

# Children's Needs

## Children are not small adults

The main difference between their needs and those of adults can be summed up in one word: growth. Eating well helps children grow.

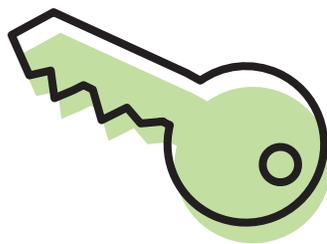


## Small stomachs, big needs

Children have small stomachs, but their needs are great. They need nourishing food to support their developing bones and brain. And of course, they need it for the rest of their rapidly growing bodies. They also need energy to move, concentrate and have a good day.

## Keep it simple!

Focus on foods rather than their make-up (e.g., vitamins and minerals). That means regular milk or soy milk as well as fruits and vegetables every day, and fish and whole grains on a regular basis. No one food can give children everything that they need. Foods work together like a team. The key is to vary them. It's a simple philosophy that we should keep in mind when we speak about food.



## Change your tune!

“Eat your crust so you grow big and strong!” “Finish your spinach so you get big muscles!” - Does any of this sound familiar to you? There are no superfoods or miracle ingredients that will make you grow big and strong. Childhood development only requires that they eat a varied diet and in accordance with their hunger. It's not very exciting, but it's the truth.

## No “light” foods

Children need foods that are rich in vitamins and minerals and sometimes high energy (calorie) to grow. Light foods are not appropriate for them. No non-fat yogurt, light peanut butter, non-fat milk or sugar alternatives. Give them the regular stuff.

## When it comes to quantity, let children decide!

Are you frustrated with trying to figure out the right portion sizes for children? There are as many answers as there are children! When deciding how much to serve, let children decide. It will change every day, because hunger, appetite and growth varies from one child to the next.

## No worry, no waste

How should we treat a child who's got a little extra weight? Just like we treat the other children! Every child is unique—there are lots of body types. Making children worry about this can create or worsen a problem. We do not encourage children to lose weight. If they start dieting early in life, they will likely continue to do so for the rest of their lives. Children need to learn how to eat well without being deprived of anything.

## Growth spurts

Growth spurts require a lot of energy and increase children's appetites. When you see children eating more than usual, you can expect to see their pants get shorter soon! Some children between the ages of 6 - 8 will store up energy for their next growth spurt. If they seem a bit pudgier to you, don't worry about it! It's called adiposity rebound (higher body fat), and it's normal. Puberty is not far off.