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## Parents Are a Child's First Teacher Children's Tastes Start Early, Parents Need to Start Early Too!

Of course our children are smart! They learn very quickly what they like and don't like. They learn from what their parents eat and what they give them. And we're just learning how young they are when they start learning!

salty or greasy food over and over, children learn that their parents like these foods, and learn to prefer them too. When parents serve children red peppers or rice and fish, children



**Children as young as 3 years old prefer  
Sugar  
Salt  
Fat.**

**And they know which *brands* of foods give them those flavors!**

learn to like those foods. Children whose parents eat hot salsa enjoy hot salsa too. Children will like sweets, but parents can start early teaching their children to eat healthy foods too!

Three to 5 year old children were asked to chose between pairs of food items or pictures of foods. Some were natural, others had added sugar, added salt or added fats and oils. Does it surprise us that they mostly chose the sugary, salty, or greasy foods? The first adult food most babies get from their parents' plates is French fries - greasy and salty with sugary ketchup on top!

When they were asked to match a food picture with the logo or brand, every child was able to match at least



some of the foods to their correct fast food or food marketing company.

When parents serve sugary,

**BUT: children offered a choice of low sugar cereals will be just as happy with them. And they are more likely to add extra fruit to the cereal.**

Children who are offered only high sugar cereal will eat a lot more of it than if the choices are low sugar cereals. Children who are offered only low sugar cereals will eat less cereal and more fruit. That's a good combination!





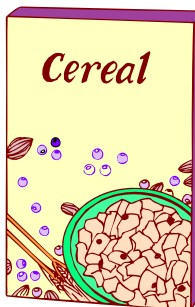
So, what should parents do?

• **Keep several varieties of low sugar cereals in the home, and no high sugar ones!**

• Don't let the children decide which you will buy. You choose what to keep in the house.

• **Read the Nutrition Facts box and pick cereals with less than 5 g of sugar per serving.**

• Have some kind of fruit available for breakfast. It can be fresh (chopped strawberries), or canned (peaches canned in juice), or frozen (blueberries with no added sugar.)



• **Children over 2 years old should have 2%, 1% or skim milk. Only toddlers between 1 and 2 years old should have whole milk. (That's the jug with the red top.)**

• Allow the children to choose which cereal they want, and which kind of fruit they want to put on it. If you only have one kind of fruit today, that's okay. They can eat that one today.



• **If children want to put a little bit of sugar or honey on the cereal, let them. Even if they add sugar, it's**

**usually less than what is all ready in the high sugar cereals.**

• Carry this list with you to the store. Only buy cereal from the top half of the list.



### How Much Sugar Is In My Cereal? 5 grams = 1 teaspoon

Cereal	Sugar
Oatmeal	0 grams
Shredded Wheat	0
Puffed Rice	0
Puffed Wheat	0
Cheerios	1
Rice Chex	2
Corn Flakes	3
Kix	3
Corn Chex	3
Rice Krispies	4
Special K	4
Grape Nuts	4
Grape Nuts Flakes	4
Wheaties	4
Total	5 = 1 tsp



**Choose the ones above this line!**

Life	6
Life Cinnamon	8
Honey Nut Cheerios	9
Honeycombs	10 = 2 tsp
Alpha-Bits	10
Lucky Charms	11
Sugar Frosted Flakes	11
Fruity Pebbles	11
Cap'n Crunch	12
Trix	12
Count Chocula	12
Froot Loops	12
Apple Jacks	12
Honey Smacks	15 = 3 tsp

**This much sugar is almost half the serving of cereal!**

These numbers are based on the serving size on each package.

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