

Child Care Menu Planning with Canada's Food Guide

Roles in Feeding

Roles in feeding

Early Learning and Child Care professionals play a key role in promoting health in the early years.

Caregivers and children have separate roles in feeding. Understanding the roles in feeding can help support children's growth and brain development. This will also help children learn to eat well and enjoy eating.



Caregivers decide **what** foods to offer, **when** to offer food, and **where** to offer food.

- Use Canada's food guide to plan meals and snacks.
- Offer meals and snacks at regular times each day, 2 to 3 hours apart.
- Sit, eat, and talk together with children at meal and snack times. Turn off screens and put aside toys.

Children decide **if** they eat and **how much** they will eat from the foods offered.

- Let them decide how much to eat and drink from the foods and drinks offered.
- The amount they eat may change from meal to meal or day to day, depending on their age, appetite, activity level, and growth spurts.
- If a child chooses not to eat, don't force them.

For more information

- Visit [Feeding Toddlers and Young Children](#) for more information about the roles in feeding and common feeding habits.
- Visit [Support Positive Mealtimes](#) for ideas and resources to make mealtimes pleasant.
- Visit Canada's food guide [Healthy eating for parents and children](#) and [Eat meals with others](#) for tips for parents and caregivers.

