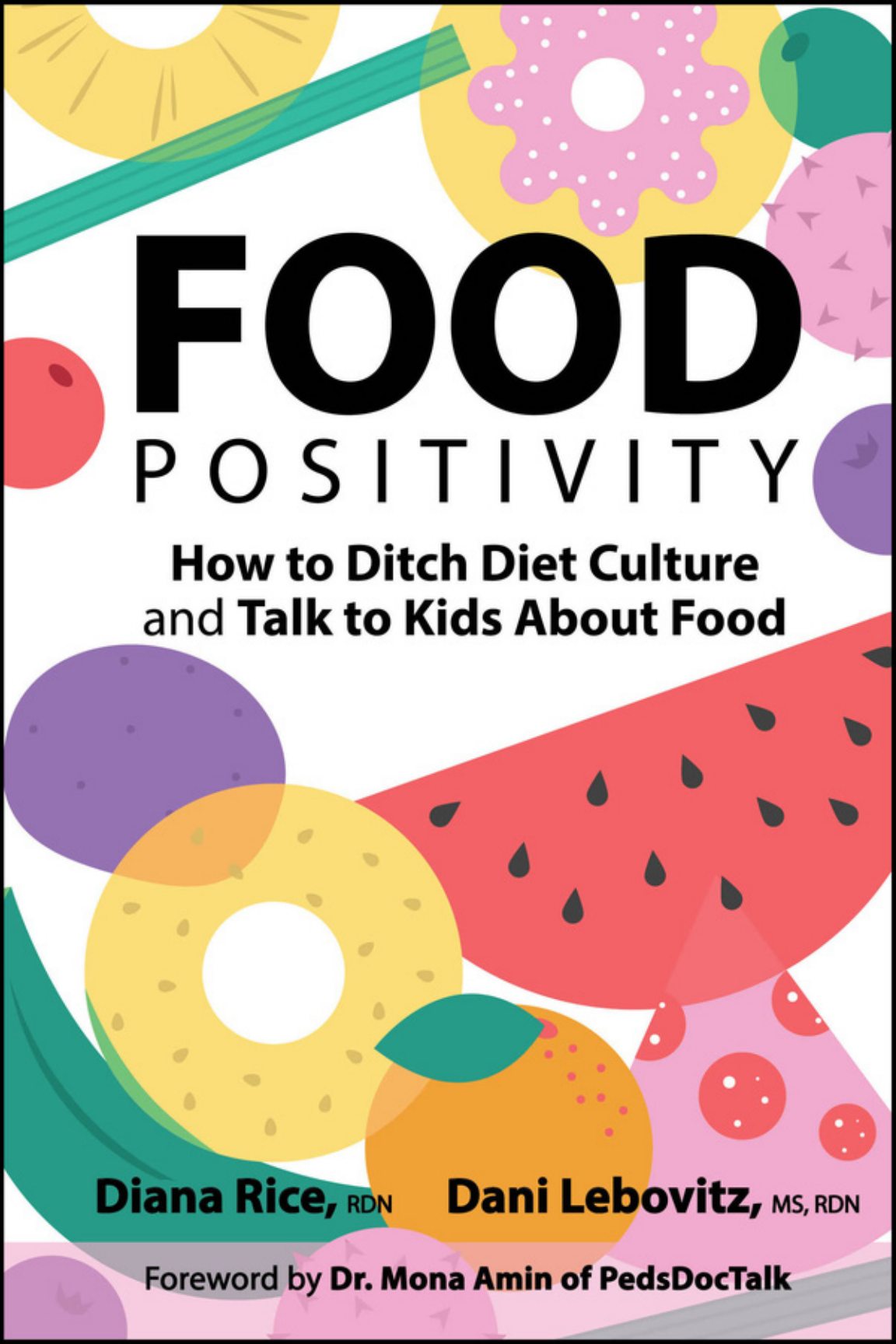




FOOD POSITIVITY

**How to Ditch Diet Culture
and Talk to Kids About Food**

Diana Rice, RDN

Dani Lebovitz, MS, RDN

Foreword by **Dr. Mona Amin of PedsDocTalk**

FOOD POSITIVITY

FOOD POSITIVITY

**How to Ditch Diet Culture and
Talk to Kids About Food**

DIANA RICE AND DANI LEBOVITZ

Copyright © 2026 by John Wiley & Sons Inc. All rights reserved, including rights for text and data mining and training of artificial intelligence technologies or similar technologies.

