

Children Eat Better in Positive Eating Environments



Create a positive food environment at school or at home



- **Schedule meals and snacks.** All children should have regular meals and snacks but young children usually need a sit down mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack to sustain brain power and energy.
- **Children should have at least 20 minutes to eat a meal AFTER sitting down.** Children eat better when not pressured or hurried to eat.
- **Designate eating areas.** Sets structure for mealtimes and eating. At home the designated area is the family table.
- **Eating areas are free of distraction.** TV's, computers, cell phones and toys prevent children from focusing on eating.
- **Teach consistent nutrition messages.** Foods provided or served by schools and in schools should support the classroom messages.
- **Adults (teacher, staff, parent) eat with children.** Children are more likely to try new foods, learn to eat a variety and build social skills when adults model healthy eating habits, table manners and socialize with children.
- **NEVER praise, bribe, or restrict a child's food intake and choices.** This does not help children become competent eaters and can lead to over eating or under eating.
- **Try "recess before lunch" (RBL).** Studies show it can improve behavior, children eat better and there is less food waste.

