

NUTRITION & KIDS

IT'S NOT ALWAYS WHAT YOU THINK.



“Good nutrition starts with eating a balanced diet *most* of the time while having a *positive relationship with food*,” explained registered dietician Suzanne Farrell at PIN’s March presentation. Farrell discussed tips for helping kids to be healthy eaters. Some of her advice might surprise you.

Time to Rethink the Control Game

“Control creates resistance,” stated Farrell, while acknowledging that limiting the menu to only foods that kids like isn’t the answer, either. She encourages parents to keep trying new foods with their kids. “Most parents give up after the seventh try, but it can take 20 times to get a kid interested in something new.”



Farrell asked parents to try this (if it works, stick with it): For a week, the parents are in charge of what’s on the menu, and when and where it’s served; the child is in charge of how much they eat. “Empowerment decreases the control fights, especially with older kids,” she said. There are ample studies showing that families that eat together at least a few times a week raise kids who are more balanced and successful. Keeping mealtimes positive, peaceful and fun is an essential part of that.

“I discourage the idea of good foods and bad foods, and the ‘Take two more bites rule,’” said Farrell. Research shows that pressuring kids to eat certain foods backfires, producing the opposite effect. “And restricting foods just makes them want that food more,” she added. For kids who struggle with over-eating, keeping an eye on portion sizes is key. “Snacks should be put in an individual bowl, not eaten out of the bag,” Farrell said.

“As parents, we should declare our homes a body-judgement-free place, keeping the negative speech out,” explained Farrell. “Parents need to build kids up to have positive body images,” she said. Farrell talked about parents being good role models by accepting and loving their own bodies. “When kids see their parents dissatisfied with their appearance, they’re much more likely to be dissatisfied with their own,” she explained. Some of Farrell’s tips include:

- Don’t bribe kids with foods
- Don’t use food as a reward
- Serve a balanced breakfast with protein
- Model good eating habits
- Focus on whole grains, not processed foods
- Let kids pick fruit & veggies at the store
- Check labels for portion sizes
- Keep less junk food/dessert in the house
- Keep sugar in yogurts to <20g per serving
- Focus on healthy eating, not weight loss
- Limit eating to the kitchen only
- Don’t diet
- Have healthy snack foods with fiber & protein readily available

Farrell’s presentation was full of much more practical advice. Download the full podcast at www.PINccsd.org. To receive Farrell’s monthly newsletter on nutrition, visit www.cherrycreeknutrition.com. Visit www.choosemyplate.gov for more help about nutrition & kids.

Next at PIN: Join us on 4/5 to hear author and editor Rick Lawrence speak about the *The Myth of Safety: Why Kids Need Grit*.

Also, be sure to mark your calendar for **PIN’s Annual Brunch on 5/3**, featuring author Kristen Race who will talk about *From Surviving to Thriving: Brain-Based Mindfulness Strategies to Reduce Stress*. The Brunch will be at Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church, 10150 E. Belleview Ave., Englewood. *By Bobbie Turner, PIN Publicity.*