Explore-to-Grow Compass © 2024 Kid Food Explorers. Food Positivity Framework, Ecosystem of Food and Body Learning, and SAFE Framework diagrams © 2025 Kid Food Explorers. Used with permission.

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

ISBNs: 9781394335206 (Paperback), 9781394335213 (ePub), 9781394335220 (ePDF)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 750-4470, or on the web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permission>.

The manufacturer's authorized representative according to the EU General Product Safety Regulation is Wiley-VCH GmbH, Boschstr. 12, 69469 Weinheim, Germany, e-mail: Product_Safety@wiley.com.

Trademarks: Wiley and the Wiley logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Further, readers should be aware that websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this work was written and when it is read. Neither the publisher nor authors shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic formats. For more information about Wiley products, visit our web site at www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number is Available:

Cover Design and Image: Mary Navarro · Kakao Studio · www.kakaostudio.com

*For every parent choosing compassion over control,
curiosity over fear, and raising a generation free
to trust their bodies and find joy in food.*

Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>xv</i>
Part I	
What We've Inherited and the Foundations for Change	1
Chapter 1 Understanding Health and the Impact of Diet Culture	3
Chapter 2 Unpacking the Roots of Diet Culture in Our Food System	15
Chapter 3 The Pursuit of Thinness: How Diet Culture Shapes Our Relationship with Our Bodies	25
Chapter 4 You're the Narrator Now: Turning Awareness into Action	37

Part II	Whole-Child Development and What Kids Are Learning About Food and Bodies	43
Chapter 5	Nutrition Matters: It Starts with Positive Feeding Foundations	45
Chapter 6	The Building Blocks of Everyday Kids' Nutrition	67
Chapter 7	It Starts at Home: Your Most Powerful Tools for Raising Food and Body Confident Kids	83
Chapter 8	From Toddlers to Teens: What Kids Really Understand About Food and Bodies	93
Chapter 9	Food Talk Traps: When Food Talk Teaches More Than We Mean	111
Part III	What We're Passing On: Unpacking Diet Culture in Parenting	135
Chapter 10	Family Core Values: Shifting Toward a Positive Foundation	137
Chapter 11	Parenting Matters: Guiding with Confidence and Care	155
Chapter 12	Role of the Food Leader and Establishing a Food Positive Environment	169
Chapter 13	When Feeding Is Difficult: Supporting the Child in Front of You	187
Chapter 14	Putting It All Together: The Heart of Food Positivity	207
Part IV	Scripts and Strategies for Compassionate Conversations	221
Chapter 15	How to Talk to Kids About Food (Without Shame or Fear)	223
Chapter 16	How to Talk About Bodies (So Kids Learn to Trust Theirs)	243

Chapter 17	Navigating Food Exploration (Making Food Fun for All Ages + Stages)	255
Chapter 18	How to Handle Food and Body Talk from Others (and Support Your Child Too)	271
Part V	Raising the Next Generation	287
Chapter 19	A Systemic Change for Transforming the Food and Body Environment	289
Chapter 20	Partnering with Schools to Redefine Food Education	305
Chapter 21	An Inclusive Whole-Child Approach to Healthcare	323
Chapter 22	Raising the Next Generation to Be SAFE	335
	<i>Acknowledgments</i>	345
	<i>Index</i>	347

Foreword

AS A PEDIATRICIAN, there are so many stories and faces you never forget. These are the stories that shape your values as a doctor, mother, and advocate.

I think of the mom with her thriving 15-month-old on her lap, pleading, “Please tell me what to feed him so he gains weight. He’s so scrawny.” Or another parent asking me to tell his teenage daughter she’s “fat” and needed to lose weight. Two very different bodies, the same fear: that their child wasn’t in the “right” body.

I see this tension everywhere. Toddlers pushed to eat past fullness to “catch up.” Lean kids urged to chase calories instead of balance. Children in larger bodies shamed for honoring hunger taught not to trust themselves. I’ve met high schoolers who binge in secret.

The result is the same: children disconnected from hunger and fullness cues, learning to see food as something to control instead of enjoy. Parents want their kids to thrive, but many feel stuck, caught in mealtime battles, weighed down by guilt, and unknowingly repeating the struggles they grew up with.

