

# Making Mealtimes More Enjoyable

Training Workbook



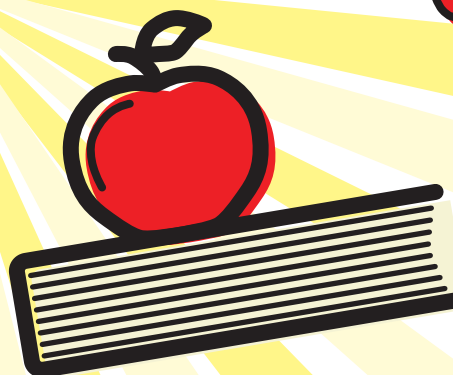
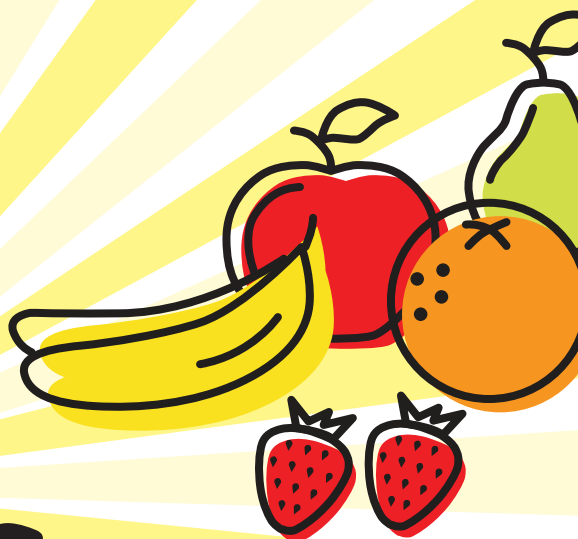
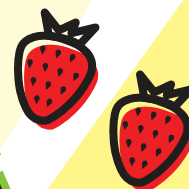
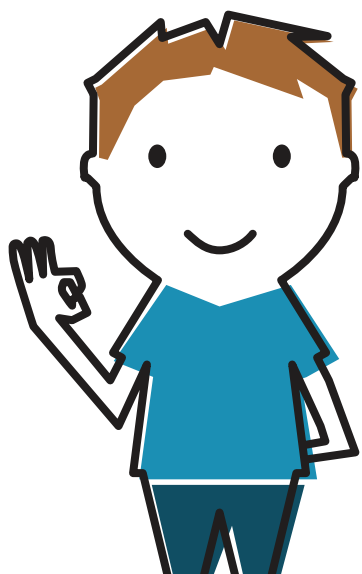
ASSOCIATION  
QUÉBÉCOISE DE LA  
GARDE SCOLAIRE

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Developed by

**Extenso**  
Centre de référence sur la nutrition humaine



The Association québécoise de la garde scolaire works to recognize school daycares as key actors in students' educational success. The Association supports the development of school daycares in Québec by promoting their complementary role to a school's mission, which it does by representing their collective interests and facilitating skill development for staff.

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# The New Cornerstones of Healthy Eating

Currently, views on how to manage meals tend to vary between school daycares. Views tend to be based on personal beliefs and knowledge and are transmitted through our actions and our words. Yet, if everyone does things in their own way, it is impossible for children to develop a common understanding of healthy eating.

Ideally, all of our views about food, mealtime behaviours and things we say to children would be aligned. Mealtimes should be enjoyable for optimal childhood development.

## Extenso's 3 Healthy Eating Values

### Eating well is delicious

Healthy eating includes tender, juicy fruits, crunchy, colourful vegetables, flavourful grain products, tasty fish, surprising legumes, refreshing, comforting milk, and more.

Eating a wide variety of foods ensures we get an array of nutrients. In addition to offering a nutritional advantage, variety also provides different experiences and constantly renews the enjoyment we get from eating. All foods are allowed. We avoid the culture of forbidden foods and the dichotomous categorization of foods, i.e., good vs. bad. Instead of isolating certain foods, we look at overall eating habits. Of course, certain foods have higher nutritional value than others. While we need to prioritize those foods, we should not completely avoid foods that are less nourishing but that still hold cultural, sentimental or gastronomical value.

### Eating well is enjoyable

Whether or not a meal is enjoyable depends partially on what is being served, but especially on the mealtime environment. It should be a pleasant moment, free of reprimands and pressure to eat. Pleasant conversations that give each child the chance to express themselves have an influence on children's psychological health. Children should be allowed to eat in accordance with their hunger without being pressured (e.g., No dessert if..., Finish your food if you want..., etc.). Healthy eating includes a healthy relationship with food starting at a young age.

