Providing an Environment that Promotes Good Nutrition

- Why Nutrition?
  - Children deserve to have healthy relationships with food, eat what they need and grow according to their potential.
  - Some children may not have access to adequate foods at home
  - Nutrition is at the heart of family, culture and community
  - There are increased incidences of diabetes in children
  - Childhood obesity has tripled in just 20 years

- Significance of Food Environment
  - An environment that has good nutrition education helps children support and extend their intuitive eating capabilities
  - Early eating habits continue into adolescence and adulthood
  - Children learn by example from adults

- Vision for Optimal Nutrition
  - Providing children with nutrients and energy they need to be healthy and grow well physically, emotionally, socially and mentally in an environment that supports self-regulation and autonomy

- Immediate Environment
  - Give time and attention to allow children to eat
  - Store food out of sight until the next meal or snack

- Social & Emotional Environment (teaching self-regulation)
• Predictable sequence and structure for mealtime activities allows kids to do a good job of eating their meals

• Adults eat with children and help them cope with success and failure (serving self, spilling, etc.)

• Children have opportunity to solve their own challenges and take risks (choosing foods, trying new foods, mixing foods, etc)

• Food Acceptance; teach food acceptance skills
  o Remain calm with new and disliked foods
  o Knowing they don’t have to eat or taste
  o Saying ‘no thank you’.
  o Sneaking up on new foods; look but don’t taste, taste but don’t swallow, swallow but don’t take any more, taste without swallow (napkin trick)

• Food Intake
  o Adults help children stay in touch with internal cues of hunger and fullness
  o Children serve themselves
  o Food offered every 3 hours
  o Enough time to eat until finished

• Mealtime as Part of the Curriculum
  o Math: counting, shapes
  o Colors: eating a variety of colors
  o Storytelling: where the food came from or the production
  o Science: growing, mixing, baking
  o Biology: what happens to the food and your body when you eat
  o Sociology: how to communicate, have patience, engage and resolve, etc