

## Food Program Newsletter

### Winter 2010

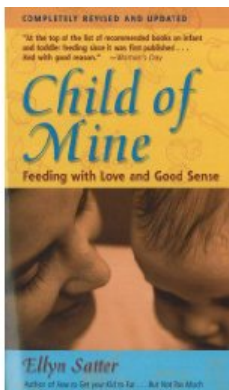
The Food Program would like to wish all Children Center families a happy new year! For many, the start of a new year brings about fresh perspective and new goals. Hopefully, continuing or beginning a healthy lifestyle is one of your family's resolutions as we begin the new decade. Get started by setting attainable wellness goals that are realistic for your family and will stick in the long run. Some ideas might include challenging your family to eat at least six fruits and vegetables each day or setting aside 30 minutes of physical activity as a family three times a week. Small steps in the right direction will help build a lifestyle that values health and wellness over time.

Please read on for some important information about child feeding and how to develop a positive feeding relationship with your child. The principles explained below will offer some solutions for families struggling with picky eaters and ideas for parents working to raise children with healthy food attitudes and behaviors. I hope you take the time to read. Thank you, and enjoy the quarter!

Sarah Pool  
Food Program Assistant

# Establishing a Positive Feeding Relationship With your Child

Ellyn Satter, author of *Child of Mine Feeding with Love and Good Sense* developed the principle we hear so much today on the topic of child feeding. The division of responsibility being that parents are responsible for the *what*, *when* and *where* of feeding, and children are responsible for the *how much* and *whether* of eating. In 1979, it was revolutionary for Satter to insist that



children knew how much they needed to eat and that all children, regardless of their weight, should be allowed to eat as little or as much as they want. Parents often place a great deal of focus on “getting the child to eat” when in reality the way to get your child to eat is not to try at all, according to Satter. The author’s no-fuss approach to handling what is a difficult issue for many families is refreshing and encouraging. Below you’ll find some of Ellyn Satter’s ideas for feeding toddlers and preschoolers.

## Attitude and Behavior Goals for Young Children

- The child is positive about eating.
- The child relies on internal cues of hunger and fullness.
- The child relies on variations in appetite to know what to eat.
- The child enjoys many different foods.
- The child can try new foods and learn to like them.
- The child can politely turn down or ignore foods she doesn’t want.
- The toddler can “make do” with less-than-favorite food.

## How to Feed So Toddlers & Preschoolers Can Achieve Goals

- Put yourself in charge of the family menu. Don’t give your toddler choices ahead of time.
- Have three meals a day with planned snacks midway between meals.
- Don’t allow panhandling for food or beverages (except water) at other times.

- Manage snacks and timing to help your child be calm, well rested and hungry but not famished at mealtime.
- Include your child in family meals. Don't feed her separately.
- Once you get to the table, let your toddler choose what and how much she wants to eat from what you offer.
- Let your child eat as much or as little as she wants
- Don't press food on your child or she'll play the toddler's favorite game of turning things down and watching you get desperate.
- Present foods in a way your child can handle relative to form, texture, temperature and choices.
- Let her eat in her own way. Let her look, feel, mash, and smell to explore.
- Don't make or even entice her to eat anything she doesn't want to eat.
- Don't make her clean her plate. Even adults find it hard to know ahead of time how hungry they are.
- Make family mealtimes pleasant. Don't argue, fight or scold at mealtimes.
- Talk and pay attention to your toddler, but don't let her be the center of attention.
- Turn the television off: It distracts your child and other family members from eating and interferes with family social time.



## **Don't Cater, but Do Choose Appropriate Foods**

- Everybody in the family should be offered the same food including the toddler.
- Make a few modifications to the food so that it is easier for her to chew and swallow but offer her essentially the same food as everyone else.
- Don't cater to your toddler, and don't get up from the table to make special foods if your toddler won't eat.
- Pair new, strange, or disliked food with something that your child generally likes.

- Offer a variety of foods at mealtime to increase the chances she will find something she can manage, but don't cater to her. Variety doesn't mean a buffet, but a well-balanced assortment of food.
- Always put bread on the table. She can eat that if all else fails.
- Offer a second starchy food as well. Children generally do well with foods like potatoes, noodles, tortillas and rice.
- Have your child's favorite foods sometimes – but not all the time.
- Don't try to force your child to eat anything. She may act stubborn, but she'll feel ashamed when you disapprove of her eating.

## Stay Out of Struggles for Control

*You are being too controlling if you make your child*

- Stay at the table and eat her vegetables
- Clean her plate
- Eat everything else before she can have dessert
- Get by on only three meals a day



*You aren't providing enough structure and limits if you*

- Give your child a snack whenever she wants one
- Let your child behave badly at the table
- Regularly prepare special food for your child
- Short-order cook for her
- Let your child have juice or milk whenever she wants it

**For more detailed information on feeding young children be sure to check out the book *Child of Mine Feeding with Love and Good Sense*.**