That’s why this book, *Food Positivity*, is essential.

When I first connected with Diana, we talked on my podcast about how diet culture shows up in childhood. Her words resonated deeply,

not just as a pediatrician but as a mom raising kids in a world that ties worth to appearance. When I came to know Dani, I saw how beautifully their strengths come together. Dani brings the joy of food exploration, the developmental insight, the playful tools parents crave. Diana brings compassion, clarity, and a deep understanding of food and body image struggles. Together, they are committed to breaking cycles and offer what parents desperately need: expertise wrapped in empathy, evidence made practical.

Parenting around food feels harder today. Most parents want to raise kids who feel positive about food and confident in their bodies, but they were never given the tools to sort through their own insecurities. Then layer on BMI charts that reduce kids to numbers and social media feeds that are packed with filtered and AI-edited bodies, “what I eat in a day” videos, misguided nutrition advice, and wellness trends disguised as health—it’s no wonder families feel like they’re failing.

The cost of staying stuck is steep: mealtime battles, kids disconnected from hunger cues, disordered eating that can last a lifetime, and another generation carrying the shame we hoped to leave behind.

What makes this book different is that it doesn’t just focus on kids or parents; it speaks to both. *Food Positivity* helps parents reshape their own food and body stories while raising a generation free from shame. That mirrors the philosophy I share in my own work: the only way we can truly support our children is by being willing to look inward.

This book shows you how. It doesn’t lecture or overwhelm. It offers real words for the moments that matter, when a child refuses dinner, begs for dessert, or says, “I’m fat.” It reframes health as more than what’s on a plate: nourishment, yes, but also safety, connection, and joy. With practical scripts, compassionate strategies, and evidence-based tools, it makes parenting around food and bodies less stressful while raising kids who trust themselves and grow up free from shame.

In my work, I’ve seen the shift when parents trust their child’s body instead of controlling it. Dani and Diana’s SAFE framework—Safety, Autonomy, Flexibility, and Experience—captures this. Kids don’t learn to love food through pressure or shame but through safe experiences, laughter at the table, and the freedom to say “no, thank you” without fear.

As you begin to read *Food Positivity*, I hope you feel relief. Relief from micromanaging every bite. Relief from guilt. Relief in knowing that in parenting; perfection isn't the goal. Connection is. With small shifts in language and approach, you can raise kids who trust their bodies, enjoy food, and grow up free from shame.

Some of what you'll read may feel hard to hear. Especially if you grew up where food felt shameful, meals were stressful, or your body wasn't loved for what it was. Sitting with that discomfort can stir up grief, anger, or resistance. But that discomfort is not a sign you're doing it wrong. It's a sign you're breaking the cycle. The only way we change ourselves, and raise a generation free from the pain we carried, is by being willing to get uncomfortable.

My hope for every parent reading is this: may you raise kids who know food as joy, not judgment. May you raise kids who see their bodies as homes, not projects. And may you find yourself, as much as your children, set free from shame around food and bodies.

When you change the story for yourself, you change it for your children. That's the real gift of this work, and it starts here.

—Dr. Mona Amin

**Board-Certified Pediatrician, IBCLC, and
MomCreator of the Peds Doc Talk Community
Host of *The PedsDocTalk* Podcast, helping parents
find the confidence and calm they need**

Introduction

YOUR GRANDMOTHER HAD cigarettes and the cabbage soup diet. Your mom had Slim Fast and *Jane Fonda's Workout* at the peak of the low-fat craze. (SnackWell's, anyone?) They both had Weight Watchers, and maybe you did too.

You had Atkins, paleo, and the South Beach Diet (just reminiscing on a few. . .). And you grew up with the unshakable image of 1990s and 2000s music stars in low-rise pants with impossibly flat stomachs. And you often think of Kate Moss's infamous words ringing in the back of your mind:

“Nothing tastes as good as skinny feels.”

In the last few years, it's been all about trends like “clean” eating, Whole30, keto, and intermittent fasting. And let's not forget the parade of scientifically shaky food fears—seed oils, food dyes, processed foods—on and on it goes.

The diets may change. The food rules may shift, but the message stays the same:

Your body is wrong.

Your appetite is out of control.

If you could just *fix* this pesky problem of food and your body size once and for all, your life would finally be better.