### Eating well is learnt

We develop eating habits and food preferences during early childhood. The various places a child spends time should foster healthy eating habits. Parents, educators and other adults involved in children's lives also have a strong influence on their behaviours and preferences, particularly through the things they say, their habits and their attitudes. Considering the natural reticence children have toward new foods—food neophobia—it is important to continue offering them certain foods so they have time to accept and appreciate them. Meals should be a pleasant experience that children look forward to as a chance to discover new foods. What we offer them is just as important as how we offer

## A Vision of Healthy Eating

The Vision of Healthy Eating put forth by the *Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec* was published (in French only) for people who influence the food environment. It focuses on conditions that promote healthy eating.

The food environment  
is made up of all of the conditions  
under which a person has access to,  
purchases and consumes food.

Reference: <http://www.saines habitudes de vie.gouv.qc.ca/visionsainealimentation/presentation.php>

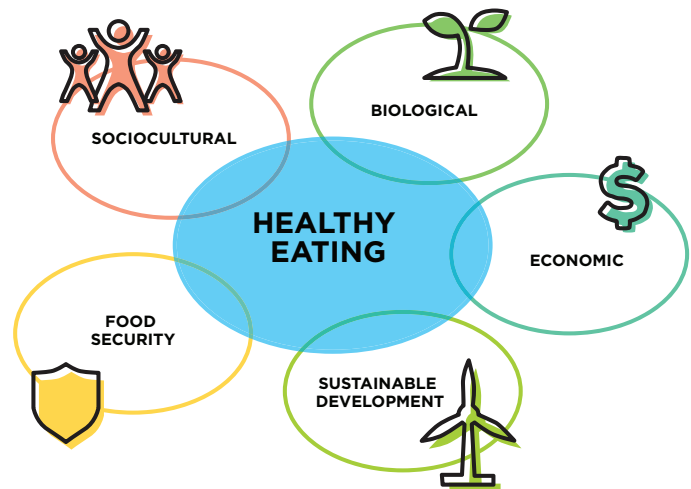
Our food environment is made up of five components: biological, sustainable development, economic, food security and sociocultural. These components are part of our environment and, in one way or another, influence healthy eating.

Each component includes factors that influence our eating behaviours. It is important to understand the influence and interaction between these things to ensure that children develop good eating habits.

Schools and school daycares can also help improve the food offering by incorporating the five components into their practises. A few examples:

- ▶ Whenever possible, give children enough time to eat in a positive, pleasant environment.
- ▶ During cooking activities and snacks, offer a wide variety of foods that reflect children's cultural preferences.
- ▶ During activities involving rewards or annual holidays, make sure that nutritious foods are at least as affordable, if not more so, as foods with little nutritional value.
- ▶ Work with the school team to put a recycling or composting system into place. Schools and school daycares are a place for education. What better place to educate children about the principles of healthy eating? These institutions should encourage the consumption of everyday foods as well as foods for special occasions served at specific events.

School daycares and educational staff can promote the Vision of Healthy Eating and Extenso's values to encourage children and their parents to adopt a similar vision of healthy eating.



## Remember

Healthy eating includes variety and enjoying one's food. Children learn to adopt healthy eating habits through experience.

The food children eat is influenced by biological, economic, sociocultural, food security and sustainable development factors.

**Everyday foods:** foods with high nutritional value, often considered to be whole or mostly unprocessed foods. These foods are recommended under Canada's Food Guide. Example: fruits and vegetables

**Occasional foods:** foods that, overall, have good nutritional value, but less so than everyday foods. Foods that are a bit more processed and sometimes have too much sugar, fat or salt or not enough fibre, vitamins and minerals. Example: chocolate milk, cereal that is rich in fibre, sweet corn.

**Foods to limit:** foods with little nutritional value. Example: chips, soda.

## Meals are Learning Opportunities

Children develop many skills during family and school meals. We must not think of mealtimes as a break during which children do not learn anything. On the contrary, children need many skills to get through a meal.

### Self-sufficiency and self-esteem

Especially with young children, educators encourage children during meals and snack times to feed themselves, use utensils and unwrap or peel food independently. Older children can get involved in activities and tasks related to meals and snacks. When possible, educators can ask them to help set the table, serve meals and clean up after meals and snacks.

### Social and language skills

By placing children in groups that sit together at snack or meal times, educators give them a chance to converse while eating, which creates an environment that fosters their social skills (e.g., waiting to be served, helping each other, etc.).

In addition, by starting little rituals (handwashing, etc.) and activities (songs, stories, etc.) and creating an anxiety-free environment where children do not feel rushed, educators help create pleasant snack and meal times wherein children are building relationships with the adult and other children. Children also develop a sense of belonging to the group during these times.

