serve meals and snacks at about the same time every day.** Children need to know they will be fed regularly.
- **Put small amounts on your child's plate.** Let your child decide if he or she wants more. Cut foods into bite-size pieces.
- **Allow your child to decide which foods to eat from the healthy foods you have given him or her.** Don't force your child to eat foods or to finish everything on the plate.
- **Allow your child to choose how much to eat.** Only your child knows when he or she has had enough to eat.
- **Reward your child with hugs, toys and time together rather than with food.** Children need to learn that meals are for enjoying people and food. Food is not something a child gets for being good.



- **Enjoy meals with your child.** Take time to share meal times with your child. Forget about what or how much your child is eating. Enjoy talking to your child.



Encourage Active Play EVERY DAY

Children need to move around a lot to be healthy.

Being active means doing things like this:

- running
- chasing
- throwing
- catching
- climbing
- rolling
- jumping
- scooting
- pushing
- pulling
- crawling
- tumbling



Encourage your child to play outside.

There are things to do in all types of weather.

- If it is hot, play with a hose or a tub of water*.
- If there is snow, have a snowball fight or build a snowman.
- In nice weather, go for walks, play tag and other games.

Buy kids toys that encourage activity.

- Buy a riding toy instead of a video.
- Try getting a ball at the store instead of soda and chips.

Limit television time.

- Kids shouldn't watch more than one hour of television a day.
- It is your job as a parent to make a rule about television time in your house.
- Maybe your child can pick a show to watch once per day.
- Or if you have more children, they can pick one show a week.
- Remember, too much television isn't healthy for adults either!
- Computer time and video games should also be limited.



Set an Example

Children learn by example. You can help your children be active by being active yourself.

*Always watch children around water.



Real Problems

What should you do if....

Your child refuses to eat a meal or snack?

It's OK if your child doesn't want to eat. Maybe she isn't hungry. Just ask that she sit at the table for a little while, but make it clear that she doesn't have to eat if she doesn't want to. Be sure to provide another meal or snack within 2 to 3 hours and don't allow her to eat until then.

Your child wants to eat large portions?

Remember it is your child's job to decide how much to eat. Just make sure you are doing your job of providing food at regular meals and snacks so your child knows that he will not have to go hungry waiting for the next meal. Also be sure you are not encouraging him to eat more by praising him or saying he is good when he eats.

Your child won't eat certain foods (Like vegetables, milk or meat)?



If you continue to provide your child with a variety of foods, your child will get a variety of vitamins. Always remember it is your job to serve the food, it is up to your child to decide whether or not to eat it. If you encourage her to eat certain foods, she probably will learn to not like those foods. If you force her to eat certain foods, you may get into a battle with your child over food and your meal will not be very enjoyable.



Your child wants soda, chips and other junk foods, but never eats meals.

It is OK for your child to eat junk foods every once in a while. These foods taste good. But it is your job to limit how often you serve these foods to your child. If you offer good tasting, healthy food at regular meals and snacks, your child will eat when he is hungry. Don't give your child junk foods just to get him to eat. He will quickly learn how to get junk food.

Your child is always in the cupboards or refrigerator looking for food?

Young children should not be allowed to choose which foods to eat and when they should eat. It goes back to your job.

It is your job to provide your child with food at regularly scheduled meals and snacks. Your child should choose food from those you serve, not from the cupboards.



What I will do for my child:

Write down one thing that you will try to change in feeding your child.



Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. WIC Program
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This project has been funded with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and nutrition Services, FY 1999 WIC Special Projects Grants. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