The Moment You Knew Something Was Off

You've probably felt it, the tension between what you were taught about food and bodies growing up and the way you want things to be for your kids.

Maybe it's that unsettling feeling when your child repeats a food rule you never meant to pass down, like finishing dinner before they can have dessert. Or the weight (pun not intended, but here we are) of how diet culture shows up—at the doctor's office, in schools, on their lunch trays.

Maybe you hear echoes of your own childhood at the dinner table in your home:

"Are you sure you need seconds?"

"You don't want to get fat, do you?"

Or maybe you heard:

"You're skin and bones, eat something!"

"Other kids would be grateful for this food."

And you think to yourself: *I don't want this for them. I don't want this for me either. But what on Earth do I do instead?*

You're not the only one.

Many of us are navigating the same murky water, trying to raise kids in a world where food and bodies carry way too much baggage and distract us from the things that really matter. You're ready to do things differently.

We Grew Up in Diet Culture. So Now What?

It makes sense that you're struggling. A 2022 survey by *Good Housekeeping* found that three-quarters of women have a mental list of "good" and "bad" foods.

And so, without even realizing it, we pass them down. That same survey found that 62% of parents discuss food and exercise in relation to weight with their children. We think we're helping. We all want our kids to be healthy after all! But diet culture has conditioned us to believe that certain foods are dangerous, that weight is the ultimate measure of health, and that "doing it right" means constantly policing what our children are eating.

And yet. . .the more we try to get food "right," the more we suffer.

We're all born with the ability to trust our bodies. Babies cry when they're hungry and stop when they're full. Toddlers eat three bananas one day and refuse them the next. But over time, diet culture teaches them to ignore those signals, just like it taught us.

We learn to mistrust our hunger, fear certain foods, and tie our worth to our weight. Worst of all, it takes us away from what really matters, like:

- Making memories with our kids surrounded by microwave popcorn and gummy candy on movie night
- Confidently posing for a family photo without sucking in our stomach
- Simply enjoying food without guilt

The Most Concerning Part? The Impact on Our Kids

A 2023 *Journal of the American Medical Association* meta-analysis found that 22% of children and adolescents engage in disordered eating. Another study reports that as many as 17.9% of girls and 2.4% of boys will be diagnosed with an eating disorder by young adulthood.

And we know exactly how it happens. Eating disorders are influenced by a variety of factors, but living in a culture that prioritizes some body types over others plays an enormous role. We know that we can draw a straight line from these alarming statistics back to a lifetime of being taught to ignore our *own* hunger signals.

Back to hearing that broccoli is *good* and donuts are *bad*. Back to our parents' hushed whispers of "*Don't you know how many calories are in that?*" and "*Shouldn't you eat something healthy first?*"—voices that still echo in our heads every time we reach for a snack or feed our kids.

The Parenting Paradox: Freedom vs. Fear

We want to raise kids who feel free to be exactly who they are, to dress how they want, to love who they love, and to chase their dreams.

But when it comes to food and their bodies? That freedom feels terrifying. Because we've been taught that letting go of food rules means letting go of their future.

That if we don't control what they eat. . .

- . . .they'll eat nothing but junk.
- . . .they'll be bullied for their size.
- . . .they'll be unhealthy, or worse.

We want them to be well-nourished, of course. But we also live in a world that tells us fatness is a fast track to disease and early death (which isn't true by the way—more on this in Chapter 1).

So how do we let go of control without feeling like we're setting them up for struggle? How do we raise kids to trust their bodies when we've spent a lifetime being told we can't trust ours? How can we shift from control to support when we don't even know what that support is supposed to look like?

The Tipping Point

Thankfully, things are changing. More and more people, including medical organizations, researchers, and everyday parents, are questioning the dangers of diet culture. Athletes, musicians, actors, and influencers who don't fit the traditional beauty mold are taking up space, sharing their stories, and offering our kids the role models we never had.

And, we have research on our side. Studies are clear that the way we talk about these subjects in our kids' early years affects their long-term relationships with food and their bodies. We also know that body shape and size are mostly determined by genetics and environmental factors, not the "hard work and dedication" touted by diet culture. And we've learned that the number-one predictor of weight gain in both children and adults is, ironically, trying to lose weight in the first place.

