

Jill Chodak, MS, RD, CDN

TURNING FAMILY FOOD FIGHTS INTO FREEDOM

Exploring the Division of Responsibilities, time crunches, and building a balanced plate with strong food preferences!





On the agenda




Identifying obstacles to feeding our families



Finding individual family values and goals to strive for that embrace health and peace



Carving out strategies to move toward values and goals and overcome obstacles



Naming key resources for help along the way





Obstacles to Feeding a Family

x Busy school, work, activity schedules, aka no time for family meals

x Contending with strong food preferences

x Cost of food

x Confusion or lack of confidence in kitchen for what to make and/or eat

x Others?



Identifying what matters

Values, Goals, Preferences, Schedules, Food...

Values:

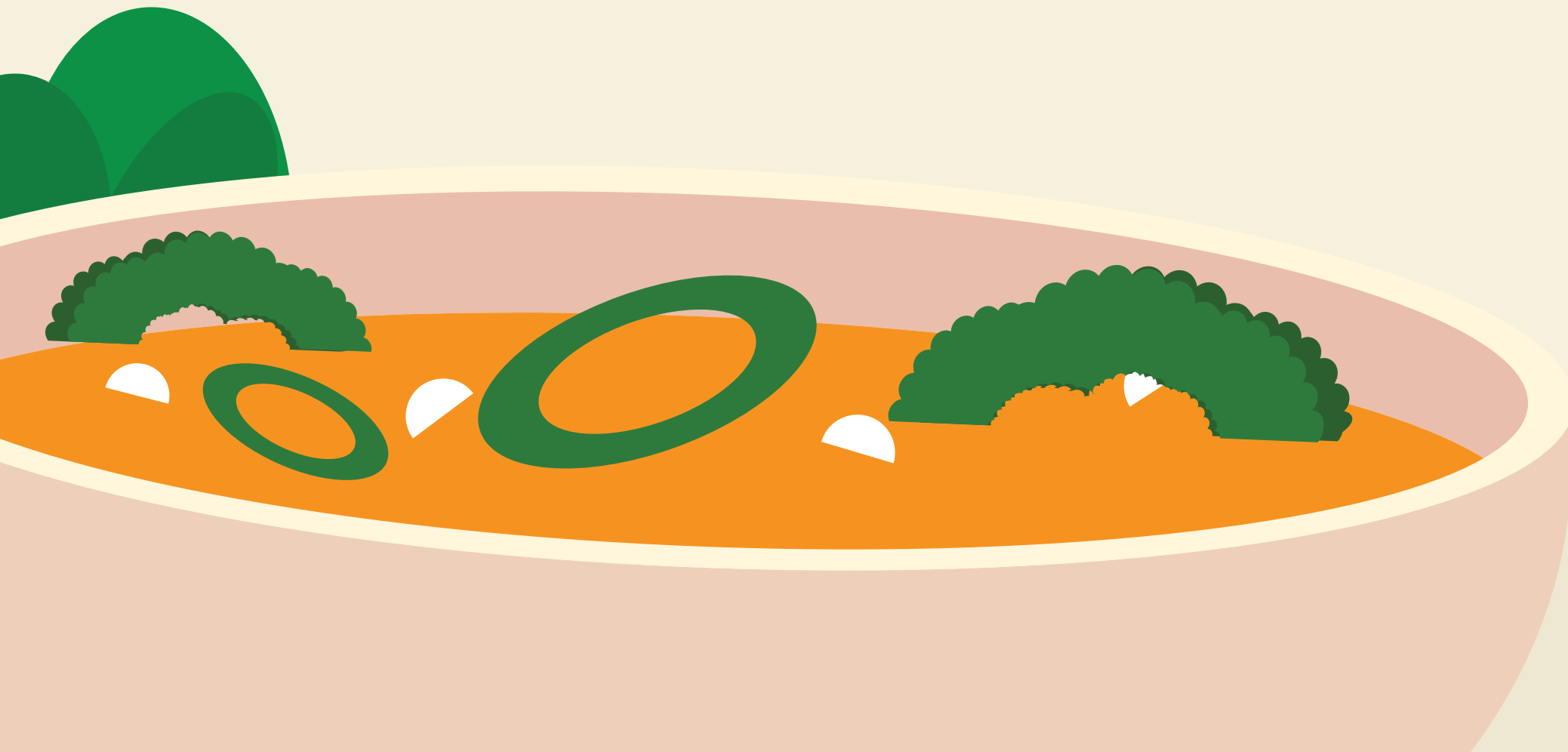
- Family meals
- Fun foods
- Peace at table
- Group effort

Goals:

- 2 family meals per week
- Choose 1 new item per week
- Fight free dinner 2x per week
- All have jobs 1x per week

Overcome Obstacles:

- Look ahead, carve out time
- Kids come shop, or parents pick
- New location, new lighting, new plates...
- Who's helping with what?





