

Good News for Parents

A publication of the University of California Cooperative Extension EFNEP
for families of young children, ages 2 to 7.



FAMILY MEALTIMES IMPORTANT

Family meals can be enjoyable for all family members. Mealtime is too important to spend fighting about food. The good news for parents is that there's a way to make mealtime more pleasant for everyone. It's called "sharing food tasks."

It's simple. And it works! Parents decide 2 things, and so do children.

PARENTS DECIDE:

- What food is served
- When food is served

KIDS DECIDE:

- How much to eat
- Whether or not to eat

Bright Ideas for Sharing Food Tasks:

Parents decide what food is served.

- ◆ Serve a variety of foods from the Food Guide Pyramid.
- ◆ Make sure there is something the child likes at each meal.

Parents decide when food is served.

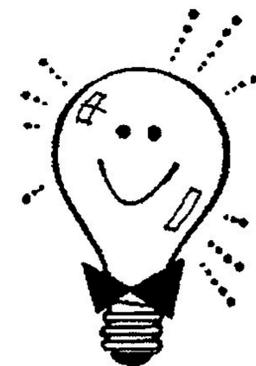
- ◆ Have a schedule for meals and snacks and stick to it. Kids should eat only at these times. Don't let them eat at other times.

Kids decide how much to eat.

- ◆ Serve small portions. Let her ask for more if she is still hungry.
- ◆ Don't tell the child that he hasn't eaten enough or has eaten too much. His body will tell him if he is hungry or not.

Kids decide whether or not to eat.

- ◆ Don't worry if a child occasionally doesn't eat at a meal or snack. If he knows he can only eat at meal or snack time, he'll eat if he is hungry.
- ◆ Even if a child chooses not to eat, have her come to the table. This teaches her that mealtimes are important times to be shared by all family members.

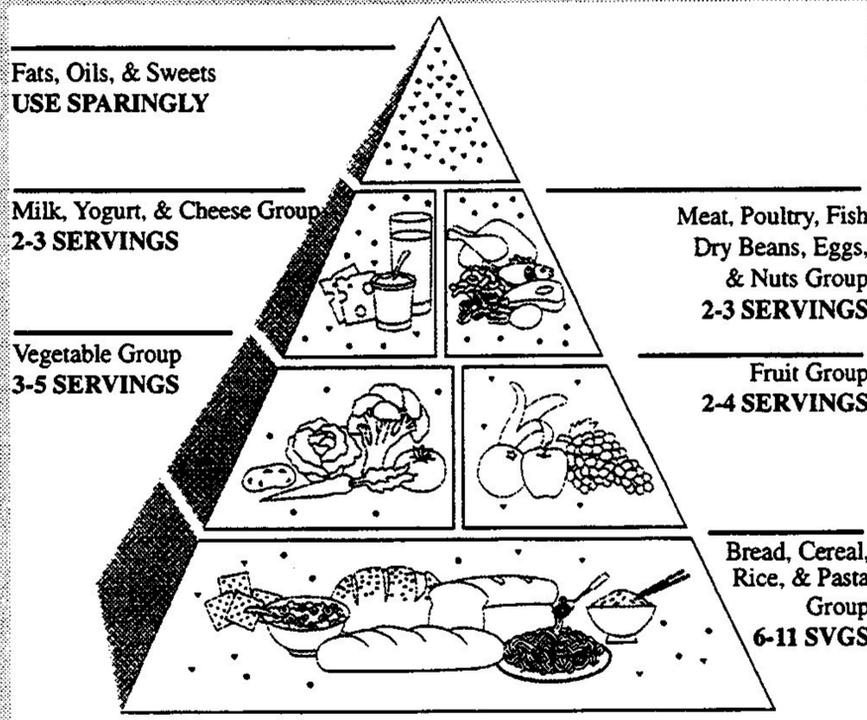


Here's how I can make it
work at my house:

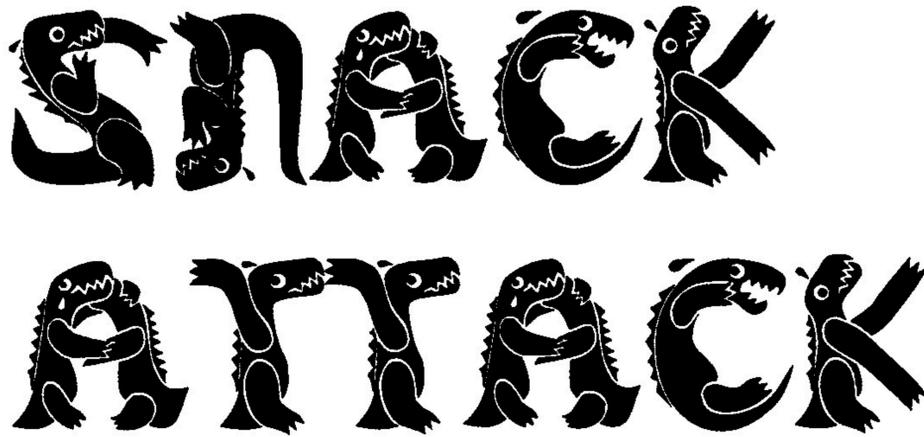
Here's how I can make it work at my house:

THE FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID FOR KIDS

Yes, it's the same Pyramid as it is for adults! Kids should have a variety of foods from *all* parts of the Pyramid—bread, grains and cereals, fruits, vegetables, milk, and meat.