But most importantly, we're finally realizing our power as parents. We're the first generation with the opportunity to break these cycles—to say *enough* to the food guilt, the body shame, the relentless pursuit of thinness disguised as "health."

What if we redefined what food means, not just for our kids, but for ourselves too?

Diet culture has stolen so much joy from eating, reducing it to numbers, rules, and guilt. It's time to take that joy back, for our kids, and for ourselves. It's time for **Food Positivity**.

What Is Food Positivity?

Every parent wants their kids to grow up healthy, eat a variety of foods, and feel good in their bodies. But so many of us find ourselves stuck—in dinner battles, negotiations over sugar, or the quiet fear that our children will inherit the same struggles with food and body image that we grew up with.

Food Positivity is more than how we feed kids—it's *how we raise them*. It's the decision to make mealtimes a place of trust instead of conflict, joy instead of guilt, and connection instead of control. Instead of focusing on rules, pressure, or perfection, Food Positivity supports the whole child—body, mind, and spirit. It gives parents practical tools to make mealtimes calmer *today* while raising kids who explore food with curiosity, trust their bodies, and eat well for *life*.

Our mission is simple: to help families break cycles of shame and guilt so the next generation can inherit something better—a *relationship with food and their bodies rooted in safety, trust, joy, and whole-child well-being*.

A Fresh Perspective: More Than Just “Food Neutrality”

You may have heard of Food Neutrality, which teaches that all foods have equal moral value, meaning you’re neither “good” or “bad” based on what you eat. It removes those labels altogether.

Food Positivity takes it further. It’s not just about what we take *away*, it’s about what we *add*:

Instead of only removing guilt, we create joy.

Instead of avoiding pressure, we build confidence.

Instead of only treating food as fuel, we embrace it as connection, culture, and learning.

Food Positivity isn’t just about eating, it’s about raising kids who:

- Trust their bodies
- Feel safe exploring new foods
- Enjoy food without guilt
- Develop a healthy relationship with eating for life

Food Positivity is both an approach parents can take and a life skill children grow into—one that makes food a source of safety, trust, connection, and joy. It nurtures whole-child well-being so kids grow up nourished, confident, curious, and resilient against food and body shame.

The Science Behind Food Positivity

If you’ve ever tried to get a toddler to put their shoes on, you probably know kids don’t learn positive habits through control, fear, or shame.

Food Positivity isn’t just some “feel-good” parenting philosophy. It’s grounded in decades of research on child development, psychology, neuroscience, education, and nutrition. But you don’t need to be an expert to use it. What you’ll find in this book are simple, practical ways to put it into action—from the words you say at the table to how you respond when your child comments on someone’s body to

the way you model your own relationship with food. It's evidence-based, and it works.

But honestly? It also just makes sense. Kids learn best when they watch us model healthy behaviors. When they get to explore and learn through play. And when they feel like they have a say in their own choices. Food should be fun, not forced. And most importantly, kids thrive when they trust themselves, not when every meal turns into a battle over bites.

Does This Mean Nutrition Doesn't Matter?

Nope. Actually, it's the opposite. But as you'll see, *what* you feed matters, but *how* you feed makes all the difference.

Food Positivity is about recognizing that nutrition *does* matter, so much so that we want to teach kids about food and nutrition in a way that supports them for a lifetime. What we're after is kids who become adults with the ability to think, "Eh, I don't really think a donut would feel very good right now" or "Hey, I could really go for a salad!" without the food police whispering in their ears either way.

Research shows us how early food experiences shape lifelong well-being. The way we teach kids about food today, whether they feel pressure, joy, or guilt, affects:

- The variety of foods they eat
- How open they are to trying new foods
- Whether they learn to listen to their bodies (or override their hunger cues)
- Their sense of connection and belonging at the table

Food Positivity supports whole-child well-being by recognizing that if we want to raise healthy kids from the inside out, we can't just focus on *what* they eat; we have to transform *how* they experience food.

Meet Your Guides

We are so excited and honored to be part of your parenting journey. Between the two of us, we've spent more than 35 years helping parents raise kids with a healthy, happy relationship with food. Dani is a

dietitian who specializes in early childhood development. Her passion is creating food education for kids, and she has spent years teaching families how to approach food with curiosity and confidence. Diana is a dietitian and Certified Intuitive Eating Counselor who specializes in helping parents untangle their own food and body beliefs so they can raise kids without the same struggles.

