



## REACH OUT AND READ HEALTHY EATING/ACTIVE LIFESTYLE INITIATIVE

### PARENT EDUCATOR COUNSELING

The mission of ROR –language development and literacy skills can remain the focus of parent counseling by the ROR Parent Educators WHILE they also give messages about healthy eating and active lifestyles. Here are some simple, core messages that might be helpful while talking with parents/children related to our healthy eating/active lifestyle project.

#### **Healthy eating messages for the parents of babies, toddlers and preschool children**

##### **Keep your 2 -4 month old growing healthy:**

- By two months of age, your baby knows how much and how often he needs to eat-
- Learn how your baby shows you when she's hungry or full- so you give the right amount-not too much and not too little.
- Your baby does not need to finish the bottle. Remember, she has hungry days and less hungry days-just like you!
- Crying does not always mean your baby is hungry. There are many ways to comfort your baby when she cries.
- Your baby does not need fruit juice or other sweet drinks.
- Be active with your baby. Put your baby on her tummy to play every day. TV time is not good for babies.

##### **Keep your 6 month old growing healthy:**

- Your baby may make a face or spit out new food. He needs to get used to how each food tastes and feels in his mouth. Don't force him. Offer it again another day.
- Your baby can learn to like the real taste of food. There is no need to add any salt, sugar, spices or butter. Show her how good it is by saying "yum"!
- You can make your own pureed baby food in a blender or food processor.

- Try not to buy junk foods, like French fries, sweetened foods, and soda. Babies learn to eat what they see other people around them eating. If you eat healthy foods, your baby will eat healthy too.

### **Keep your 9 month old growing healthy:**

- Give your baby small amounts of healthy, soft “finger foods”. This will help your baby learn to feed himself!
- Serving size is the amount of each food you give your child at a meal or snack.
- Once your baby starts to crawl and walk, he may eat less. That’s normal.
- Remember: Your job is to offer your baby healthy food for meals and snacks. Your baby’s job is to decide which food he wants to eat and how much to eat.
- Your baby should switch from drinking from a bottle to a cup by the time she is 1 year old. It takes time to make this change. Start now- give her a plastic cup to drink from, at mealtime or snack time.
- Children under age 2 should not watch TV. Try to keep the TV off while your baby is awake. Too much TV can lead to behavior problems and gaining too much weight.
- Instead of watching TV: Dance and sing together, practice walking with your baby or play ball. Your baby will have more fun and will learn more from you-than from sitting in front of the TV.

### **Keep your 12 month old growing healthy:**

- Your baby can do lots of new things. How she eats and what she eats will change with her new skills.
- Toddlers love feeling in charge of their eating!
- Do not fight with your toddler about eating. It will not make her eat more and can cause feeding problems later on.
- Your toddler needs 5 servings of fruits or vegetables every day.
- Snacks should be small amounts of healthy foods given between meals. Snacks should not be junk food, like French fries, potato chips, or soda.
- Water is the best drink for your toddler, besides milk.
- Do not give your toddler sugar sweetened drinks. Drinks with a lot of sugar can make children gain too much weight.

- If your toddler is already drinking juice and sugar sweetened drinks—you can help her learn to drink water instead. Add water to juice, a little more each day until she is mostly getting water. Then give her all water.

### **Keeping your 3-5 years old children growing in a healthy way**

- Don't forget breakfast. It's very important--it gives you and your child energy for the day!
- Let your children help you "you get ready for mealtime—it's fun! For example, they can help find the different things that are needed to make the meal and bring them to the table; they can mix and pour to help make the food. Older children can help you to measure things
- Everyone needs 5 vegetable and fruit servings in a day—these foods keep us healthy!
- Let's "eat the rainbow"—Fruits and vegetables come in wonderful colors. Ask your child what vegetable or fruit rainbow they would like to eat?
- Your child may need to try a new food lots of times before he or she learns to like them.
- Offer your family drinking water instead of juice, soda or other sugary drinks. Drink low fat milk instead of whole fat milk. Here are a couple of ideas:
  - Try not to let your child fill up on drinks before eating
  - If you choose to give juice, mix 100% juice with some water.
- Don't use fast food as a "bribe" to get your children to do something.
- Your children will do what you do—be a good example.
- Young children like to "help"! They will be more willing to try healthy foods if they help plan, shop, and prepare meals and snacks.

### **For the whole family:**

- Eat together as a family—whenever you can.
- Talk together at mealtime and have fun without the T.V on
- When you serve food at a meal, start by serving small amounts of food. You can always give more food if you and/or your child are still hungry.

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- Slow down...if you eat fast you may not know when you are full and you may eat too much.
  - Help your family learn to eat healthy food when hungry and stop eating as soon as they feel full. You can ask yourself/your child:
    - “How does your stomach/tummy tell you when you are hungry?”
    - “How does your stomach/tummy tell you when you are full?”
    - You may have a hungry day and then a not so hungry day.
  - Be active everyday—go for a walk, turn on the music and dance.
  - How much time do you sit at a screen?
    - Turn the T.V. off when the program is over.
    - Keep the T.V. off when you are eating.
    - Find other fun things to do at home
    - If you’re going to watch TV or play computer games, break it up! “Pause” the game. Make commercial breaks count Here are some active and fun ideas:
      - Jumping jacks
      - Dancing
      - Racing up and down the stairs
      - Sit-ups
      - Stretching
      - Jogging in place
      - Push-ups
  - Keep junk food off your shopping list-don’t bring it home!
  - Bring food from home when you are out. For example, when you come to your child’s appointment.
  - Keep trying-- you may have to offer foods many times to get the family to eat healthy foods.