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## How To Teach Kids To Make Healthy Food Choices

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Teaching kids to eat healthy is a challenge. Sugar and snacks are around every corner and on every screen. Don't give up. Consistency, time and encouragement teach your kids to enjoy healthy foods. The DishQuo family meal planning app has healthy kid friendly recipes to get you started.

### **Aim For Balance**

## AIM FOR A BALANCED DIET



## DISHQUO

Avoid strict rules that put pressure on the kids. Enforcing a strict plan will drive them to the cookie jar—just like anyone trying to stick to a crash diet! Enjoy an occasional ice cream cone or pizza night. Teaching balance and enjoyment of food is part of a healthy lifestyle.

### Celebrate The Wins



No matter how small, praise them for each effort. If your 3-year-old eats one leaf of spinach at dinner, then celebrate! The positive reinforcement encourages them to move forward. Young children want to please their parents. Positive praise for effort and victories goes a long way.

### **Value Health Over Appearance**



Emphasize the impact of healthy eating on their energy, brain power and strength. Avoid comments about weight, size or appearance. Building healthy habits in children isn't only around what they eat, but also about how they see and value their body. Encourage them to love their body, and they'll be more likely to treat it well with healthy food. If weight is a concern, speak with your pediatrician for guidance.

Each kid finds motivation to eat healthy in a different way. What works for one child, may not work for another. That's okay. Keep trying different things until it clicks. If you need ideas, here are seven ways to teach kids to make healthy food choices.

### **7 Ways To Teach Kids To Make Healthy Food Choices**

#### **1. Lead By Example**

Actions are more powerful than words. Children watch and absorb how adults around them live and speak. While teaching is part of parenting, they learn more from watching how we live our life. Continue to grow in your health with a positive and balanced approach.

## 2. Eat Colorfully!

Kids love color. But many kids' plates are full of boring beige food such as pasta, crackers, bread and cheese. Encourage children to eat the rainbow. Gather fresh foods of each color and lots of fruits and vegetables. Include a few they already love and introduce a few new ones. Together, create a rainbow shape on their plate with each color. For preschoolers, this will also help to reinforce learning their color names.

## 3. Switch Up The Presentation

Food rainbows are fun and creative, but don't stop there! If your kid enjoyed it, try making animal faces with toast. There are endless options: Nut butters for the face, banana slices for ears, grapes for eyes and veggie sticks for whiskers. Pinterest has endless options if you get stuck.

If your kid loves dip, that's an easy side to go with raw vegetables or lean protein. If your kid doesn't like raw vegetables, try them frozen. It may sound crazy, but if your kid complains of "mushy" peas and green beans, try them frozen. Sure, it's not ideal, but remember we're going for little wins. By eating vegetables frozen, they get the nutrients and develop a taste for them. Don't worry, they won't go into college only eating frozen peas.

## 4. Watch Cooking Shows

Kids cooking shows can be a great way to inspire your young eater. Creative cooking challenges encourage kids to step outside their comfort zone with food. Plus, seeing their peers celebrate food and try new things may encourage them to do the same.

## 5. Let Them Cook

Young kids especially love to be in the kitchen. Mixing, pouring and measuring are excellent for fine motor development. Be aware it's going to get messy! If you've got a little one vying for your attention while trying to cook dinner, invite them to join you.

Offer each young chef their own tasting plate. As you add each ingredient or seasoning, place it on their plate. Invite them to smell or taste it, but don't force it. Young kids often turn their nose up at dishes that have food mixed together, like a casserole. Letting them see, smell and taste each ingredient individually first may open the door to them trying the completed dish.

## 6. Value Their Input

Taking kids grocery shopping is an adventure. And sometimes it's not an easy one. We get that. If they're with you, they're going to ask you to buy food that's not on your list. 5 boxes of cookies? No. Random vegetable you've never cooked before? Yes!

Keep healthy cookbooks around and encourage them to find something that piques their interest. It may stretch you as a chef, but everyone may discover something new they enjoy.

While using the DishQuo family meal planning app, ask them which meals they enjoyed and which ones they want to try.

## 7. Teach Them To Listen To Their Body

Teaching healthy habits isn't only about nutrition. Help them develop a positive relationship with their body and food. After they eat something, ask them how they feel. Are you tired? How is your stomach? Do you have energy? Help them connect the dots by listening to their body. They'll begin to take ownership for their food choices when they know how it affects them.

Need help planning healthy meals for the whole family? DishQuo makes meal planning easy for busy moms. You'll gain access to hundreds of kid friendly healthy recipes everyone will love. Sign up for your [first two weeks free](#).