

How to Practice the

# DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY

When Feeding Children

**The Division of Responsibility varies slightly depending on the age and ability of a child.**

A crucial part of parents' and caregivers' job around mealtime is trusting children to determine *how much and whether* to eat from what is offered. Children are born with a natural ability to eat. As adults do their jobs with feeding, children do their jobs with eating. Because of this, we encourage caregivers to practice Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility when feeding children.

When parents and caregivers follow this Division of Responsibility in feeding, children build on this natural ability and become eating competent. This leads to them eating the appropriate amount of food and growing in the way that is right for them.

## For infants

- The caregiver is responsible for *what* is offered.
- The child is responsible for *how much* they eat from what is offered.

## For babies making the transition to family food

- The caregiver is still responsible for *what* is offered, and is becoming responsible for *when* and *where* the child is fed.
- The child is still responsible for *how much* and *whether* to eat the foods offered by the caregiver.

## For toddlers through adolescents

- The caregiver is responsible for *what, when, and where* the food is offered.
- The child is responsible for *how much* and *whether* to eat from what is offered.

Content adapted from Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility in Feeding at <http://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org>. Visit this website for more about eating and feeding and for Ellyn Satter's books, videos, and other resources. For the evidence behind this model, read "The Satter Feeding Dynamics Model" under "Who We Are" on the website.

