



# Using loving regulation to help children choose **healthy foods**

## DO

- Do eat healthy foods and choose smaller portions. Children often copy their caregivers over time.
- Do provide an array of healthy foods in the home and include them in every meal.
- Do view healthy eating as a normal part of family life.
- Do prepare meals together and make it a time to enjoy each other and eat well.
- Do ask your children what they would like to eat and offer them choices if you can. Ask them what fruits or vegetables they would like to eat at a meal or snack.
- Do remain positive, even if your children do not want to eat healthy right away. In the long run, it will help them to want to try new healthy foods.

## DON'T

- Do not punish children or put them down if they refuse to eat healthy foods. Be open to hearing their feelings.
- Do not keep a lot of junk food in the home.
- Do not use food as a reward for being good, and do not restrict food as a way to punish them.
- Do not give too much praise, even when children do choose healthy foods. The habit of trying new foods is more likely to stick if they feel like it is their choice. For them, it should feel good to have the choice to taste new foods.
- Do not force it when children do not like a certain food. Instead, try something new and healthy next time.
- Do not take it personally when children refuse to eat what you have prepared.

**Keep healthy foods in your home and be a role model by eating healthy foods yourself. Over time, with your support, children will choose healthy ways of taking care of themselves.**