Educators encourage social interactions and conversation using vocabulary primarily related to colour, shape, size and quantity. Language can also be developed and explored through discussions that allow them to discuss the taste, texture, appearance and smell of foods. Children will develop a richer vocabulary when adults and peers feed it. In addition to offering communication and learning opportunities related to food, these conversations create an enjoyable mealtime environment. This is a time for each person to express themselves, feel heard, build relationships, etc.

## **Motor skills**

Meals and snacks are also a time for children to strengthen their motor skills, which helps them feel competent.

In order for their motor skills to develop, children must have the chance to experiment with feeding themselves. Educators can encourage young children to drink on their own and feed themselves using a spoon, a fork or their fingers.

## **Knowledge and curiosity**

Meals and snacks are a chance to discuss food with children. They do not need to know much about the vitamins and nutrients of the food they are eating. It is better to explain that every food on their plate gives them energy to play, jump, run, etc., and we can tell them where foods come from, how to prepare them, etc., using the knowledge we already have.

# **Influential Role of Adults at Mealtimes**

## **Adults are role models**

Children will model adult eating behaviours even if adults prefer foods they do not like. This is an effective way to get children to try new foods. Children will more easily accept different foods if the adult talks about the food with enthusiasm.

## **Everyone has their own beliefs, values and preferences**

Adults tend to buy and cook with foods that they like, that reflect their values (e.g., organic, sustainable development, vegetarianism, etc.) or that reflect their knowledge (I know that this food is good for me so I will eat it. This other food is not good for me so I will avoid it.).

The beliefs, personal values and behaviours of adults influence those of children. With this in mind, educators must make sure to stay in their professional role during mealtimes and to not share their personal beliefs or values.

## **Educators have an influence on mealtime ambience**

Adults are often in a position of authority at mealtimes. They can either allow children to chat with each other or ask them to eat in silence. Educators should always opt for a pleasant, relaxed environment with a predictable schedule. This sets the stage for children to have a positive experience and work on their skills. Distractions such as television, toys or arguments reduce children's concentration on their meal and on listening to their signals of satiety. Educators should reduce the number of distractions as much as possible.

# **Children's Particular Needs**

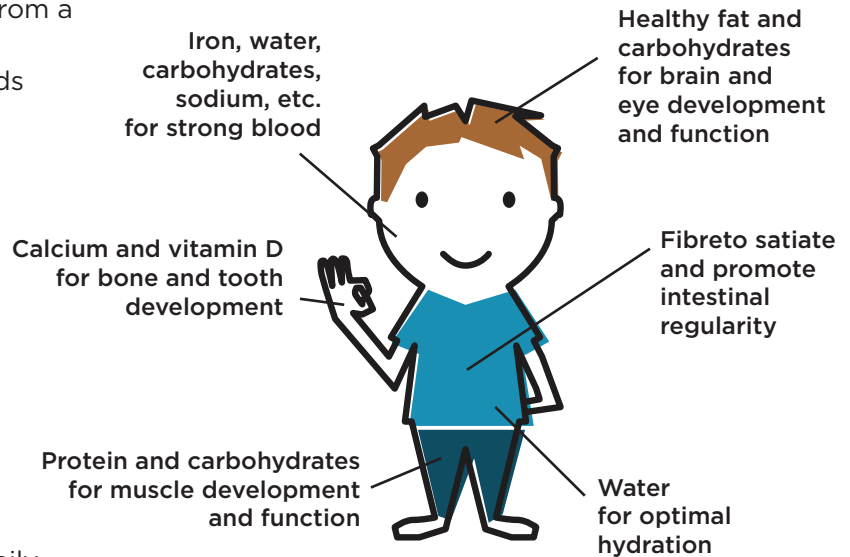
Children grow a lot and have a lot of needs between the ages of 4 and 13. Their stomachs are small, so it is important to focus on nourishing foods.

No single food can meet all of children's needs or keep them healthy. When children eat a varied diet, they consume a wide range of vitamins, minerals, healthy fats, protein, carbohydrates, fibre, antioxidants, etc., in addition to water.

Many nutrients are essential for childhood growth and development. Their whole bodies benefit from a varied, balanced diet.

Each child has different needs when it comes to food. To meet all of their needs, Canada's Food Guide recommends a specific number of portions per day based on a child's age.

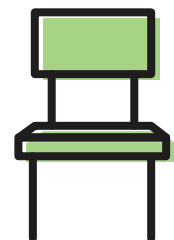
Children spend an average of seven hours at school a day, where they have at least one meal and two snacks. Foods consumed at school should meet at least 50% of their daily nutritional needs. Most children also eat at home.



