
Feeding your Child for Lifelong Health is a timely book for parents, built on the premise that how parents approach feeding their children is as important as the foods they provide. Clearly, the primary audience is well-educated parents of young children aged 0–6 y, although health care providers will also find the book a useful reference with many practical tips and references.

Compared with many books written for this audience, this book is based solidly on the science of infant and child nutrition, behavior, and development. In part one, the authors introduce the principles of early nutritional programming, “smart” strategies that parents can use to build on early instincts, and 8 key nutrients: iron, calcium, zinc, folate, B vitamins (B-6 and B-12), and vitamins A, C, and E. Part two includes a chapter titled “Breast-Feeding Made Easy,” guidance in choosing formulas, and special considerations in feeding premature infants. Age-appropriate advice for feeding children aged 4–12 mo, 12–21 mo, 21 mo to 3 y, and 3–6 y is covered in part three. These chapters are replete with parenting tips, recipes, and remedies for common problems encountered during these years. The final section, part four, takes a problem-oriented approach to important issues including sickness, food intolerances, colic, overweight, and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Throughout the book, the authors emphasize the importance of using 8 smart strategies to shape child feeding patterns. These strategies include 1) accepting a division of control (parents: which foods to offer; children: amounts to eat), 2) using windows of opportunity to introduce new foods, 3) shaping a child’s appetite and food preferences by increasing the variety of foods offered, 4) continuing to offer new foods many times to gain acceptance, 5) using familiar foods to “bridge” children to similar but new items, 6) teaching by example, 7) offering foods without trying to persuade children to eat them, and 8) involving young children in gardening activities to encourage consumption.

The pairing of general parenting advice with nutrition advice is a definite plus to this book. The authors patiently lead parents step-by-step through important stages and situations, such as how to start a baby on solid foods or use an elimination diet to identify food allergies. They also include practical assessment tools, such as how to determine whether a child may be consuming too many foods that contribute to weight problems. The advice and encouragement to breast-feed is especially well presented and not undermined by information about selecting formulas, which appears in a separate chapter.

The book is packed with practical advice, but busy parents may not always be able to locate answers to some immediate questions easily given the way the book is formatted and indexed. The sections on theory and use of nutrition jargon, such as caloric density and glycemic index, although enlightening to some, may be confusing to less-educated parents. Some nutritionists will also find disturbing the authors’ decision to veer away from the US Department of Agriculture food guide pyramid in presenting the family feeding guidelines given in chapter 8. To get the gist of what this book has to offer, parents are encouraged to read the book all the way through before their children are born and to revisit sections as their children grow and develop.

Lucia L Kaiser

Department of Nutrition
University of California at Davis
3205 Meyer Hall
One Shields Avenue
Davis, CA 95616
E-mail: llkaiser@ucdavis.edu