

Nurturing Healthy Eaters

SENIOR YEARS

WHEN A MEAL/SNACK IS PROVIDED BY FAMILIES

Caregiver's Job

Have available a variety of foods to pack

School's Job

When & where students eat

Student's Job

Pack a variety of food & decide how much to eat

WHEN A MEAL/SNACK IS PROVIDED BY SCHOOL

School Decides

What foods to offer, when and where students eat

Student Decides

Whether and how much to eat

Positive Eating Environment

- Provide eating environments around the school that encourage students to eat together and use mealtimes as a time to connect.
- Have casual conversation with students. Save nutrition education for the classroom instead of at meal times.
- Encourage students to limit screen time to be mindful of their eating habits.

Encourage Natural Hunger & Fullness Cues

- Allow students to control their own intake.
- Allow students to eat food in any order they choose - no need to finish one food before another.
- Trust and respect students when they say or signal they are full or still hungry.

Build Trust With Students & Families

- Respect that students and families may define "healthy food" differently, and have different health needs.
- Allow student to eat food brought from home unless the food is restricted due to an allergy. Students need to trust that their caregivers can feed them properly and teachers need to trust this as well.
- Support all students and families by encouraging access to reliable nutrition information such as Dial-a-Dietitian Manitoba (1-877-830-2892) or from www.unlockfood.ca.
- Refer families to breakfast, snack or lunch programs and other community food resources (such as food banks) when needed.

Snack and mealtime should be enjoyable

Teach Food & Nutrition in a Positive Way

- Teach about a variety of foods, focusing on the benefits of fueling the mind and body. E.g. eating a variety of foods gives your brain and muscles energy to think and work.
- Keep all messages about food neutral. Discuss where foods come from, how foods look and feel and ways to eat different foods; rather than referring to food as good versus bad or healthy versus unhealthy.
- Focus on behaviors, such as regular meals, sleep, and physical activity to feel good not for weight control. Weighing, using weight tables or charts, or calorie counting activities can hinder healthy behaviours and have lasting damaging effects on mental health.
- Role model body acceptance and inclusivity by demonstrating that all bodies deserve respect and kindness. Avoid sharing personal views about food and body weight. Each person's body is different, and we should respect, accept, and celebrate these differences!
- Teach students how to look at media messages critically. Unrealistic images of beauty are often mistaken for happiness and popularity.



General eating advice: The eating advice in this article is based on Ellyn Satter's principles and guidelines. For more about Satter's work, see: ellynsatterinstitute.org

Resource provided by the registered dietitians of the Manitoba Food Environments for Early Learning and Schools (MB FEELS) Committee. Contact us for permission to modify this resource: MBFEELSCommittee@gmail.com