## Snacks Give us Energy!

They round out the last meal and help tide kids over until the next one, in addition to providing them with nutrients. Children feel secure when their meals and snacks are served at regular times. Snacks also helps us make sure that their daily caloric and nutritional needs are being met to keep them healthy.

	Ages 4 to 8	Ages 9 to 13
Vegetables and fruit	5	6
Grain products	4	6
Milk and alternatives	2	3-4
Meat and alternatives	1	1-2



## When should snacks be offered?

Children should have two to three snacks per day at the same times, if possible. Snacks should be served about 1.5 to 2 hours before the next meal. When children eat snacks too close to a mealtime, they likely will not feel hungry.

Snacks are also a time for sharing and should be eaten in a calm environment so children can listen to their signals of hunger and satiety.



	Meals/ snacks	No. of portions in Canada's Food Guide			
		Vegetables and fruit	Grain products	Milk and alternatives	Meat and alternatives
50 % {	Breakfast	1/2 - 1	1 - 2	1/2 - 1	
	Morning snack	1		1/2 - 1	
	Lunch	1 1/2 - 2	1 - 2	1/2	1/2 - 1
	Afternoon snack		1	1/2 - 1	
	Supper	1 1/2 - 2	1	1/2	1/2 - 1
	Snack	1/2			

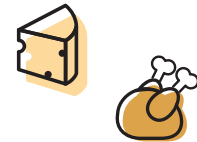
It is important to give them time for this, to stop other activities and sit down, like they do for a meal.

## What snack should be served?

Snacks should include two portions of foods from two different food groups in Canada's Food Guide.

There are several possible combinations:

- Vegetables or fruit (apples) + milk or alternatives (cheese),
- Vegetables (raw) or fruit + meat or alternatives (hummus),
- Grain products (muffin) + milk or alternatives (glass of milk),
- Grain products (pita bread) + meat or substitutes (a hard-boiled egg)



## Morning snack



Morning snacks should be lighter and contain **simple carbohydrates (sugars)** that can be quickly digested.

Example:

- ▶ A piece of fruit and a glass of milk
- ▶ Cereal and milk
- ▶ A fruit smoothie



## Afternoon snack

Afternoon snacks should be more filling and contain complex carbohydrates (sugars) that are more slowly digested. They should also include protein in order to tide children over until supper, which is sometimes served late at home. If afternoon snacks are not offered or are incomplete and not sufficiently filling, children will be famished when they return home after school or daycare.

Example:

- ▶ Whole wheat crackers and cheese cubes
- ▶ Pita bread and hummus
- ▶ A home-made muffin and yogurt

A less nutritious snack is acceptable on occasion and can be worked into a varied, balanced diet. All foods can be a part of healthy eating! The frequency at which we consume certain foods and oversized portions are what can negatively affect health.

# Hunger, Appetite and Satiety

## Sharing Responsibilities

Sharing responsibilities means that adults (parents or educators) and children form a team at mealtime. Eating becomes a collective responsibility.

By sharing responsibilities, we define the role of the adult and of the children during meal and snack times. By organizing meals this way, we help kids develop healthy eating habits and take enjoyment in eating well. Children are encouraged to eat based on their needs and to be open to discovering new foods. The following is a breakdown of responsibilities:

Adults:	Children:
<b>When?</b> – Schedule <b>Where?</b> – Location <b>What?</b> – Food offering <b>How?</b> – Environment <b>Who?</b> – People	<b>How much?</b> – Quantity

### When?



Adults are in charge of setting regular schedules for meals and snacks. They also decide the minimum amount of time a child must stay at the table. Thirty to forty minutes is usually enough time for children to eat at their own pace. Twenty to thirty minutes is sufficient for a snack.

### Where?



Adult decide where meals and snacks are eaten. This way, children cannot eat in front of the television, standing up or in the play room. Meals are eaten sitting down at the table, without any distractions. Snacks are also served at the table.

### Who?



Adults determine who will be present at mealtimes and are there to supervise.

### How?



Meals and snacks should take place in a pleasant, relaxed environment. To create this type of environment, adults should adopt a democratic style, give clear instructions, use positive reinforcement and be a role model.

### What?



Adults (parent, cafeteria supervisor or the lunch cook) create quality menus that offer varied, balanced meals. They also prepare certain meals several times so children are exposed to dishes more than once.

## How much?

Children are the only ones who know if they want to eat and how much they want to eat. They should feel their signals of hunger and satiety. If an adult is serving them, children must tell the adult how much food they want to eat and are allowed to have a single portion of dessert. Adults who tell children they must eat a certain amount of food before they can be excused are not encouraging children to listen to their signals of satiety.



