



Non-diet feeding for kids

The **Division of Responsibility in Feeding** (developed by Ellyn Satter) is a feeding model that parents and carers of children can use to support their child to have a positive relationship with food and their body, and minimise mealtime stress.

The different mealtime tasks are divided into tasks which the parent or carer is responsible for and tasks which the child is responsible for. As the child approaches adulthood, parents/carers may begin to hand over responsibility for more and more of the mealtime tasks to their young person.

Parent/carers tasks

What

Parents/carers decide what food to prepare and offer their child at each mealtime.

This might be based on:

- The child's nutrition needs and the food the child has already eaten
- The child's eating capability eg. if they can use a knife and fork
- The child's food preferences
- The food available at the time

When

Parents/carers decide when to offer food, aiming to provide regular meals and snacks, spaced evenly during the day. Grazing on food during the day can make it difficult for the child to develop their awareness of their body's appetite rhythm.

Where

Parents/carers decide where the mealtime will take place eg. at the family table.

Child tasks

If & how much

Children are always responsible for *if* and *how much* they eat of the food offered at each mealtime. This does mean that they might not eat any of a certain meal component. Parents/carers offer more of the same food if the child eats all the food which was initially offered. Eating more of one meal component isn't dependent on how much they've eaten of the other components.

Example: The child is offered chicken & vegetable curry with rice. The child eats all the rice and the parent/carers offers them more rice, regardless of how much of the curry has been eaten.



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What foods does my child need?

Children (and adults) are more likely to meet their body's need for nutrition by eating a variety of foods from these food groups:

- Grain foods & cereals eg. rice, bread, pasta, breakfast cereal, wraps, crumpets
- Vegetables (including potato) and legumes - fresh, frozen, canned
- Milk & milk foods - plant milks need to contain at least 100mg of calcium per 100ml of milk (check the nutrition panel)
- Meat and non-meat proteins eg. red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, tofu
- Fruit - fresh, frozen, canned, dried, 100% fruit juice

Your child will also benefit from having regular opportunities to eat foods for enjoyment. Treat these foods equally by offering them at the same time as foods from the above food groups eg. you could offer cookies, fruit and a glass of milk as a snack. Try to stay neutral when it comes to talking about these enjoyable foods, rather than drawing attention to them in a positive or negative way. This teaches your child that there are no 'treat' foods or 'junk' foods - food is just food, and it's ok to eat for reasons other than nutrition.

Offering these enjoyable foods regularly helps your child to trust that they'll have the opportunity to eat these foods at another time, there's no urge to overeat in the moment. Because the task of *what food is offered* is your responsibility, you can settle on a balance of foods for nutrition and foods for enjoyment that works for your family.

How much food does my child need?

Children of different ages and sexes need different amounts of food. The food groups above are listed in order of the group children generally need the most serves of, down to the group children generally need the least serves of. Your child's individual nutrition needs may be different.

By trusting your child with the task of **how much food** they eat, they learn to listen to their body to know when they've had enough. Children will naturally eat a variety of foods and intuitively meet their nutrition needs.