



Encouraging Healthy Eating Habits

The WHALE Study
Family Newsletter
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Developing healthy food habits doesn't necessarily mean preaching about healthy foods or the dangers of too many sweets. Research has shown that pressuring children to eat foods they don't like or restricting "unhealthy" food does not help them develop a well-rounded diet later in life. While said with good intentions, labeling foods as "good" or "bad," saying negative things about anyone's eating habits, or focusing on body size can promote lasting shame. So how *do* we promote a healthy relationship with food?

Food should be considered neutral, meaning not involved in rewards, bribes, or punishments. This also means paying attention to how you speak about your own eating habits and body! Beyond what you say, it's what you do. You've heard from us before how young children look to their caregivers as examples of how to behave. Serving and eating meals together as a family is an opportunity to introduce new foods and model healthy eating habits, including serving appropriate portion sizes. Studies have shown kids who grow up eating with their families (however large or small) are more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, and grains, and less likely to snack on "junk food" (snacks without much nutritional benefit). Eating together also adds that important structure and predictability to their routine and gives you a chance to talk and connect with your kids about their day.

Instead of concentrating on how food might affect a child's weight, think about how the food you provide can fuel your children's active bodies so you can feel good about what they're eating. This [brief guide](#) has tips for choosing nutritional food. It's helpful to provide a range of food options to let kids practice independence by choosing what to eat, yet you still have control over what foods are available in your home. People develop preferences for the foods they're repeatedly exposed to. Besides naturally snackable fruits and veggies, examples of other kid-friendly snacks high in nutritional value include whole-grain crackers and cheese, peanut butter (often paired with apple slices or celery), and low-fat yogurt. Including kids in grocery and snack shopping, deciding what to make for dinner, or helping you prepare a meal (by giving them age-appropriate tasks), helps prepare them to make healthy choices throughout their lifetime.

You may be thinking, "I already do some of this, but they're just not eating what I provide." Look out for our next newsletter on picky eating!

Click [here](#) to tell us what topics you want covered in future newsletters!

Check out the page below for **food** and **community** resources!



Please reach out if you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding The WHALE Study or the COVID-19 situation. Staff can be reached by call, text, or email: whalestudy@unc.edu | 919-914-0588

Find us on Twitter: [@circlelab_unc](#), Instagram: [circlelab_unc](#), and [Facebook](#)!

Newsletter written by Dr. Ilana S. Berman and formatted by Dominique N. Martinez

FOOD RESOURCES (CLICK BLUE LINKS)

Resources on how to talk about food with kids (also how not to):

- [Tips to encourage smart eating habits](#)
- [How to talk about food in a healthy manner](#)
- [How to teach about food without shaming](#)

Healthy eating tips:

- [Nutrition for school-aged children](#)

Resources on food in the area:

- [Chapel Hill Carrboro Meals On Wheels](#) (serves Chapel Hill Carrboro area)
- [Food Not Bombs 919](#) (serves Triangle area)
- [Durham Community Food Pantry](#) (serves Durham area)
- [Samaritan Relief Ministry Food Pantry](#) (serves Hillsborough area)

NC/Govt. resources:

- [Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#)
- [How to apply for Food Stamps](#)

Fun recipes:

- [14 easy recipes to cook with kids](#)
- [70 easy recipes kids can make all on their own](#)
- [Cooking with Kids](#)

Helpful social media accounts to follow:

- @feedinglittles
- @kidseatincolor
- @foods.kids.love (for recipe ideas)



REMINDERS

***Reminder:** Please refer your friends if they have a 4-6-year-old and you think they would be interested in participating in the WHALE study. For every eligible family that you refer to us, you will receive \$10! Email us at whalestudy@unc.edu or call/text us at 919-914-0588 with their information.*

COMMUNITY RESOURCES (CLICK BLUE LINKS)

HOUSING

- [Durham Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#)
- Eviction Information: 216-965-5095
- [Durham Rescue Mission](#)
 - 919-688-9641
- [Orange County Partnership to End Homelessness](#)
- [Urban Ministries of Durham](#)
- [Durham County Social Services](#)
- [Orange County Social Services](#)
- [Wake County Social Services](#)

HEALTH & SAFETY

- [Compass Center for Women and Families](#)
 - 919-929-7122
- [Durham Crisis Response Center](#)
 - 919-403-9425
- [InterAct Family Safety and Empowerment Center](#)
 - 919-828-7501
- [Orange County Rape Crisis Center](#)
 - 866-935-4783 (call) , 919-504-5211 (text)
- [Freedom House](#)
 - 919-967-8844 (Crisis Unit, Chapel Hill)
 - 1-877-967-8844 (Mobile Service)
- [Suicide prevention lifeline](#): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Hope4NC Helpline: 1-855-587-3463
- [Crisis Text Line](#): Text HOME to 741 741

FOOD & GROCERIES

- [Wake County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Durham County Public Schools Free Meals](#)
- [Orange County Food Resources](#)
- [Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools](#)
- [TABLE](#)
- [Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina](#)
- [Wake County Food Resources](#)
- [No Kid Hungry NC](#) - Text FOODNC or COMIDA to 877-877 to receive information about 3 drive-thru or pickup sites with meals for kids closest to you

CHILDCARE

- [NC Hotline for Critical Workers Seeking Child Care Options](#)
- [Covid Childcare Co-op Creator](#)
- [Covid Urgent Childcare](#)
- [Child Care Services Association](#)

LEARNING

- [Scholastics Learn at Home](#)
- [Khan Academy](#)
- [PBS Kids](#)
- [CDC Tips for Talking with Children about COVID-19](#)