## A Few Definitions and Influences

It is important to know the difference between appetite, hunger and satiety in order to better understand children's attitudes and behaviours.

**Appetite:** The combination of sensations, enjoyable or neutral, that reveal a desire to eat. Appetite is soothed by the ingestion of specific foods. For example, we feel the urge to eat hot bread when we enter a bakery, even if we are not hungry.

**Hunger:** A conscious feeling of a physiological need for food, when food intake is insufficient or inadequate or it has been a while since the last meal. It is soothed by the ingestion of any kind of food.

**Satiety:** A state after the ingestion of food, characterized by the suppression of the sensation of hunger and a loss of appetite.



## Influential Factors

Appetite, hunger and satiety can vary for different reasons. Each person is unique and reacts differently to things that affect their appetite, hunger and satiety. Here are a few examples:

### Appetite

- ▶ Stress tends to ruin a person's appetite. *Children can feel stressed by an upsetting or loud voice, a lengthy speech, etc.*
- ▶ New foods regularly ruin children's appetite. *To stimulate children's appetite, ask if any of them have ever tasted the food and, if they have, what they thought of it.*
- ▶ The presence of other people (social aspect of a meal) increases appetite. *On a regular basis, let children choose who they want to sit with at the table.*
- ▶ Illness often reduces appetite and can even ruin it.
- ▶ Preferred foods increase appetite. *From time to time, ask children to lift up which food they are going to eat first. You can use humour in your response, e.g., "It is not backwards day! You can't start with your carrot cake!"*

## Hunger

- ▶ Children need more calories when they are growing, so their hunger increases.
- ▶ Physical activity burns calories that need to be replaced, thereby increasing hunger.
- ▶ When large meals are consumed, hunger decreases, and vice versa.

## Satiety

- ▶ The richer foods are in protein and fibre, which are slow to digest, and water, the longer a person feels satiated after a meal.
- ▶ The more food a person eats in a sitting, the longer they will feel satiated. For example, a small amount of food will be more quickly digested than a large amount.

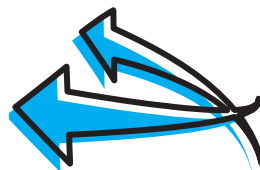
## Hunger and Satiety Signals

Our bodies send us signals of hunger and satiety to tell us that we are hungry or satiated. We must pay attention to these signals to know when it is time to eat or stop eating. The hunger scale is a tool adults can use to help children determine how hungry they are and when they are satiated. It is ideal to stay between sensations 2 and 4 and avoid extremes.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Starving	Very hungry	Hungry	A little hungry	Just right	Full	Too full

These signals help us recognize hunger.

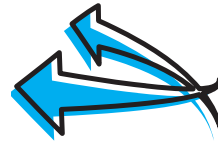
- ▶ Growling stomach
- ▶ Feeling empty
- ▶ Slight stomach cramping
- ▶ Drop in energy
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Irritability



*Help children recognize these signals*

It is just as important to recognize satiety signals. We see them after children have been eating for a while. Some signals are quite visible but others, only children can recognize.

- ▶ The child regains their energy.
- ▶ They do not feel empty anymore.
- ▶ Food does not taste as good.
- ▶ They are playing with their food instead of eating it.
- ▶ They slow down their pace of eating.
- ▶ They want to get up and go play.



*Do not hesitate  
to ask children  
what they are feeling.*

Certain things need to happen for children to listen to their signals. First, they must be able to recognize them, so make sure to tell them what signals of hunger, appetite and satiety they should be paying attention to. Next, children should be able to eat slowly without distraction.

## Parenting Styles

There are three main types of parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive and democratic. These styles define the adult's approach toward the child. They are especially apparent when it comes to eating behaviours and significantly influence children's current and future behaviours.

### Permissive

A permissive style is characterized by a laissez-faire type of attitude and always consulting the child before making a decision. Adults make decisions to please the child and do not set any rules. The permissive style considerably decreases the quality of a child's diet.

For example, at home, a child has the last word when it comes to choosing what, how much and when to eat. Since these parents want to avoid tensions, they often only offer children foods they already like. Their children end up eating fewer new foods, which greatly limits the variety of foods they consume. Since they are not used to having to try new things, they will tend to reject new foods.

### Authoritarian

When using the authoritarian style, adults use strategies that put pressure on children to make them eat healthier foods. This approach tends to involve restricting and even forbidding foods with low nutritional value.

These are damaging practises because they only intensify children's desire for foods that are forbidden or used as rewards, such as desserts. It will also become more difficult to make children appreciate foods they think they are being "forced" to eat. This authoritarian style has the effect of increasing children's will to eat fattening and sugary foods, and of reducing the variety of foods to which they are exposed. When adults use this approach, they pressure children to eat, sometimes more than they are hungry for. The result is that children become disconnected from the signals of hunger and satiety. While effective in the short term, this approach has serious consequences on children's long-term relationships with food.

