

## Core Nutrition Messages

### For Moms of Preschool-Aged Children

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service has developed a series of nutrition education messages to support and enhance nutrition education for mothers and children who participate in child nutrition programs. The messages are designed to increase consumption of whole grains, low-fat milk products, fruits, vegetables and to foster child feeding practices that support the development of healthy eating habits. These messages can help child care providers and nutrition educators deliver consistent messages to inspire mothers and children to adopt healthier eating habits.

### Whole Grains



√ **Give yourself and those you love the goodness of whole grains.**

Make at least half of the grains you eat whole grains – such as bread, tortillas, pasta, and cereals. Whole grains are good for your heart and digestion, and can help you maintain a healthy weight and overall good health.

√ **Whole grains make a difference.**

Whole grains help keep your heart healthy and are good for digestion and a healthy weight. Choose foods with “100% whole wheat” or “100% whole grains” on the label. Or check the ingredient list to see if the word “whole” is before the first ingredient listed (for example, *whole* wheat flour). If it is, it's whole-grain.

√ **Start them early with whole grains.**

It's easy to get your kids in the habit of eating and enjoying whole grains if you start them when they are young. Whole grains give your kids B vitamins, minerals, and fiber to help them be strong and healthy.

√ **Happy Kids, Happy Tummy.**

Serve your little ones whole grain versions of their favorite bread, cereal, or pasta. It's a simple way to help them eat more whole grains. And, eating more whole grains that are higher in fiber can make potty time easier, too.

## Low-Fat Milk



√ **Mom is a child's first teacher.**

You teach by doing. Every time you drink fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, or eat low-fat yogurt, you're giving your kids a lesson in how to eat for better health. It's a lesson they can use all their lives.

√ **Strong bodies need strong bones.**

Give your preschooler fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk or yogurt at meals and snacks. They're packed with vitamins, minerals, and protein for strong, healthy bones.

√ **There's no power like Mom Power.**

You are a positive influence in your children's lives. Help them develop healthy eating habits for life. Offer them fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk and yogurt at meals and snacks.

## Fruits and Vegetables



√ **They learn from watching you.**

Eat fruits and veggies and your kids will too.

√ **They take their lead from you.**

Eat fruits and veggies and your kids will too.

## Feeding Children



√ **Enjoy each other while enjoying family meals.**

Keep meal time relaxed to nourish the body and help your family make stronger connections. Let your little ones select which foods to put on their plates and how much to eat from the healthy choices you provide.

√ **Feed their independent spirit at meal times.**

Each meal with your preschooler is a chance to help them grow and learn to make some decisions on their own. Encourage them to make their own food choices from the

healthy foods you offer. Start early and you'll help them build healthier eating habits for life.

√ **Let go a little to gain a lot.**

It's natural for moms to worry about their preschoolers' eating habits. Offer healthy food and let your kids choose from them. They'll be more likely to enjoy meal time and eat enough, so everyone is happier.

√ **Think beyond a single meal. Keep in mind what your child eats over time.**

Meals and healthy snacks give children several chances every day to eat a variety of foods. If your child eats only a little or nothing at one meal, don't worry. He'll make up for it with other meals and snacks to get what he needs for good health over time.

## Introducing New Foods



√ **Sometimes new foods take time.**

Kids don't always take to new food right away. Offer new fruits and vegetables many times, served a variety of ways. Give your kids just a taste at first and be patient with them.

√ **Patience works better than pressure.**

Offer your children new foods. Then, let them choose how much to eat. Kids are more likely to enjoy new foods when eating it is their own choice. It also teaches them how to be independent.

√ **Let them learn by serving themselves.**

Let your kids serve themselves at dinner. Teach them to take small amounts at first. Assure them they can get more if they're still hungry.

## Cooking and Eating Together



- √ **Make meals and memories together.**  
It's a lesson they'll use for life.
- √ **Cook together. Eat together. Talk together. Make mealtime a family time.**

For more information about the core nutrition messages, visit the FNS web site at:  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/>