

Three Ways To Win The Healthy Eating Battle With Kids

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When it comes to nutrition, most of us are pretty good on the basics by now. Eating a rainbow of seasonal fruits and vegetables, adding [probiotic foods](#) and supplements to our diets, finding [healthy recipes](#) that we can batch cook and prepare in advance and staying hydrated are top of a lot of peopleâ€™s must-do lists. When it comes to kids, however, sometimes healthy eating isnâ€™t so straightforward. A lot of conscientious parents with junk food loving kids or little fussy eaters in the family are in despair trying to enforce the rules â€” no dessert on a weeknight, eat all your vegetables â€” and it can result in a lot of stress. As parents, itâ€™s important that we [approach food holistically](#) with our children. Eating isnâ€™t just about nutrition â€” food is also there for fun, for comfort, for celebration and so much more. Valuing healthy food and [teaching your children how to eat well](#) shouldnâ€™t be a daily battle.

Take A Step Back

If youâ€™ve been caught up for a while in disagreements with your children about what they eat â€” perhaps youâ€™re parenting a fussy toddler who will only eat plain pasta and freaks out at the sight of anything green hitting their plate, or a picky [teen who is becoming body conscious](#) â€” itâ€™s hard to always do the right thing. We get so caught up and focused on a single issue, such as them finishing what is on their plate, or eating a certain amount of carrots before being allowed to leave the table. Take a step back for a moment. Itâ€™s perfectly normal for kids' appetites to fluctuate with mood, growth stage and level of activity. If there are a few unbalanced days, try not to worry too much. Trying to control the amount your child eats is often a losing battle, and although it can be frustrating, try to focus more on doing the job of providing healthy meals, while your kid follows their own signals on how much they want to eat. Unless there is a medical issue, itâ€™s far better to allow children to regulate the amount they eat and [learn to listen to satiety signals](#) in their body.

Involve Them In Cooking

Kids are generally far more interested in whatâ€™s on their plate if you can involve them in how it got there. Simple ideas, such as starting a vegetable garden and growing things together, letting them help to make a simple and fun dish like zucchini bolognese, or finding healthier cook-at-home versions of favorite treats, like the [low carb cookies recipe here](#) can make them keener to eat the right things. Another big hit is usually [â€œbuild your ownâ€™ meals](#) like pizzas, salad bars or fajitas â€” just set up a station of healthy ingredients and let your kids do the rest.

Donâ€™t Forbid Treats

Generally banning or otherwise overly demonizing any food is not a good idea, as it quite frequently leads to eating issues later in life. Work on introducing more healthy options that your child enjoys instead. Not keen on broccoli? Donâ€™t push on that â€” but offer alternatives like sugar snap peas or mashed sweet potato that may go down better. And remember to allow the odd cookie or bag of chips â€” itâ€™s okay every once in a while.

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