



What is Responsive Feeding?

Responsive feeding is an approach that divides the responsibility for meals and snacks between parent and child. Parents provide a safe and nurturing feeding environment and offer healthy meals and snacks in age-appropriate servings. Your baby decides whether, which foods, and how much to eat. This approach is known as: Parent Provides. Child Decides.

Key Messages on Responsive Feeding

- Responsive feeding respects the child's need and ability to control his or her own food intake, and defines very clear roles for parent and child, known as: Parent Provides. Child Decides. Every child is unique and has her own way of helping adults understand her hunger and satiety cues.
- Many different adults impact the way a baby or young child eats. Home visitors have a special opportunity to learn about the food habits and beliefs of the adults who surround a child. That information can enrich conversations with families about healthy, responsive feeding. Home visitors can also help families learn to read their children's feeding cues, as well as learn about age-appropriate foods and serving sizes.
- Food, meals, and feeding babies and young children can be emotional topics that are rooted in a family's culture, values, history and experiences. Home visitors can help families establish a positive, social environment at mealtime and make meals a chance for children to learn new skills.

Questions To Consider Before You Go

It is important to explore and acknowledge our own perceptions of food and meal times. These perceptions and expectations of child feeding and healthy eating can influence our recommendations or interactions with families. Take time before talking with families to reflect about food and meal times in your own life. You may not have answers to all these questions but hopefully you can consider your own experiences with food and how it may affect your perceptions.

Do you have an image of an ideal or healthy weight for a baby or young child? Where do you think this image comes from? Do you think the families you work with have a similar image?

How do you feel about breastfeeding? Do you feel you have the knowledge or skills to talk to families about breastfeeding or help the breastfeeding mom?

What were mealtimes like when you were growing up? Did you have family meal routines? What were mealtimes like?

What did you learn about your family over food? Did you hear stories, share laughter?

Did you grow up as a member of the clean your plate “club”?

How do you think this affected your relationship with food?

How have you used food as a learning tool in past lesson plans?

How do you make mealtime enjoyable for you and your family?

What words do you use to describe the foods you serve?

How do you introduce new foods to your child(ren)?



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