How? The Basics:

Division of Responsibilities



Parent/Caregiver's Job is to:

- choose and prepare food
- role model expected table behavior
- provide snack/meal structure that's right for child
- honor food preferences without catering to likes/dislikes

Child's Job is to:

- eat
- decide the amount he/she/they need
- learn to behave well at meal time

Based on Ellyn Satter Institute Guidelines.



Tips for time crunches and building a schedule/balanced plate

Scheduling

- Look at the whole week ahead
- Know your limits
- Car coolers and snack bags baby
- Honor key values
- Fed is best
- What's in the kitchen?

Ex:

Mon. Baseball-grab 'n go

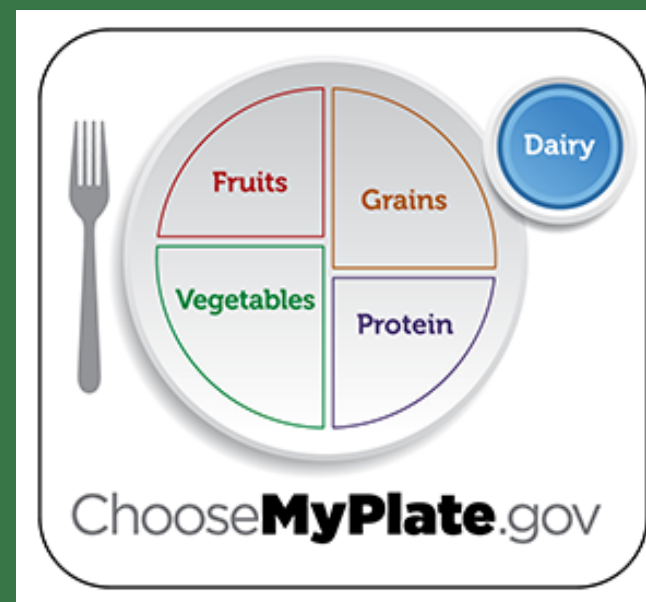
Tues. Band-eat early

Wed. Baseball-eat late

Thurs. Rest day-family meal

Fri. Baseball-dine out

Balanced Plate



- What do we get regularly?
- Where can we explore more?
- What are our “safe” foods?
- Where are there fast food options near us to support this more?

Strategies

- Change up locations
- Change up lighting
- Change up to family style servings
- If you're bored or stressed, they probably are too
- No screens or play
- Talk about stuff other than food
- STAY NEUTRAL

Navigating strong food preferences-Strategies in action

Ex: Rushed weeknight dinner with kids with multiple food preferences

- Think about your values-family dinner? peace? family discussion? connection? balance?
- Try a plastic table cloth and fancy design paper plates, maybe candlelight to make an inviting space in 30 seconds
- Serve one family safe food (like fries) family style with other options from balanced plate. Initiate kids to serve themselves, explain what's on the table, role model the plate and behavior you would like and move on to other topics.
- Stay neutral with food choices and see what happens.
- Remind everyone no snacks until 2 hours later but dinner will be available on their plate if they decide they didn't eat enough at meal.
- Think about age appropriate timing for sitting at the table for meal.
- Who's helping with clean up?
- It might all fall apart. Work with pediatrician to ensure no nutrition risks, and if none, continue practicing this approach.
- Eating routine matters-BSLSD



How to minimize food costs



- Use balanced plate to determine your staples for each food group—then buy in bulk if you can
- Shop seasonally and locally if you can
- Go back to basics and amp up with sauces
- Repurpose foods throughout the week
- Watch for sales or last minute markdowns
- Reorganize fridge, freezer, pantry as needed to minimize waste
- Plan for the week



Resources

<https://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/>

<https://thenourishedchild.com/>

<https://www.myplate.gov/>