## **Democratic**

Somewhere in between the authoritarian and permissive styles, the democratic style offers a structure around eating that does not put pressure on children. Parents and educators alike should use this strategy, which goes hand-in-hand with the principle of sharing responsibilities.

Adults who use a democratic style show interest and sensitivity toward children's eating habits. They also have a positive attitude toward new foods and are eager to talk about food with children. They use positive reinforcement. Adults who use a democratic approach do not make any foods off limits. They simply teach children that we eat certain foods on a daily basis and eat other foods on occasion.

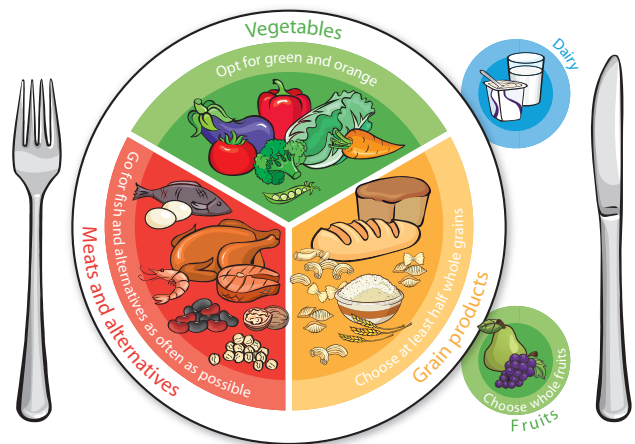
# Balanced Meals and Taste Development

Every balanced meal is a chance to include at least one food from each food group. This is a visual method we can use to make sure children are being offered variety, colour and a range of nutrients in their meals.

What does this look like?

- ▶ One part vegetables (broccoli, corn, zucchini, squash, etc.)
- ▶ One part grain products (pasta, rice, couscous, quinoa, bread, etc.)
- ▶ One part meat or alternatives (meat, fish, tofu, eggs or legumes).

A glass of milk and a nutritious dessert can be offered to round out the meal



## Dessert

As we can see in the picture, dessert is considered to complement a balanced meal. It is not without value. Desserts actually round out a meal. They are made of nutritious foods that provide essential nutrients for our bodies. This can be fruit, yogurt, a dessert made from fruit or milk, etc. This makes a varied menu and helps children discover new foods and dishes. Children are thus participating in their own taste development.

## Beverages

### Which beverages should be made a priority?

Water should be offered when children are thirsty. Make sure to offer children water several times throughout the day. We should also prioritize milk and enriched soy milk. These beverages contain about 85% and 90% water respectively and are a good way for kids to stay hydrated. They are also nutritious and provide calcium and vitamin D, which are essential for children's growth.

### How can we make sure kids stay hydrated?

- ▶ By offering water often to children and letting them drink as much as they want.
- ▶ By encouraging children to drink their milk box or enriched soy milk.
- ▶ For children who have a harder time drinking plain water, try adding a couple pieces of strawberry or orange or a few mint leaves. Keep a few pitchers of flavoured water in the refrigerator and switch the flavours every week.
- ▶ When you take kids outside on a hot, sunny day or when they are getting exercise, make sure they drink water regularly.



Juice contains a lot of sugar and, because it does not contain any fibre, does not satisfy like whole fruit does. It can also cause cavities. Children should only have about 125 ml (1/2 cup) of 100% pure juice a day. Soda and fruit-flavoured beverages have no place in a child's daily diet. They have no useful nutritional value. They have a lot of added sugar and are a factor contributing to childhood obesity. In addition, some sodas contain caffeine, which has negative effects on children, such as poor sleep, restlessness and overexcitement.

## **Children's Taste Development**

To get a full understanding of how children develop taste, let's start from the beginning, during pregnancy. Pregnancy, breastfeeding, early childhood phases and childhood are all times when children make all sorts of discoveries and learn about food. Tastes and preferences developed during these times can change over time, but will likely remain the same into adulthood.

### **Strategies to Use**

To help children develop taste, try these strategies:

#### **Repeat positive experiences**

The less a food is known, the more suspicious it seems. The more a child tries a food, the more they will learn to like it. Be patient. Food fears are rarely overcome after trying a food one time. It often takes trying a food five times before a child will willingly eat it. This process can seem very long—sometimes it can take up to 15 to 20 exposures. Unfortunately, adults only offer new foods three to five times before establishing that a child does not like it. Be careful not to make a child sick of a dish! It is better to offer rejected foods once a month and alternate meals with other dishes.