But beyond our professional credentials, we're both moms who know firsthand how hard it is to navigate food and body talk in a world that's constantly telling us we're doing it wrong. We've seen the harms of diet culture in our own lives and the lives of the families we work with. We know that parents aren't *trying* to pass down food and body guilt; they just don't know what to do instead. That's why we wrote this book: to help you step out of the cycle of food shame, weight fears, and impossible food rules and into something better.

How to Use This Book

Each chapter opens with a story from parents who've inspired this resource. We hope you'll see yourself in their experiences and realize you're not the only one trying to figure all this out.

Here's what you'll find:

Part I: Where our food and body beliefs come from and how awareness helps us change.

Part II: How kids think, grow, and form food and body beliefs, so you can meet them where they are.

Part III: How to unpack what you've inherited and create a shame-free food environment that reflects your family's values.

Part IV: Real-life tools and scripts to handle those tricky food and body moments with more calm and confidence.

Part V: How to take Food Positivity beyond your home—to schools, healthcare, and the next generation growing up free from shame.

Throughout the book, you'll also hear from experts who are putting this approach into practice every day with their clients, patients, and families.

And since we're pretty big on *experiential learning*, every chapter ends with **One Simple Step** you can put into practice today.

You'll also get access to our companion website with bonus handouts, full chapter references, and a downloadable workbook called **Your Food Positivity Practice: A Guided Playbook for Real-Life Parenting**. At the end of each chapter, we'll point you to the matching workbook page to keep the learning going.

Access All Companion Materials Here

Scan the QR code to find:

- Your Food Positivity Practice: A Guided Playbook for Real-Life Parenting
- Bonus handouts and tools
- Full chapter references and glossary



(Once you've scanned it, bookmark the page so you can find it easily as you read.)

Breaking the Cycle Starts Here

We know it's not easy. Undoing years (and maybe even decades) of food guilt, body shame, and rigid food rules isn't something that happens overnight.

You're not just feeding your kids.

You're rebuilding trust in food, in bodies, and in yourself.

You're breaking cycles that have shaped generations.

You're giving your child something you never had: the freedom to grow up feeling safe, confident, and at home in their own body. And that's powerful.

This journey won't be perfect. And that's okay. Because raising intuitive eaters who trust their own bodies isn't about getting every meal "right." It's about showing up, learning, and unlearning—one step at a time.

You don't have to do this alone.

We're here to help you rethink old narratives, navigate tricky moments, and give you the tools you need to raise a child who feels at peace with food and their body—for *life*.

You're here because something in you *knows* there's a better way.

This book will help you find it. Let's get started.

One Simple Step

Think back to something an adult said to you about food when you were younger. Do you still hear that voice in your head today? Did it help you eat "better," or does it bring up guilt, shame, or confusion?

Now ask yourself: What voices do you want your child to hear in their head when they grow up?

Let that question guide you as you read this book.

Your Food Positivity Practice

Exploring My Food & Body Story: *Where My Beliefs Begin*

problem-solving, 132
 processed foods, rethinking, 79–81
 Protective Shield. *See* Food Positivity
 Protective Shield
 protein, 71, 72
 daily needs, 72
 protein-sparing effect, 72

Q

Quetelet, Adolphe, 6
 quick versus slow energy, 77, 105, 112,
 114–116, 128

R

real health, elements of, 7–8
 red foods, 121
 red light food, 310
 regular meals and snacks, 190–191, 229
 regulation, checking regulation
 first, 230, 231
 reset rituals, creating, 262
 responsive exploration, 261–262
 avoiding labeling the moment, 266
 celebrating without pressure, 266
 growth mindset language,
 encouraging, 263
 keeping meals low-stakes and
 engaging, 265
 multiple varieties/forms for discovery, 264
 “no big reaction” parenting, 264–265
 normalizing dislike, 264
 noticing and transitioning, 263
 pairing familiar foods with
 exploration, 264
 playful mealtimes, 262
 reset rituals, creating, 262
 responsive parenting and responsive
 feeding, 158
 restriction, scarcity and food elevation (Food
 Talk Trap), 116–117
 roots of diet culture, 15
 access vs. “better choices,” 23
 assimilation and “Americanization” (late
 1800s–early 1900s), 19
 colonization and early food systems
 (1600s), 18
 diet culture makeover
 (2010s–present), 22

dieting as big business (1980s–2000s), 22
 food stigma, lasting legacy of, 22
 mainstreaming of diet culture
 (1950s–1970s), 20–21
 origin of food and body rules, 16–17
 rise of “healthy eating” as moral standard
 (1900s), 19–20
 transatlantic slave trade and food
 oppression (1700s), 19

