

Nutrition in Children From Birth to Six Years

Participant Guide

Feeding Practices

Phrase...	This is called...	Do you think this is a helpful or harmful phrase?	What effect would it have on the child?	If harmful, what could the teacher say instead? If helpful, what is another example of this practice?
“You are welcome to use our breastfeeding room when you pick up your infant.”	Breastfeeding Promotion	Helpful	It would help the child to be breastfed because the mother would be supported. Returning to work or school is one of the main reasons women stop breastfeeding.	
“Are you all finished or would you like some more? You still look interested, here is another spoonful.”	Responsive Feeding	Helpful	Responsive feeding helps the child regulate his own eating according to hunger and fullness. Responding to and respecting an infant’s cues teaches him that people are trustworthy and their needs matter.	
“I see you started putting your hand to your mouth. You must be hungry!”	Responsive Feeding	Helpful	Recognizing an early hunger cue in an infant and feeding her promptly teaches him/her that people are reliable and their needs matter.	
“There is just one more ounce in this bottle. Go ahead and finish it for me; I know you’ll be hungry later.”	Pressure	Harmful	Pressuring an infant to eat more than he wants can lead to overfeeding, giving the child too many calories. It also disrupts the child’s ability to stop eating when he feels full, a habit that can continue to adulthood and encourage overeating.	You keep turning your head from me. It looks like you’re ready to stop eating now.”
“These sweet potatoes are delicious! They are my favorite vegetable because they taste so good to me.”	Role Modeling	Helpful	When an adult role models healthy behavior, such as eating a dark orange vegetable, children are likely to imitate them.	

Phrase...	This is called...	Do you think this is a helpful or harmful phrase?	What effect would it have on the child?	If harmful, what could the teacher say instead? If helpful, what is another example of this practice?
"Is your stomach telling you that you are still hungry? If it is, you may have seconds."	Teaching children to listen to internal cues for hunger and fullness	Helpful	Supporting a child to listen to whether she is hungry or full benefits that child. She is likely to continue listening to her hunger and fullness cues, which helps people eat when they are hungry and stop when satisfied.	
"Please, just eat that for me."	Teaching children to listen to internal cues for hunger and fullness	Harmful	This can teach a child to eat for approval and love. This can lead him to have unhealthy attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors about food and himself.	This is kiwi fruit; it's sweet like a strawberry.
"Children, would you like to try these beets? They are warm and sweet!"	Encouraging	Helpful	Promoting healthy eating lets children know that it is an important thing to do.	
"You need to clean your plate before you leave the table."	Pressure	Harmful	Putting the focus on the amount of food eaten disregards the child's feeling of fullness. Over time, children can learn to eat for reasons outside of them, instead of what their bodies tell them.	Is your tummy telling you it has had enough?
"I saw you taste that broccoli, good job!"	Praise	Helpful	Positive reinforcement lets a child know that this is important behavior.	
"If you behave well at naptime today I will give you cookies for snack."	Food as reward or bribe	Harmful	Using food to bribe children into behaving a certain way encourages an association between food and feeling good. It also sends the message that the behavior is only important to adults, not children, and that the child is incapable of the behavior without the bribe.	"You were so quiet during naptime today. You did a very good job!"
"If you stop crying I'll give you a lollipop."	Food as comfort	Harmful	Using food as comfort teaches children to eat in response to problems down the road.	I'm sorry you are sad, why are you upset?

Phrase...	This is called...	Do you think this is a helpful or harmful phrase?	What effect would it have on the child?	If harmful, what could the teacher say instead? If helpful, what is another example of this practice?
"You need to eat your carrots before you get the fruit."	Using one food to get a child to eat another (bribe)	Harmful	This food bribe will backfire; the carrots become even less appealing than they were before if the child thinks he needs to be bribed to eat them.	Would you like to try those carrots? They are soft and warm.
"Did you know that part of the carrot grew underground? It is a root!"	Informal education	Helpful	Speaking to children informally about food helps children understand how food is grown and helps them recognize it when they are served that food at mealtime.	
"This grape tomato is so juicy inside. When I chew it, it goes, 'gush'."	Describing the texture of a food	Helpful	The description helps children know what to expect when they try it. Knowing something about a food before putting it in their mouths can reduce the fear of trying a new food.	

Participant Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics – Infant Food and Feeding

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/HALF-Implementation-Guide/Age-Specific-Content/Pages/Infant-Food-and-Feeding.aspx>

A Dozen Ways to Be Healthy - Preschool Lesson Plans for the Child Care Food Program

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/childrens-health/child-care-food-program/Nutrition/preschool-lesson-plans.html>

Lesson 5: A is for Apple

Grow It, Try It, Like It! Nutrition Education Kit Featuring MyPlate

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it>

Healthy Bites – A Wisconsin Guide for Improving Childhood Nutrition

https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/school-nutrition/pdf/healthy_bites.pdf

The Michigan Team Nutrition Booklist

<http://www.chsd.us/foodservice/docs/MI%20Team%20Nutrition%20Booklist.pdf>

Model Health Promoting Nutrition and Physical Activity in Children

<https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/hsmrs/Maryland/MODELHealth.pdf>

Sesame Street Food and Drink to Grow On

https://cdn.sesamestreet.org/sites/default/files/media_folders/Images/healthy%20habits%20kit%202.pdf