#### **Enjoyment**

The process of becoming familiar with a food should be done in a warm environment. Children have a tendency to associate the context in which they try something new with the actual food. We should try to avoid negative situations as much as possible (arguments, stomach aches, etc.). Children should never feel forced to eat something! Adopting a warm but firm attitude will make it easier to encourage them to try and enjoy foods. In certain school daycares, especially in preschool and first grade, children must finish at least half of their main dish before they can eat dessert. Although well intentioned, this practise does not encourage children to listen to their satiety signals. Instead, it is recommended to ask children if they are still hungry and if they think they have eaten enough to make it to snack time.

#### **Praising Effort**

It is important to recognize the efforts children make when they try new dishes or foods they do not like very much. They will be more motivated and willing to try new dishes later on.

#### **Role Model**

Children are more likely to agree to taste new foods when they are around their friends and adults who like the foods. It is easier for them to accept new foods when someone

they know, like their parent, friend or educator is enjoying them. By seeing people they know eat new foods, they will feel reassured and less worried about trying them.

### **Participating in activities**

It seems that introducing children to foods before serving them makes it easier for them to accept the foods. There are numerous opportunities to get children in school daycare involved in developing their taste and getting used to foods. Here are a few examples: create a recipe book, organize a dinner with a show, plan a day to teach children about traditional foods from around the world and let them taste them.

### **What is a food neophobia?**

Food neophobia is a fear of new foods. Children who are neophobic are very reluctant to try unknown foods. They tend not to like any new food they do taste. Neophobia is also associated with fear of having a bad experience when eating a new food.

It is estimated that 3/4 of children ages 2 to 10 spontaneously refuse to try unfamiliar foods. The degrees to which they resist new foods can vary.

Food neophobia becomes particularly common at age 2, when a children gradually start to take control of which foods they eat. It appears to be more common among boys than girls. It is associated with a reduction in the number of foods a child likes in every food group, especially vegetables. We can't just give up. Food neophobia decreases with age and exposure to foods.

### **Neophobic behaviours**

Children with neophobia will display certain characteristics when faced with foods they do not want. When educators can identify these behaviours, they are able to respond appropriately. A few examples:

- ▶ Separating mixed foods
- ▶ Examining their food
- ▶ Cringing
- ▶ Chewing for a long time
- ▶ Turning food over and over again with their fork
- ▶ Refusing foods without tasting them
- ▶ Spitting out food
- ▶ Smelling food
- ▶ Vomiting when forced to swallow
- ▶ Pushing food away
- ▶ Turning their head away

To accept a food, children use their senses of sight, smell, touch taste and sometimes even hearing. When they try a new food, all of their senses are engaged, one by one. Each child goes through this process in their own way. They may stay in phases for varying lengths of time. It can even take a long time! The process can be spread out over several meals.

With that in mind, it is easier to understand why, at first, children may look at a new food without tasting it, and when they do taste it, they do not swallow! The next time, they might only take two bites. Bit by bit, they will start to really eat the food. It may take 5, 10 or even 20 meals before children dare to taste the food, and a few times after that before they start to like it.



Regarde



Sent



Goûte



Touche



Mange



Aime



When doing food-related activities with children, educators can help them put words to food by describing the food and talking about where it comes from. This helps children become familiar with different foods and figure out what foods and dishes they do and do not like.

# Messages to Send

When educators in early childhood daycares eat the same meal that the children are eating, what they eat makes them a role model for the children. In school daycares, the situation is a bit different. Educators influence children first and foremost with their words.

**Complete the column, “Attitudes and Phrases to Avoid” with the following:**

- Using food as a punishment or a reward
- Using food to console or calm a child
- Making children feel guilty for not finishing their food
- Insisting a child eat or taste
- Playing with a child’s emotions
- Making an exaggerated promise
- Restricting or forbidding foods

Examples of phrases and attitudes to avoid	Attitudes and phrases to avoid	Explain why
You have to eat all of your food if you want to grow big and strong.		
Just 5 or 6 more bites left...		
It is not good to waste food.		
Make your parents and me happy and eat all your food.		
When you’ve finished everything, you can eat your dessert.		
Did you hurt yourself or are you sad? Poor sweetie. Come have something to eat and you’ll forget all about it.		
No, you can’t have any cake. I know the other kids are eating it but it is not good for you.		

If a child asks you, “Have I eaten enough to go play?”  
how will you answer?

