

# POSITIVE MEALTIMES WITH CHILDREN

Centre staff can help children build positive relationships with food by:

## DESCRIBING FOOD

Instead of 'yuck' or 'yum', describe colour, texture or taste. "Cucumbers are green and crunchy."

Instead of 'healthy' or 'unhealthy', talk about what food does in our body. "Milk makes our bones strong," or "Cupcakes give us quick energy."



## HAVING PRESSURE-FREE MEALTIMES

Instead of saying "mmm that broccoli looks yummy, have you tried a bite?" you could say "I see you're still learning to like broccoli, you don't have to eat it."

Before offering more food, encourage children to check in with their hunger. "How is your belly feeling?"

## CREATING A MEAL ROUTINE

Offer food at the same time every day, every 2-3 hours.

If children don't want to eat, that's OK. "You don't have to eat right now, you can have more food later (during afternoon tea)."



## BEING POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

Involve children in food preparation (e.g. mixing ingredients), cooking and gardening.

Sit and eat nourishing food with children.

Read stories and sing songs about food.

