



How to Grow a Healthy PresChooler

EARLY CHILDHOOD IS THE PERFECT TIME TO HELP CHILDREN LEARN HEALTHY BEHAVIORS. Preschoolers are curious, eager to learn and motivated to please adults. By following these proven strategies, you can help children develop good habits that will last a lifetime.



OFFER VARIETY AND CHOICE Let kids decide what to eat from the healthful foods you serve. Encourage kids to “explore” with all five senses.



CREATE CALM Turn off the TV during meals to encourage mindful eating.



BE CONSISTENT Whenever possible, feed children at the same time every day and allow them to eat at their own pace.



DRINK TO HEALTH Offer children at least 6 cups of water throughout the day and especially after play. Limit fruit juice and do not serve soda to preschoolers.



DON'T JUDGE Avoid rewarding kids for what they eat. Help kids take charge of their bodies by asking them to notice if they feel full or have room for more.



TALK HEALTH, NOT LOOKS Talk with kids about building healthy and strong bodies. Avoid messages about being fat or thin or having an “ideal” body size.



LISTEN TO KIDS Allow children to express feelings and help them problem solve so they don't need to “eat their feelings” or rely on food for comfort.



DON'T USE FOOD as a reward, punishment, or bribe.



PROMOTE PLAY Make sure children have at least 1 hour of active play each day. Limit TV and other screen time to 2 hours a day.



SCHEDULE SLEEP Be consistent about nightly routines and bedtime to help preschoolers get the 11 to 13 hours of sleep they need.



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