The good news for parents is that they don't have to be short order cooks. Kids can eat the same foods as the rest of the family. Kids need smaller servings than adults. Serve them small portions and let them ask for seconds if they are still hungry.



Yes! Kids need snacks. They should have three meals and at least two snacks every day. The

good news for parents is that healthy snacks can be easy to make. Use the Food Pyramid as a guide for choosing healthy snacks **most of the time**. Occasionally it's okay to have cookies, ice cream, chips, or soda.

Here are some ideas for quick, easy snacks for kids:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| fresh fruit | juice popsicles |
| cereal with milk | 1/2 sandwich |
| hard-boiled eggs | plain popcorn |
| mini pizza | burritos |
| rice balls | quesadillas |
| <i>agua fresca</i> | <i>licuado de frutas</i> |



recipe idea -- mini pizza:

Put some tomato or pizza sauce on a flour tortilla or half an English muffin. Top with grated cheese. Broil until bubbly. Let cool before giving to kids.

WONDERFUL WATER

When kids are thirsty between meals and snacks, give them water. Water is important for staying healthy. If they drink a lot of milk, juice, soda, or



Kool-Aid™ between meals and snacks, they get full and are not hungry at meal and snack times.

Here are my ideas for kids' snacks -- and the Food Pyramid group for each one.

Idea	Food Group

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS OVERWEIGHT?

There is a wide range of normal heights and weights for children at any age. As overweight kids grow taller, they often grow into their weight.

The good news for parents is that sharing food tasks still works, even for large children. Parents still decide what food is

served and when it is served. Kids still decide how much to eat and whether or not to eat.

Children can trust their bodies to tell them when they are hungry and when they are full. If they are hungry, they can have seconds. If they are full, they can stop eating.

Here's how parents can help--

1



Give your child lots of love and affection. Don't pressure her to lose weight or to be thin. It doesn't work! Overweight kids need love and support. Treat them the same as all children in the family.

2



Encourage your child to be active. See article on page 4.

3



Serve the same healthy food to all family members. Don't put kids on diets! Parents decide what food is served by serving a variety of foods from the bottom parts of the Pyramid. Don't serve high fat and high sugar foods at the tip of the Pyramid very often.

Here's what I can do to help my child:

Introducing New Foods

"Yucky" is often a child's reaction to a new food. This is natural. But it's frustrating for parents.

The good news for parents is that there are ways they can help.



Here are some bright ideas!

- 🍏 Set a good example by eating the new food.
- 🍏 Let the child help prepare the food.
- 🍏 Offer new foods when the child is hungry and well rested.
- 🍏 Don't pressure the child to eat the new food.
- 🍏 Let the child look at the new food and touch it. That's how kids learn about new things.
- 🍏 Offer the new food again in a few days. It usually takes several tries before kids are willing to try new foods.

Let's Play

All kids should play actively every day. Set a good example by being active with your kids. Plan family activities like walking, playing ball, hiking, swimming, or going to the park.

Here are some more ideas:

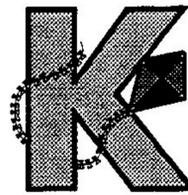
- Play Frisbee
- Ride a bike
- Jump rope
- Swing, swim
- Blow bubbles, chase them
- Run and jump
- Join a sports team
- Walk the dog
- Dance to music



Rollerskate or Rollerblade



Play Ball



Go fly a Kite!

Limit the amount of time kids watch TV or play video games to no more than 2 hours per day.

Here are some activities I can do with my child:

IRON POWER

Many children don't get enough iron in their foods. They become anemic. This can make them tired all the time.

Here are some foods that are high in iron. Serve them often.

- ◆ beef, pork, chicken, and turkey
- ◆ eggs
- ◆ fortified cereals (WIC cereals are iron-fortified)
- ◆ cooked beans (pinto beans, refried beans, black-eyed peas, baked beans)
- ◆ spinach, other greens
- ◆ potatoes with skin
- ◆ dried fruits

Foods high in vitamin C (oranges, grapefruits, tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, melons, and berries) help the body use iron. Eat them with iron foods when possible.

Warning:
Kids can get sick if they eat too many iron tablets.
Keep all medicine in a medicine cabinet, not on a kitchen table or window sill where kids can reach it easily.

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