S

SAFE approach to raising next
 generation, 335
 adequacy of, 343
 from broader systems to everyday
 moments, 337–338
 community support in building Food
 Positivity, 343
 full SAFE application, example
 of, 342–343
 parental healing alongside SAFE
 practice, 343
 parental healing around food and body
 narratives, 336–337
 as practical guidance tool, 338–339
 SAFE model characteristics, 340
 Autonomy, 340
 Experience, 341
 Flexibility, 340–341
 Safety, 340
 safety, positive family value, 141–142
 Satter, Ellyn, 176, 177, 180, 234
 saturated fats, 74
 school food, 310, 313. *See also* Learning
 Foundations in school food
 exploration
 school nutrition lessons, 305
 beloved foods, harmful messaging
 about, 310–311
 culturally relevant foods, harmful labeling
 of, 311–312
 developmental mismatch in, 311
 difficulty recognizing harm in,
 307–308
 failures in, 310–313
 fear-based body messaging in, 312–313
 food education, 310
 food literacy, 310

- school nutrition lessons (*Continued*)
 - “healthy choices” lessons, limitations of, 306–307
 - Learning Foundations in school food exploration, 314–317
 - nutrition education, 309–310
 - obedience-based approaches in, 312
 - partnering with schools on food and nutrition lessons, 318–320
 - reframing food education, 318
 - revealing underlying problems in, 313–314
 - school-level changes in nutrition education, 317–318
 - systemic problems in, 308–309
 - schools
 - Body-Positive approaches in, 316
 - Developmental Attunement in, 315
 - experience-based and joyful learning in, 316
 - inclusive practices in, 317
 - science behind Food Positivity, xx–xxi
 - science vs. nutrition lessons, 308
 - scientific racism and medicine, 26–27
 - screen time of children, 298
 - selective eating, 191
 - self-narration, reclaiming, 41
 - Self-Regulation, 58–60, 159, 180, 226, 239, 247, 249
 - self-sacrifice, negative family value, 140
 - sensations, naming and
 - normalizing, 245–246
 - sensory differences—learning eaters, 192
 - sensory needs, 203
 - sensory sensitivities, 64, 188, 195. *See also* feeding differences
 - shared-care approach, 277
 - simple carbohydrates, 75–76
 - slave gardens, 19
 - snacks, xviii, 3, 58, 68, 69, 72, 83, 109, 119, 161, 193, 198, 201, 219, 228, 231, 232, 249, 293, 313, 342
 - anytime access to, 164
 - bedtime boundaries around, 162
 - consistent schedule for, 164, 229
 - flexibility around timing of, 173
 - packaged, 12
 - planned bedtime snack, 233–234
 - predictable and regular access to, 190–191
 - with protein or fat, 77
 - regular meals and, 229
 - repeated requests for, 59
 - school rules and labeling around, 306
 - self-regulation, role in, 59
 - shame from moralized labeling of, 310
 - whole-grain, 77
 - Social Determinants of Health (SDoH), 8, 118, 175, 296, 324
 - health as a house, 9–10
 - social-emotional learning (SEL), 95, 310, 315
 - soluble fiber, 77
 - starches, 76
 - stereotypes, harm from, 32
 - stewardship
 - environmental, 147
 - financial, 148
 - sugar, xix, 74–77, 89, 104, 116, 117, 118, 127, 180, 234, 247, 282, 283, 301, 306, 310, 313
 - “Superfood” label cycle, 18
 - supplement use, thoughtful, 238
 - supportive care, missed opportunities for, 328
 - supportive leadership, positive family value, 141
 - supportive reassurance, 247–248
 - sweets, 183, 234, 235, 239
 - systemic change in food and body environment, 289
 - advocacy for, 302–304
 - child as central influence, 292
 - chronosystem, 296–297
 - critical thinking as child’s inner filter, 297–298
 - Ecosystem of Food and Body Learning, 291
 - exosystem, 294–295
 - influences outside the home, 290–291
 - macrosystem, 295–296
 - media, spotting diet culture in, 298–299
 - media consumption patterns, 300–302
 - media literacy for children, 299–300
 - mesosystem, 293–294
 - microsystem, 292–293
- T**
- talking to kids about food, 223
 - bedtime snack, planned, 233–234
 - checking regulation first, 230, 231

