



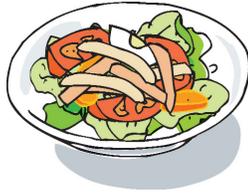
# Helping Youth Make Better Food Choices

The tips at right are based on strategies and approaches used by nutrition, health and public health professionals who work with children, youth and families. These professionals shared their ideas for helping youth make better food choices in keeping with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* as part of an **Action for Healthy Kids** research project that involved over 1,400 respondents nationwide.

**Please refer any child with a special dietary need or health condition to an appropriate health care professional.**

Action for Healthy Kids is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the epidemic of overweight, undernourished and sedentary youth by focusing on changes in schools. Through volunteer Teams in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and a network of 60 national Partner organizations, Action for Healthy Kids works to improve children's nutrition and increase physical activity, which will in turn improve their readiness to learn. For more information, visit [www.ActionForHealthyKids.org](http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org)

## Tips for Schools



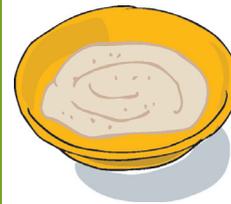
**Encourage** healthful food offerings throughout the school campus.

**Money matters.** Offer ideas for successful non-food fund-raisers and healthful refreshments for classroom parties.

**Design a taste test** of healthful foods for the cafeteria. Ask kids to vote and put "winners" on the menu.

**Collaborate with parent groups.** Invite them to join the wellness committee or help plan the annual field day.

**Make the connection.** Educate youth on the connection between healthy eating and academics or sports.



**Have kids keep a food diary.** Review with them what they are eating as they progress toward eating healthier.

**Involve students in making changes.** They will be more likely to participate in healthier options.



**Be a good role model** and pave the way to healthy eating habits.

**Provide tools.** Teach students how to read food labels, MyPyramid charts, shopping lists and recipes.



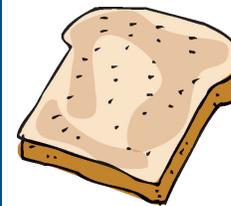
**Make sure that** the school environment is free of ads and product placements for non-nutritious foods.

**Teach media literacy.** Work on improving kids' media-literacy skills to counter the effects of food marketers.



**Appoint "change agents,"** teens who will market good habits to their fellow peers.

**Teach kids where** their food comes from and how it is grown. Invite a farmer to school. Create a school garden.



**Show and tell.** Use the school meal menu to educate youth about healthy eating.

**Healthy messages.** Using rap, rhymes and riddles, let kids take turns reading during announcements at school.

**Portion distortion.** Teach youth about realistic food portions using age-appropriate serving sizes.

**Make it real.** Show kids how much sugar is in soda or an energy drink by measuring it with sugar cubes.

