

Seven Food Rules

Trying to be the best parent for your children is a tough job and feeding them can make it even more challenging. While most parents recognize the importance of good nutrition for their child's wellbeing, many need some practical tips to make it happen. Here are seven rules that will help you optimize your child's eating habits and health.

1. Model it

- The [healthy parent role model](#), the better their children will eat.
- Let [fruits and vegetables](#) reign in your kitchen and on your plate.
- Try to keep your home environment junk-free most of the times. Vary it.

2. Vary the foods offered at meals and snacks as often as you can.

- Offer a [variety of flavors, textures and colors](#) to increase the development of your children's palates.
- More variety in diet leads to more mature palates and even more vegetables on your child's plate.

3. Divide the Responsibility

- Your job: TO SERVE a variety of healthy foods that you want your children to eat
- Your child's job: TO DECIDE how much and whether he will eat the food
- Focus on quality, not quantity and trust your child's appetite.
- Bribing, threatening, kids to eat their broccoli or [rewarding them with brownies](#) DOES NOT help your child like healthy food and IS NOT beneficial in the long term.

3. Do not Give Up

- Up to 15 exposures may be necessary to get your child to taste a new food.
- Keep buying, serving, enjoying it yourself and encouraging your child to try.
- Spitting out an unfamiliar food after tasting it IS normal. Serve the food again in a few days.
- Try [offering a small prize for trying a new healthy vegetable](#).

4. Keep it Fun

- [Shop together and cook together](#) as often as you can.
- Play "guess the food", taste tests, and give ratings to new foods.
- Serve plain foods like whole grains and vegetables with flavorful dips, oils or sauces.

5. Do Not Overwhelm

- Keep portions of new foods very small and serve them alongside familiar foods.
- Children can be intimidated by a huge pile of unfamiliar or less favorite food.
- Very small portions look more manageable, especially for picky eaters.

6. Relax

- Remember: [eating meals together](#) is not entirely about nutrition, it is also family time. Besides, children who feel comfortable and secure at a dinner table have better appetites and are more likely to try and enjoy new foods.