

# NUTRITION TIDBITS FOR TEACHERS

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Early Head Start requires teachers to sit *and eat* with their students during mealtime. Do you know why?

## *Why do we have to sit and eat with the children?*

### 1) Modeling

- Did you know that 18.9% of kids are obese. Children who are obese as preschoolers are more likely to be obese as adults. There have been many research studies done to see what preschool teachers can do to help prevent obesity. One common protective factor showed up in these studies. *Can you guess what it is?*
  - It's not telling children to eat their vegetables.
  - It's not forcing children to try their vegetables.
  - It **IS** sitting down and eating the same foods as the children.
- When you eat with them, you are helping prevent childhood obesity!

### 2) Connection Counts

- Research shows that children who eat meals with their family at least 3 times per week are more likely to do better in school.
- You are the child's daycare FAMILY and having mealtimes with you improves a child's chance for success!

### 3) Let's Get Talking!

- Some studies show that children learn more about language during mealtime than they do while being read a book!
- When you sit and eat and talk with children during mealtime, you are teaching them how to talk!



## *Can't I just sit with the children at mealtime and not eat?*

Research shows that when a teacher sits down with their class, but doesn't eat what the kids are eating, they are less likely to eat their fruits and vegetables. Interestingly enough, research also shows that **when a teacher tells a kid to eat their fruits and vegetables, the child ends up eating less.** Teaching by example works best!

#### References

1. "Childhood Obesity Facts" *Center for Disease Control*, US Department of Health and Human Services, 5 Aug 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>.
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