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## Some Things to Say

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## **Attitudes to Adopt**

The following are some things you can say and do to encourage children to develop their taste and listen to their hunger and satiety signals:

1. Encourage discussions on the organoleptic characteristics of foods: their smell, taste and textures. What do they feel like in your mouth? Are they juicy, crunchy, sweet, salty, soft, dry, flaky?
2. Encourage children to taste all the food in their meal, but do not make them if they do not want to.
3. Invite children to taste new dishes or foods, without making them.
4. Show enthusiasm for a child's meal (e.g., "Wow, that looks yummy!").
5. Praise children when they taste a new food or a food they do not usually like (e.g., "That's great, you ate something you used to not like!").
6. Encourage children to recognize hunger and satiety signals.

These principles must be used with all children, regardless of their weight or size.

# Credible Sources

There is such an abundance of nutritional information available these days that it is hard to know whom and what to believe.

## How to tell if a source of nutritional information is reliable

- ▶ The name of the author or organization that produced the document is clearly indicated.
- ▶ The author is a health professional or recognized authority on the subject matter.
- ▶ The author or organization provides information in their field of expertise.
- ▶ If the author is not a specialist, they explain their position on the subject (e.g., personal experience, beliefs, etc.).
- ▶ If the information comes from an organization, the organization has a good reputation and is recognized as an authority on the subject matter. Its mission and affiliations are clearly stated (e.g., in the “About Us” section of their website).
- ▶ The document provides contact information for the author (e.g., in the “Contact Us” section of their website).

## Signs your source is credible

- ▶ There are no exaggerated statements or promises, nor are there any prohibited allegations, such as statements that have not received the validation required by Health Canada.

## Objectivity

- ▶ The approach is professional, not sensational, emotional or alarmist.
- ▶ The author’s interests, sponsorships and commercial supporters are clearly stated.
- ▶ The content does not promote a particular product or brand.
- ▶ It addresses differences in the knowledge or opinions of specialists.

## Updates

- ▶ If it is a website, the date of the last update should be clearly indicated in each section.

## Four Credible Sources to Learn More about Nutrition

**Extenso:** Objective information based on the most current scientific data. Authored by nutritionists from the Université de Montréal. Addresses myths and provides information on nutrition at different ages, food, etc.

[www.extenso.org](http://www.extenso.org)

**Nos petits mangeurs:** Produced by the team at Extenso. This website targets readers interested in early childhood, contains more than 80 family recipes, and provides information about food.

[www.nospetitsmangeurs.org](http://www.nospetitsmangeurs.org)

**ÉquiLibre:** Information on problems related to body image and weight. Several tools available for raising awareness. Sections for people who work with children and for employers, youth and the general public.

[www.equilibre.ca](http://www.equilibre.ca)

**Le nutritionniste urbain:** Opinions on current food and nutrition topics.

[nutritionnistebain.ca](http://nutritionnistebain.ca)

### Contact information for the school board's nutritionist:

Name:

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Phone:

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Email:

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# Recap

- 1- Educators have a lot of influence on the eating habits of the children they supervise.
- 2- Adults are responsible for identifying the place, time, contents and rules around meals. Children are responsible for deciding how much they eat.
- 3- Requiring children to eat a certain amount of food before they can be excused does not encourage them to listen to their own hunger.
- 4- Educators must be careful not to let their personal beliefs and values interfere with their professional role during mealtimes.
- 5- Sources of stress for a child, like yelling or a lengthy speech, can ruin their appetite.
- 6- When a child is afraid to taste a new food, ask the others if they have ever tasted it and, if they have, what they thought about it.
- 7- Eating with friends increases appetite, so we should regularly allow children to choose with whom they sit.
- 8- Illness often reduces a child's appetite and can even ruin it.
- 9- Snacks are a time for sharing and should be eaten in a calm environment so children can listen to their signals of hunger and satiety.
- 10- Hunger varies greatly, depending on a child's growth, physical activity and how much food they have eaten beforehand.
- 11- Encourage children to recognize their hunger signals, such as a growling stomach, a feeling of emptiness, stomach cramps, a drop in energy, lack of concentration and irritability.
- 12- Encourage children to recognize their satiety signals, such as if their energy is restored, they become less interested in their food, they start eating more slowly, or their food does not taste as good as it did when they started eating.
- 13- Use a democratic style during meals by showing interest and sensitivity toward children's eating habits without putting any pressure on them.
- 14 - Certain foods should be a regular part of our diet, while others should only be eaten on occasion.
- 15 - Remind children to drink fluids, especially on hot days.
- 16 - To accept a food, children use their senses of sight, smell, touch taste and sometimes even hearing. Each child goes through this process in their own way. They may stay in phases for varying lengths of time.
- 17- Encourage children to taste all the food in their meal, but do not make them if they do not want to.
- 18- Praise children when they taste a new food or a food they do not usually like.

## Notes

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