



# Supporting Content

## Mothers of Preschoolers on Role

The following content supports messages on role modeling and offers mothers additional tips, strategies, and encouragement to facilitate behavior change. This content reflects tips, strategies, and language that resonated with mothers during our focus group testing. See the section of the guide on “Putting the Messages Into Practice” (page 16) for ideas on how to incorporate the messages and supporting content into your nutrition education activities.

### Role Modeling Messages

**Message 1:** They learn from watching you. Eat fruits and veggies and your kids will too.

**Message 2:** They take their lead from you. Eat fruits and veggies and your kids will too.

### Narrative-Style Content:

“My 3-year-old picks up on so much. She loves to copy what I do. Sometimes she will ask for a food she saw me eat. And I didn’t even know she was watching me! So, I try to eat fruits and vegetables. That way she’ll want them too. My doctor told me that kids learn eating habits when they are young. I want my child to learn to eat fruits and vegetables so she’ll be healthy. It makes me feel good that I’m teaching her something she’ll use for life.”

### Bulleted Tip Style Content:

#### How can I help my child eat more fruits and vegetables?

- **Eat together.** Let your child see you enjoying fruits and vegetables at meals and snacks.
- **Take it with you.** Show your child how whole fruit is a great snack to eat at the park or in the shopping mall. Put apples, oranges, or bananas in your bag for quick snacks.
- **Share the adventure.** Try new fruits and vegetables together.
- **Fix them together.** Teach your child to tear lettuce or add veggie toppings to pizza.

#### Why does it matter what I do?

- **They learn by watching you.** Kids get curious when they see you eating fruits or vegetables. Before you know it, they’ll want to taste what you are having.
- **You teach them lessons they’ll use for life.** It’s normal for 2- to 5-year-olds to be “picky” eaters. Help them increase the types of fruits and vegetables they like by setting a good example.

#### What kinds should we eat?

- Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables are all smart choices. Buy some of each to last until your next shopping trip.
  - Frozen vegetables have as many vitamins and minerals as fresh. Choose packages that contain vegetables and nothing else--no added fat, salt, or sugars.
  - Buy canned fruits that are packed in “100% juice” or water.
  - Rinse canned beans and vegetables with cold water to make them lower in salt.
  - Look for canned vegetables that say “No added salt” on the front of the can. Buy them when they go on sale.
- Cooked vegetables or ripe fruits that are cut into small pieces are easy for your child to eat.
- Cut whole grapes and cherry tomatoes into smaller pieces to prevent choking.