

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

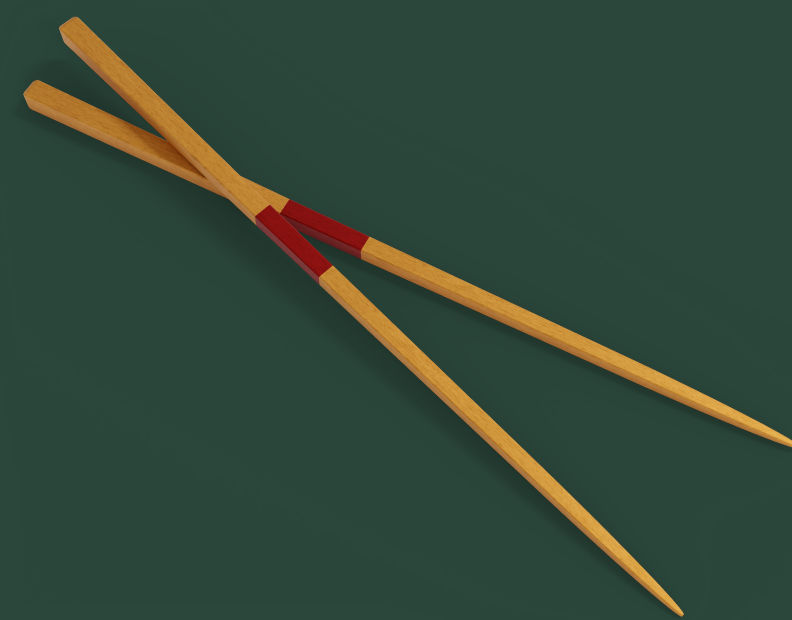
*Navigating a relationship with  
food with your family*

## Content:

- NEUTRAL TERMS
- ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT
- STOP HIDING VEGGIES
- DO WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR FAMILY
- ROLE MODEL

**"Food is not  
rational. Food  
is culture, habit,  
and identity"**

J.S. FOER



DR. GIULIANA, ND

# BE NEUTRAL

## FOOD IS NOT GOOD OR BAD

- Focus on taste and texture when describing food
- Not every meal or snack needs to be nutrient dense
- Unless you are allergic, no food should be described as "bad for you"
- Let kids draw their own conclusions about food

### FOOD CAN BE

- NOURISHING
- TASTY
- FUN
- CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT

### FOOD CANNOT BE

- RESTRICTIVE
- EARNED
- A "TREAT"
- BAD FOR YOU



# ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

## IT'S A COMMUNAL EFFORT

- Let each of the family members participate in preparing a meal or a snack, when possible
- Let your family choose at least 1 meal for the week (yes, even if it's pasta with butter)

### PARTICIPATION CAN LOOK LIKE:

- *Stirring the pot*
- *Chopping and slicing the ingredients*
- *Setting the table*
- *Garnishing & adding the fixings*
- *Serving the food*

### MAKE IT FUN

- *Play music*
- *Time the meal prep (aim for a personal best each time)*
- *Use favourite utensils*
- *Have fun aprons or oven mittens to wear*



# STOP HIDING THE VEGGIES!

## ...AND THE OTHER FOOD GROUPS

- As early as 3 years old, a child will start to have a better understanding of what food is and its societal and cultural connotations
- Hiding food groups that are commonly disliked, like vegetables, can have a negative impact on a child's relationship with food
- Hiding the vegetables in the smoothie or the sauce worked during the toddler years, but it's time to put a stop when they start to get "food curious"
- Be **open** with what is being presented on a plate

## WHEN BEING OPEN GETS A "NO WAY!"

### TRY THESE TIPS:

- If they've had the food before, present it to them again
  - Ex: "You've had spinach in your smoothie before, would you like it again?"
- Offer similar foods with similar textures
- Re-present the food in a different dish
- Honour their "No!"



# DO WHAT WORKS ● FOR YOUR FAMILY

## NOT EVERYTHING IS GOING TO WORK FOR YOU

- Recommendations that are made around food is exactly that: recommendations
- Every food goal that you decide to incorporate into your family 's daily life has to work for **your** family
- One meal a day with your family is a great goal to have, but sometimes it's not possible with busy schedules
- The **true** goal is making food and family synonymous, even if it's just eating together 3 times per week

### WHAT TO TRY :

- *Stop comparing your family dynamics to others*
- *Be flexible with your family food goals; some goals can be seasonal!*
- *Incorporate family food traditions early*



# ROLE MODEL

## YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD MATTERS TOO

- Chances are your relationship with food will be picked up by the children, the good and the bad
- Any restrictive practices or negative narratives run the risk of being passed onto the children
- Addressing your relationship with food helps keep the children neutral around food
- The same recommendations made for your family include you!

### TRY THESE:

- Be neutral around food too
- Describe taste and texture out loud
- Eat when you are hungry & remind your kids to do the same
- If you forget to eat, have snacks ready to go!

