TUMMY TALKS

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Food Stamps can help make ends meet and serves as the first line of defense against hunger. It enables low-income families to buy eligible nutritious food in authorized retail food stores.

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"Isn't this a great day to go visit Mrs. Z Tree in the Alphabet Woods?" said Hoot the owl to Elaroo.
"Yes it is, let me finish my lunch," replied Elaroo.
"I've already had mine," said Hoot.
"Here we go off to the Alphabet Woods," said Elaroo as Hoot went flying by.
“My, look at these tasty letters. Want some, Elaroo?”

“No thanks, I just ate. Hoot, are you really hungry? I thought you just ate too! I only EAT WHEN I'M HUNGRY, and STOP WHEN I'M FULL,” said Elaroo as he watched Hoot.
"Well, I'm not really hungry but these taste so good," exclaimed Hoot.

So Hoot just kept eating and eating letters ..........
until his tummy got so big he couldn't fly or walk.

All he could do was roll.
Hoot rolled and rolled right down the hill and landed at the bottom of the wise old Z tree who was just waking up.
"How did you know it was me?" asked Hoot.

"Hoot, is that you?" said Mrs. Z as she looked down.

"How did you know it was me?" asked Hoot.

"Well, almost every time you visit me, you eat so many letters you roll down the hill," replied Mrs. Z. "But they taste so good!" exclaimed Hoot.
"But, whenever you eat too much, you can't play, run or fly like everyone else."
"Has anyone ever told you to EAT WHEN YOU ARE HUNGRY; STOP WHEN YOU ARE FULL?"
"How funny! Elaroo just said the same thing. But, I do love these letters," said Hoot.

"You can eat the letters Hoot, but first listen to your tummy," said Mrs. Z.

"When it makes growling noises, it is saying it is hungry. That's when it's time to eat. But when it feels like it is getting big and gets quiet, that's when it's time to stop," Mrs. Z explained.
"Oh! My tummy does talk to me. It tells me to EAT WHEN I'M HUNGRY, STOP WHEN I'M FULL," exclaimed Hoot.

"You got it!" said Elaroo. "You'll feel so much better. You will be able to fly and play and have so much fun anytime you want."
As Elaroo and Hoot leave, Mrs. Z Tree waved.

"Bye Elaroo. Bye Hoot. Please come back and visit me again."
Young children are really amazing. They love to explore and learn about their world. But they need our help. This book was written to help you teach children about eating by listening to their own bodies. Some adults are not sure when children say, "I'm hungry" or "I'm done eating" if the children really understand what they are saying. Teaching children what hungry and full mean are very important. Once children learn about hunger and fullness, you will be able to trust them to know how much they need to eat. They will be so proud of themselves and you won't have to worry so much.

This story is one way to teach children about hunger and fullness. You can also play the game below.

Teaching Children to Listen When Their Tummies Talk

- About ½ hour before a meal, tell your child you are going to play the Tummy Talks game.
  - Ask your child to tell you what an empty tummy feels like. Your child may use words such as: noisy; it hurts; growling; rumbling. Tell your child those words mean they are hungry.
  - Ask your child to tell you what a full tummy feels like. Your child may say: it feels big and fat; it feels like it will blow up; it is quiet; it isn't talking at all.
- Ask your child to place both hands on his/her tummy and feel it.
- Then have your child "listen" to see if his/her tummy is saying anything.
- When you are ready, serve the meal.
- While your child is eating, ask if your child is hungry or full.
  - Help your child describe how tummies feel as they are getting full - using words like "big, puffy".
  - Tell your child when he/she feels this way - it's time to slow down and stop eating.
- Finally, at the end of the meal, ask your child again what his/her tummy is saying.
- Read the following sentence and have your child repeat: "Eat when I am hungry and stop when I am full."

When your child tells you he/she is "full", please listen. Trust your child. Allow your child to stop eating. It is not necessary or healthy to eat all the food on our plates! Serve your child small portions if you worry about wasting food.

Note: Some children say they are hungry to get attention. When a child says, “I’m hungry”, ask the child to tell you what his/her tummy is saying. Put your ear on their tummy and listen with the children. This is a good way for you to tell if your child is truly hungry for food or for attention.