

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD

Developing a healthy relationship with food is one of the best ways for children to enjoy healthy foods, feel good about themselves and have a healthy body weight throughout life. **A healthy relationship with food means trusting children to know how much they need to eat in order to grow the way nature intended.** Parents play an important part in helping children to develop a healthy relationship with food.

Tips for helping your child develop a healthy relationship with food:

- ◆ Enjoy family meals together. Serve meals and snacks at about the same time each day so children know what to expect.
- ◆ Offer a variety of healthy foods. Offer your child the same foods as the rest of the family.
- ◆ Let your child decide how much to eat from the foods offered. Offer him small portions and provide more if he is still hungry.
- ◆ Allow plenty of time for your child to notice when she feels full.
- ◆ Trust your child to know how much to eat. If your child refuses to eat, remove uneaten food without comment. A skipped meal will not harm a healthy child.
- ◆ Never force or bribe your child to eat and do not withhold food as punishment or offer it as a reward.

Healthy foods served in a relaxed family atmosphere are the best way to help children develop a healthy relationship with food. Turn off the TV and let the answering machine take calls during family meals. Keep family meals positive and supportive.

For more information contact:

- ◆ Your local Health Unit
- ◆ HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian or www.healthlinkbc.ca/dietitian/
- ◆ www.ellynsatter.com
- ◆ www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide