

# Keeping **P**ORTION **S**IZES in **C**HECK

Creating Healthy Environments for Chicago Kids

Children are different from adults because they have smaller stomachs and are growing. This means that they need smaller meals than adults. They may get hungry more often, or may have their hunger vary greatly from day to day. As a caregiver, it is important to serve appropriate portions at meal and snack times to encourage healthy habits and provide good nutrition for growing children.

## PORTION SIZE

The amount of food that ends up on the plate

# VS

## SERVING SIZE

All of the nutrition facts on food labels are based on the serving size, or the amount given on the label..

## MyPlate

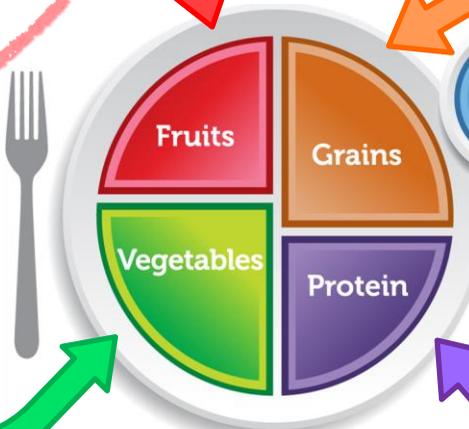
**MyPlate** helps remind us that we need to eat and drink foods from the five food groups. **Fruits**, **Vegetables**, **Dairy**, **Grains**, and **Protein Foods** are important for good health. MyPlate shows the food groups in different sections of the plate.

### Fruit

Fuel up with fruits at meals or snacks

### Vegetables

Color your plate with great tasting veggies



### Grains

Make at least half your grains whole grains

### Dairy

Get your calcium-rich foods

### Protein

Vary your protein foods

Choose **MyPlate.gov**

# Tips for **MINDFUL EATING**

## **PORTIONS ARE TRICKY:**

- Serving size  $\neq$  portion size. For example, a child may drink a 1-cup portion of milk, but the servings size is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup.
- “Clearing your plate” can silence our hunger and fullness signals. Most of us are taught to eat all of what we’re served. At the same time, portion sizes have increased in the U.S. As a result, we tend to eat these bigger portions, regardless of hunger.
- The portion of food on the plate isn’t necessarily the portion your body needs. It is important to pay attention to hunger and fullness cues.

## **MINDFUL PORTIONS:**

- Use smaller bowls, glasses/cups, plates, and utensils appropriate for “child-size” portions.
- Portion out servings of snacks into bags/containers, to help kids eat mindfully.
- Eat snacks and meals at the table. Avoid distractions while eating, like TVs, phones, tablets, or iPads.
- To help learn hunger fullness cues, try following a meal/snack schedule.

## **Hunger & Fullness Cues:**

Listen to your body’s internal hunger and fullness cues. Talk to the children about what it feels like to be hungry or full. Discuss the difference between physical hunger and boredom, sadness, tiredness, or other feelings. Help them understand it is OK to stop eating when they feel full and leave food on the plate, or to ask for more food if still hungry. If they aren’t hungry, help them identify what they need instead of more food.

## **Sit Down & Slow Down:**

Encourage children to sit and slow down during meal times to break away from eating in autopilot mode. Have them take their time and describe to you how the food tastes, looks, and even smells! This will make it easier to pay attention to their hunger and fullness cues, and is also a great way to encourage family conversation and spend time together.

## **Be A Role Model:**

Children learn by watching caregivers. Pay attention to your own senses of hunger and fullness. Practice eating when you are hungry, stopping when you are satisfied, and identifying reasons you may want to eat when you’re not hungry. Your children will try it themselves if they see you participating!