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June/July newsletter



Nourishing the Next Generation

Practical advice for caring for your young ones with food, fun and love

For more support, contact your local extension office.

The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.

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Offering 'Rainbows' at Meals, Snacks

Naturally-colorful foods are inviting to a person of any age. Your grandchild will be attracted to brightly-colored and eye-appealing meals and snacks. Eating many colors of foods each day offers lots of satisfying tastes and textures.

Getting various food colors also helps ensure your family's health and well being. Why? Naturally-colorful foods provide a wide range of nutrients and antioxidants that protect against diseases. For example, dark orange fruits and vegetables (such as cantaloupe and carrots) and dark green vegetables (such as broccoli) help prevent some kinds of cancer. Dark red and purple fruits and vegetables (such as grapes and beets) help prevent heart disease.

Encourage your grandchildren often to power up their plates — and snack bowls! — with a variety of brightly-colored fruits, vegetables and cooked dried beans.





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Rethinking Your Family Meal

Is eating supper together often difficult for your family to do? If your schedules don't mesh well at supper time, consider if breakfast could become the time when your family usually eats together.

Eating meals together frequently is important. Why? It provides a time for family members to encourage each other and to share their thoughts, plans and activities in a relaxed setting. Eating meals together can also contribute to improved table manners and conversational skills for your grandchild, and even aid digestion.

Getting your grandchildren involved in preparing meals can help them learn about nature, math and science. And even young children can "help" you measure and mix.

Source: Adapted from S Procter, Young Families, Kansas State University, Vol. 6, #2

Health Is More Important than Weight

Because an overweight child or teen has a greater chance of becoming an overweight adult, you may be tempted to focus on your grandchild's body weight. Instead of size, however, try to focus instead on his or her health. What can you do?

- Focus on the positive. Encourage your grandchildren to think and talk about what they like about themselves, not what they don't like.
- Help your youngster accept and enjoy his or her unique body and what it can do. Healthy people come in a variety of sizes and shapes. Do not emphasize physical appearances. Such an emphasis could have a negative impact on your grandchild.
- Encourage being physically active often, both as individuals and as a family. Physical activity burns calories and helps regulate the appetite. It also reduces stress levels and anxiety, and can improve your grandchild's outlook on life and self-esteem.
- Buy and prepare a variety of healthful foods and offer them to all family members. Seldom serve high-fat high-sugar foods and beverages. Do not make food an issue. Don't deprive an overweight grandchild of dessert if others are eating it. If your grandchild feels deprived, he or she is more likely to sneak food or binge later.
- Cook at home often. Encourage everyone in the family to join in. Children usually enjoy eating foods they have helped select and prepare.
- Encourage your grandchildren to eat only when they are hungry, and to stop eating when their physical hunger is satisfied. Don't ask them to be in the "Clean Plate Club."
- Set a good example by demonstrating healthy living behaviors, too.



Source: Adapted from BL Knous, Young Families, Kansas State University, Vol. 6, #10 and reviewed by T Kidd