

Tips for Teaching Children the Art of Mindful Eating

- Be a good role model: investigate and practice Mindful Eating yourself.
- Minimize mealtime distractions: turn off TV's, cell phones, and other electronic devices. Focus on the meal at hand.
- Agree to keep conversations non-stressful. The focus should be on the process of eating and enjoying the meal.
- Before a meal begins, have them pause briefly or take a deep breath to settle themselves. In this time, they can consider things like-how grateful they are to have the food in front of them, how far the food travelled to be on their plate, etc.
- Have them assess their degree of hunger prior to beginning the meal.
- Encourage children to serve themselves. This will allow them the opportunity to take appropriate portions according to their hunger/fullness levels (i.e. builds "intuitive eating")
- Encourage children to use all of their senses (sight, sound, touch, and smell, taste) to explore and evaluate foods. Serve foods with a variety of colors, textures, and tastes.
- Encourage "checking in" with hunger/fullness cues during and after the meal.
- Allow enough time for eating the meal at a reasonable pace. Rushed eating can contribute to over-eating.

