Nutrition for Kids' LIFE

How to Make Your Toddler a Great Eater

During the toddler years, your child needs to show that she is separate from you. She needs to be independent and explore, but also know her limits. Your job is to provide your child with a nutritious diet and help her learn to eat healthy.

WHEN FEEDING YOUR TODDLER

SERVE HEALTHY SNACKS AND MEALS

- Use smaller portion sizes for your toddler: **www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Care/ProgramBasics/basics.htm**, go to: Meal Pattern Requirements
- Have regular meals and snack times.
- Offer a variety of foods and let your child choose how much he will eat of any food.
- Do not use dessert or treats as a reward or punishment.
- Sit with your child when she eats. Your toddler will enjoy your company.

TRUST TODDLERS' TUMMIES

- Watch for signs that your toddler is full such as playing with food. Some playing with food is okay because your child may be exploring the new foods offered.
- Respect your child's likes and dislikes.
- Serve food in forms and textures yourtoddler can eat by himself.
- Remember, toddlers prefer simple foods that they know.

COMMON FOOD CONCERNS AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS

CHILD IS NOT WILLING TO TRY NEW FOODS

- Be a good role model by trying new foods and eating healthy meals.
- Give your child one new food at a time, with foods they know and like.
- Offer small amounts of the new food at the beginning of the meal.
- Let your child touch and smell food before tasting it.

CHILD HAS A POOR APPETITE

- Try serving five small meals and 2-3 snacks daily, instead of three larger meals.
- Offer small servings of colorful and attractively prepared foods.
- Involve your child in choosing and preparing food.
- Place food in small dishes, bowls and cups.

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TO HELP YOU BOTH ENJOY EATING

DO

- encourage trying new foods
- expect spills
- set up a mealtime routine
- treat your child the way you want to be treated
- turn off TV when eating

DON'T

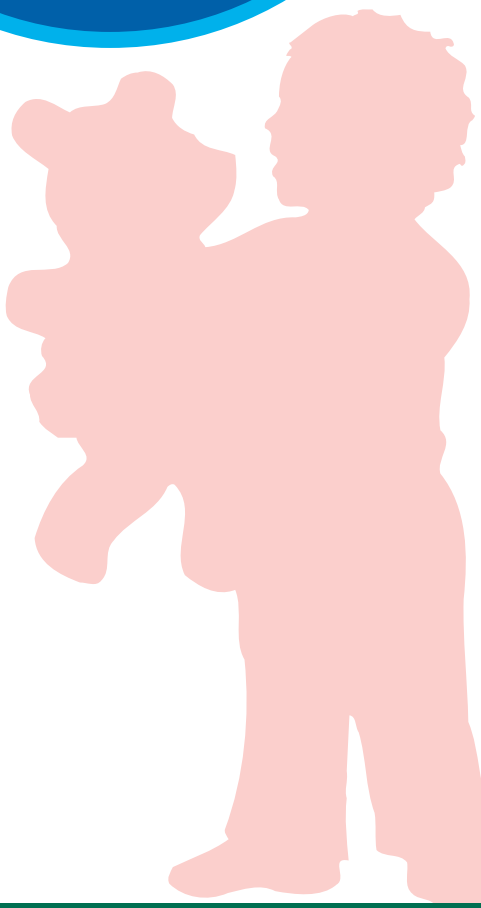
- force new foods
- overload the plate
- force your child to finish all the food on his plate.
- get angry at the table

CHOKING DANGERS

Young children can choke on food. Watch your child while she is eating, and prepare food in small and easy-to-chew pieces.

FOODS THAT OFTEN CAUSE CHOKING ARE:

• Hot dogs • Hard candies • Nuts and seeds • Popcorn • Whole grapes • Large chunks of any food such as meat, cheese, raw vegetables and fruits, peanut butter



EXPECTED BEHAVIORS AND SKILLS

TWELVE TO EIGHTEEN MONTHS

- Eats a variety of foods
- Likes eating with hands
- Uses spoon and fork awkwardly
- Drinks from a cup
- Wants foods others are eating
- Tries various behaviors to see how you will react

EIGHTEEN MONTHS TO TWO YEARS

- Displays food likes and dislikes
- Likes familiar patterns and routines
- Likes trying foods with different textures
- Is easily distracted
- Uses a spoon and fork with more skill
- Has a very clear idea about eating or not eating

FURTHER INFORMATION

USDA, Food and Nutrition Information Center
http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/
Go to: Lifecycle Nutrition under "Subject", then go to: Child Nutrition

Ellyn Satter. Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense.
www.ellynsatter.com/
Go to: Children's Eating and Growth

MayoClinic.com
www.mayoclinic.com/health/childrens-health/HQ01107
Children's Nutrition: 20 tips for picky eaters