

Healthcare Providers Can Help Your Child Build Healthy Habits

A balanced diet and physical activity are key to your child's healthy development. Yet, helping your child adopt healthy behaviors can be challenging.

Your child's healthcare provider plays a role in supporting your child's health in all settings, including early care and education, school, home and community.

To Support Healthy Eating Habits a Provider Can:

Diagnose the underlying cause(s) of any eating problems such as choosy eating, food refusal, or difficult behavior around mealtimes.

Make a referral to a Registered Dietitian (RD) to help meet your child's nutritional needs. Ask the RD to work with an Occupational Therapist to address any sensory issues related to food.

Make a referral to other professionals, once any physical problems have been diagnosed and addressed. Professionals such as speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, and behavioral psychologists can develop treatment plans to address any sensory or behavioral issues related to eating.

Discuss how any prescribed medications could impact your child's appetite, metabolism, or weight.

Recommend goals and services that your child needs at their early care and education program, school, out-of-school program or home. A statement from your healthcare provider can help ensure healthy eating goals are included in your child's Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), Individual Education Program, or Individual Treatment Plan.

Recommend healthy ways to support your child's development and positive behavior without using food as a child's reward.

Refer you to resources or services to help you provide healthy meals for your family.

Talk to your child (depending on their developmental level) about the importance of making healthy choices to help them increase responsibility for their own health.



To Support Physical Activity a Provider Can:

Explain the physical and emotional benefits of physical activity.

Talk to you and your child about different ways to be physically active.

Problem-solve ways to overcome any physical or social-emotional barriers to being physically active.

Address any safety concerns by performing pre-participation evaluations.

Recommend goals and services that your child needs at their early care and education program, school, out-of-school program, or home. A statement from your healthcare provider can help ensure physical activity goals are included in your child's IFSP, IEP, or Individual Treatment Plan.

Share resources regarding sports and physical activity programs in your community.

Talk to your child (depending on their developmental level) about their activity preferences and personal physical activity goals.