

Pointers For Parents

From Paris To Pittsburgh Children In Charge At Mealtime Ⓢ

(NAPSA)—A recent study found children around the world are eating what they want rather than what they're told to eat, and enjoying their food far more than their parents and grandparents ever did. U.S. children in particular spend less time eating than ever before, as leisurely family dinners give way to convenience-oriented meals that fit in with today's on-the-run family lifestyles.

"Lots of Baby Boomers remember being ordered to clean their plates, whether they liked what was being served or not," said Pam Watson, a registered dietician with Sodexo Marriott School Services. "That's how their parents, products of the Great Depression or the World War II era, were taught to instill healthy eating habits in their children. Today, parents are more flexible when it comes to what their children eat and the kids themselves are used to having a greater voice in the food choices."

The study also found that from a very young age, girls and boys

display very different eating habits. Girls eat twice as many fruits and vegetables as boys, who consume three times more meat and starches. Among other key findings:

- Young women spend approximately half as much money as young men on food;
- Young women, on average, take 2.5 items for lunch while young men take 3.8 items.
- Young men tend to look for good tasting, high-energy foods and continue to enjoy the social rituals traditionally associated with meal times. Young women seek simple, natural foods that can be consumed efficiently.

"Understanding the evolving eating habits of today's kids is critically important to Sodexo Marriott Services as we develop innovative products and programs to meet those needs," said Rod Bond, president of Sodexo Marriott Services' Schools Division. "Creating nutritional meals that appeal to both boys and girls is critical to ensuring children develop healthy eating habits."