

Healthy Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Adults play an important role when it comes to influencing children's attitudes about food, and while adults may be unaware, children are watching and ready to imitate adult behavior. Recently, a pediatrician commented on a study where roughly 75% of parents surveyed indicated that they hid their favorite snacks from their kids. Ironically, when the children were surveyed, 100% of the children knew where their parents hid the snacks! The kids are smart...very smart.

Your actions speak louder than words, so children are more likely to model healthy behaviors if adults practice what they preach. For example, research shows that young girls are more likely to drink milk if their moms drink milk – milk contains calcium and important nutrients for bone growth and development.

It may be hard to be a perfect role model all the time, but many adults would benefit personally, and help their kids in the process, by monitoring their own eating behaviors. Consider evaluating your own behavior and working hard to achieve the following sensible eating habits:

- Do not eat while on the computer
- Portion out snacks rather than eat from the box
- Never skip meals – especially breakfast
- Eat moderate portion sizes of food
- Drink more water and limit beverages with added sugars
- Eat fruit for dessert
- Exercise when stressed rather than eat
- Include vegetables and fruits with all meals
- Try new foods
- Remove electronic distractions, such as tv and music, to encourage conversation

Also, keep a positive attitude about food and meal time. Allowing kids to take some ownership over what foods are included in meals (with adult supervision of course), prepares them to make good decisions on their own about what foods they should eat. That doesn't always mean they'll choose the apple slices over the fries, but the food choice habits you create now can lead to a lifetime of healthier choices. I promise, they'll thank you when they get older.



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*Be a positive
influence!*

Roxanne Moore is a Registered Dietitian and past spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association (ADA). She completed her undergraduate work in Dietetics at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, and her Masters in Health Science and Business at Towson University in Towson, Maryland. Roxanne has over 15 years experience developing nutrition education programs and providing nutrition education for individuals, groups and the community-at-large. She is certified as a Child and Adolescent Obesity Counselor and a member of ADA Sports, Cardiovascular and Wellness Nutritionists dietetic practice group.

Sodexo is proud to partner with your school district to provide nutritious school meals for your children. Our unique approach provides students with a variety of healthy menu choices designed specifically to satisfy their taste preferences. To learn more, visit www.sodexousa.com or call 800-354-7000.

