

FAMILY STYLE MEALS AND SNACKS

Having kids sit together and serve themselves often leads choosier eaters to be more likely to accept and try new foods!

When you provide food to kids, you have an opportunity to influence their eating behaviors by the types of foods you offer and by how you offer them. Serving family style meals and snacks can create a supportive, encouraging, and healthy mealtime environment that exposes kids to healthy foods and helps kids learn to enjoy them.

What are Family Style Meals and Snacks?

In this style of dining, food is placed on the table in serving bowls and kids are encouraged to serve themselves. Caregivers sit at the table and eat with the kids to help model proper manners.

Why does this matter?

Family style meals help kids develop:

- Self-esteem
- Social skills
- Table manners
- Independence

Tips for successful Family Style Meals and Snacks:

- Let kids help from start to finish. This includes preparing the food, setting the table, serving themselves, and cleaning up.
- Encourage (but never force) kids to take a little of everything. Help them understand appropriate serving sizes.
- Talk about the taste, smell, look, and feel of food. Family style meals are a great time to teach new vocabulary and help kids learn to appreciate and savor their food.
- Keep the conversation light and positive. This keeps the mealtime enjoyable and helps ensure kids will look forward to the next meal together.

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LET'S GO!

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