



Suzy Startwell

Be a role model for the children:

Children learn from copying the behaviours of those they see around them. As a parent, practitioner or adult who is in close contact with children it is important that the behaviours they see and copy are positive.

Research suggests that parent's who role model physical activity as part of their own lifestyle are more effective at getting their children to engage in physical activity themselves (Bois, 2004).

However, negative experiences can have a detrimental impact on forming healthy habits. Research has found that negative modelling can hinder food consumption, particularly in the early years age group. Research also suggests that it is very difficult to reverse the impact a negative experience can have on a child (i.e. if they have 'learnt' not to like a food perhaps after hearing someone say it is 'yukky' it is very difficult for them to then start 'liking' the food again and develop a positive relationship with it).

As a role model allow children to see adults:

- Eating fruit and vegetables at snack time
- Being involved in active play and physical sessions
- Participating in meal times
- Modelling fundamental movement skills
- Food shopping and preparing food
- Enjoying being active and having fun
- Drinking water and milk throughout the day

As a role model encourage and support children by:

- Encouraging them to try to eat a variety of foods
- Praise them when they try a new activity or food
- Talk to them about food and making healthy choices
- Involving children in food shopping, food preparation and meal times
- Encourage them to play with others
- Help them to find activities they enjoy and to understand the importance of moving
- Planning for physical and movement activities daily
- Encourage them to challenge themselves and take risks during play