- connection outside of mealtimes, 230
- favorite foods offered unlimited at
 - planned times, 234–235
- food exposure, gentle, 236–237
- food requests, responding to, 231–236
- G.U.I.D.E. tool, 224–227
- gentle limits on one food with other
 - options available, 239
- Growing Needs come before nutrition, 237
- “Let’s Have It Soon” strategy, 232, 236
- matching meals to hunger
 - patterns, 229–230
- nutrition through preferred foods, 237–238
- one portion of dessert with dinner, 234
- positive language, using, 230–231
- preferred foods offered often, 233
- regular meals and snacks, 229
- reliable food-related phrases for parents, 227–229
- scripts and scenarios, 229–231
- supplement use, thoughtful, 238
- supporting children when nutrition concerns arise, 236–239
- value-based decision-making, 227
- variety, modeling, 237
- “Would You Like to Add” strategy, 235
- Teacher One-Pager, 319
- teens (13+ years)
 - body oppression, 252
 - Developmental Attunement in, 128
 - interpreting others’ messages about food/ bodies, 283–284
 - understanding of food and bodies, 108–109
- thinness, 21
- thinness, pursuit of, 25
 - eating behaviors spectrum, 30–31
 - eating disorders, prevalence and neglect, 30
 - eating disorders, under
 - recognition of, 31–32
 - food and body oppression, bridging, 26
 - scientific racism and medicine, 26–27
 - stereotypes, harm from, 32
 - trauma, sensory needs, and mental health, role of, 33
 - yo-yo dieting cycle, 29
- toddlers (1–3 years)
 - food exploration, 267
 - understanding of food and bodies, 101–102
- transatlantic slave trade and food oppression (1700s), 19
- trauma, sensory needs, and mental health,
 - role of, 33
- trauma, stress, and food insecurity, 202
- trauma and food insecurity, role of, 11–12
- trauma and sensory overload, feeding through, 202
- Trotter, Whitney, 33
- tweens
 - body oppression (11–12 years), 252
 - Developmental Attunement in (9–12 years), 128
 - food exploration (10–12 years), 268
 - interpreting others’ messages about food/ bodies (11–12 years), 283
 - understanding of food and bodies (10–12 years), 107
- U**
 - “underweight” group, 7, 32, 329
 - “unhealthy” food, 20, 24, 47, 96, 282, 308, 309, 311, 318, 319
 - unsupervised screen use, 298
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 19
- V**
 - value-based boundary setting, 279
 - value-based decision-making, 227
 - value-driven parenting, contrast with
 - fear-driven parenting, 144–145
 - variety, modeling, 237
 - vitamin A, 79
 - vitamin D, 79
 - vitamin K, 79
- W**
 - War on Fat, 20
 - weight, relationship to health, 5
 - weight-centric care, limitations of, 325
 - weight cycling, 28, 29
 - weight-inclusive care, 328–331
 - weight stigma, 28, 34
 - as a health threat, 28–29

Weight Watchers, 20

Kurbo app, 29

well-being, positive family value, 143

wellness, 22

Western food guides, 17

Western medicine, 17

Whole-Child approach, 49, 125, 159,
210, 257, 323

Body-Positive healthcare

practices, 331–332

child development and autonomy
overlooked, 326

compliance-based care rather than
curiosity or connection, 327

Developmentally Attuned care, 331

experience-based and joyful approaches
in healthcare, 332

families framed as at fault, 327

Food Positivity Learning

Foundations, 331

harmful messaging that bodies are a
problem, 326

inclusive healthcare practices, 332

missed opportunities for
supportive care, 328

partnering with providers on child's
care, 333–334

weight-centric care, limitations of, 325

weight-inclusive care, 328–331

whole-grain snacks, 77

Wolfram, Taylor, 148–149

World Health Organization (WHO), 7

“Would You Like to Add” strategy, 235

Y

yo-yo dieting, 28, 29

Z

zinc, 79