

Pressure-free mealtimes

It's common for adults to worry about the amount that a child is eating at a mealtime.

Pressure can take a positive or negative form. It is often well-intentioned, but both forms of pressure can impact on a child's relationship with food and their hunger and fullness cues.

Keeping mealtimes pressure free helps children to become relaxed eaters who enjoy a range of foods.

Positive pressure

What:

Encouragement, cheering
Reminders
Rewards
Saying a food is 'good'

Can sound like:

"Just try one bite"
"Good girl for finishing your plate!"
"This broccoli will make you so healthy and strong"
"This food is so much better for you than X"

Negative pressure

What:

Restricting or withholding
Forcing
Threatening, guiltig
Begging

Can sound like:

"I think you've had enough"
"You need to finish before you go and play"
"There are starving children in other countries"
"I've worked really hard making this meal"

Instead:

- Do not comment on what or how much children are eating
- Focus on creating a positive, relaxed mealtime environment
- Foster positive conversation

For more information

www.schoolfoodmatters.org.au/professional-learning-resources/professional-learning/topic-2-keeping-mealtimes-enjoyable/

