

FNS Core Nutrition

# Messages

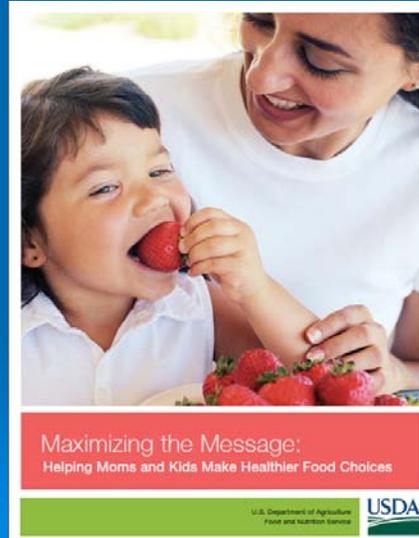
Food and Nutrition Service  
Office of Research and Analysis  
December 2008



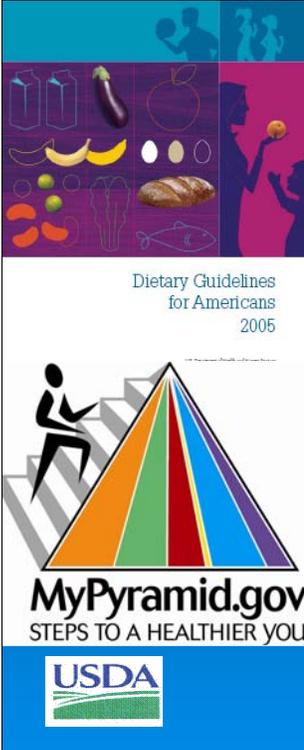
FNS has released a set of 16 consumer tested core nutrition messages and supporting content for low-income mothers and children in a new publication entitled "*Maximizing the Message: Helping Moms and Kids Make Healthier Food Choices.*"

# FNS Core Nutrition *Messages:* The Products

- 16 Core Messages
- Supporting Content on 3 Topics
- Implementation Guidebook
- Focus Group Reports



Please note that the focus group reports will be posted at a later date.



## Core Messages

- Provide consumer tested messages and related tips
- Reflect the USDA Strategic Nutrition Goals
- Support nutrition education priorities and policies

Core Messages provide nutrition educators with consumer tested messages and related tips that are personally relevant, doable and resonate with the audience that help consumers take small steps to put the DGA and MyPyramid into action. The messages:

- Reflect the USDA Strategic Nutrition Goals
- Support Program-based nutrition education and policies, and
- Have been approved by the joint USDA/DHHS Dietary Guidelines Working Group

Development of the messages included extensive input from stakeholders. FNS convened a workgroup consisting of experts in nutrition education, communication and the FNS programs that made recommendations regarding the behavioral focus, target audience, concepts and scope of the messages and content. The core message workgroup consisted of :

- HQ and Regional Program Staff
- External Stakeholders
  - Associations
  - Academia
  - Other Federal agencies (NIH, CDC)

The message and tips were tested in 9 locations across the country

30 focus groups included

- 140 mothers and
- 73 kids
- All participants were low-income; and 2/3 participated in one or more nutrition assistance programs.

## Target Audience

- Mothers of Preschool-age Children
- Mothers of Elementary School-age Children
- 8-10 year-old children



## Messages for Mothers of Preschoolers

- Role Modeling-  
Eating Fruits and  
Vegetables
- Cooking and Eating  
Together
- Letting Children  
Serve Themselves
- Offering New Foods



- Role Modeling-Eating Fruits and Vegetables
- Cooking and Eating Together
- Letting Children Serve Themselves
- Offering New Foods

# Messages included in MyPyramid for Preschoolers

The screenshot displays the MyPyramid.gov website interface. At the top, the USDA logo and "United States Department of Agriculture" are on the left, and "MyPyramid.gov" is on the right. Below this is a navigation bar with links for Home, About Us, News & Media, Site Help, Online Ordering, Contact Us, and En Español. A search bar is located on the left side of the page. The main content area features a blue header for the article "Make Mealtime a Family Time". The article text includes: "Family meals allow your preschooler to focus on the task of eating and give you a chance to model good behaviors. It takes a little work to bring everyone together for meals. But it's worth it and the whole family eats better." This is followed by two sections: "Start eating meals together as a family when your kids are young..." and "Make family meals enjoyable...". An illustration of a family eating at a table is shown to the right of the text. A large yellow arrow points from the right side of the page towards the illustration. At the bottom right, there is a "Trusted sites" indicator.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture MyPyramid.gov

Home About Us News & Media Site Help Online Ordering Contact Us En Español

You are here: Home / MyPyramid Preschoolers / Developing Healthy Eating Habits / Make Mealtime a Family Time

## Make Mealtime a Family Time

**Family meals allow your preschooler to focus on the task of eating and give you a chance to model good behaviors.**

It takes a little work to bring everyone together for meals. But it's worth it and the whole family eats better.

- Start eating meals together as a family when your kids are young. This way, it becomes a habit.
- Plan when you will eat together as a family. Write it on your calendar.
- You may not be able to eat together every day. Try to have family meals most days of the week.

**Make family meals enjoyable**

- Focus on the meal and each other. Turn off the television. Take phone calls later.
- Talk about fun and happy things. Try to make meals a stress-free time.
- Encourage your child to try foods. But, don't lecture or force your child to eat.
- Involve your child in conversation. Ask questions like:
  - What made you feel really happy today?
  - What did you have to eat at lunch today?

*Cook together. Eat together. Talk together. Make mealtime a family time!*

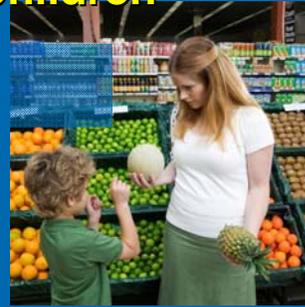
Trusted sites

Messages have been featured where appropriate in MyPyramid for Preschoolers.

## Messages for Mothers of Elementary School Age Children

Availability and Accessibility of:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Low-fat/Fat-free Milk



## Messages for 8 to 10 Year Old Children

Promoting consumption of:

- Fruits and Vegetables
- Low-fat/Fat-free Milk



## About Supporting Content...

- Narratives (Mom Stories), Bulleted Tips, and Recipes
- Topics:
  - Role Modeling
  - Cooking and Eating Together
  - Making Fruits and Vegetables Available and Accessible at Home
- Use in print materials, for classroom discussions, in anticipatory guidance and more.
- Mom-approved and consistent with DGAs!



## Maximizing the Message: Helping Moms and Kids Make Healthier Food Choices

- Provides background information
- Describes the developmental approach
- Summarizes lessons learned from the focus groups
- provides implementation and evaluation guidance



For more information visit:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/corenutritionmessages/default.htm>

Implementation Guidance provides approaches that are relevant to the nutrition assistance programs, can be applied to multiple communication methods, and provides options for educators. The suggestions build upon current practices and suggest alternative approaches as well.

Implementation Guidance was peer reviewed by educators working in WIC, School Lunch, CACFP, SNAP, SNAP-Ed Implementing Agencies and by representatives from other Federal agencies including CSREES, NIH and CDC.

We encourage you to use these resource as part of program-based nutrition education as well as cross-program education initiatives such as those outlined in the State Nutrition Action Plans. We also invite you to share information about how you are using these products. Send information, including samples of any materials to: [oaneweb@fns.usda.gov](mailto:oaneweb@fns.usda.gov).