

Touching Hearts Touching Minds Handout #22 Balance Takes Practice (Fast food) Counseling Tool

What is the key message?

- Fast foods are “sometimes” foods.
- Children grow best when offered “everyday” foods often.
- Parents can balance “sometime” fast foods with “everyday” foods.

Who should receive this message?

- Any parent.

How can this message be used?

Open:

- Let’s do a fill in the blank game. I’ll read the first half of the sentence; you fill in the second half.
 - When I give my children fast food three nights in a row, I feel _____.
 - When I give my children soda instead of milk, I feel _____.
 - When I give my children fruit instead of sweet desserts, I feel _____.
 - When I give my children vegetables instead of French fries, I feel _____.

Dig:

- We all know that fruits, veggies and milk are better for children than sweet desserts, French fries and soda. We feel better about ourselves as parents when we serve healthy foods instead of fast foods. We sometimes feel guilty when they eat too many fast foods.
- What can parents do when children beg for something like fast food meals (and the fun prizes that often accompany them), especially when their friends have them regularly?
- Fast foods have become part of many busy families. How can busy parents balance the convenience and fun of fast foods—“sometime foods”—with the “everyday foods” like fruit, vegetables and low-fat milk that children need?

Sample responses:

- Order milk instead of soda at fast food restaurants



- Order a small instead of a large French fries
- Share a small French fries between children
- Order apple slices or other healthy option instead of French fries
- Take sliced apples or chopped vegetables with you to fast food restaurants
- Pick one night a week for fast food eating and eat at home on other nights
- Go to fast food restaurants that feature playlands so children can burn up extra calories in active play

Connect:

- Imagine that a young child—about four years old—and his mother are at a fast food restaurant. He asks for a hamburger, soda and large French fries. Mom smiles and orders a hamburger, milk and apples. The boy protests. Mom explains that she loves him very much and wants the best for him. Children have an amazing ability to learn lessons from parents. What lessons might this young child learn from a mother who insists that her child drink milk instead of soda, and eat apples instead of French fries?

Sample responses:

- Mom cares very much about me and is willing to stand up to my protests because she wants the best for me. I may not tell mom, but I like knowing that she cares for me.
- Mom is fun. She lets us eat out at fun fast food restaurants but makes sure we are eating foods that are good for us. She thinks about everything because she is a great mom!
- Mom knows what is best for me.
- It is important to do what is right, even if it doesn't feel good at the moment.
- We started with a fill-in-the-blank activity. Let's end with one, but with a new twist:
 - When I give my child a love of milk instead of soda, I will feel_____.
 - When I give my children a desire for fruit instead of sweet desserts, I will feel_____.
 - When I give my children a love of vegetables instead of an obsession for French fries, I will feel_____.

Act:

- What will you do next time you go to a fast food restaurant to keep the balance?
- If you do eat more fast food than you think you should, what fun things can you do with your family to balance it out?

