

Mommies of the clean-plate club

“Finish your food!” “Your plate should look clean!” “I shouldn't see a single morsel of food left.” “So many children in Africa/Bangladesh/India are starving.”

If you're a parent, you may have inevitably used one or more of the phrases above. In fact, it's a common affair for children to hear these idioms during most meal times.

If you're a believer of this theory yourself and love your child as much as the next person, below are five good reasons to give up membership of the clean-plate club today:

1. Is this really how you'd like to teach your child empathy? He/she overeating and finishing his/her plate of food won't solve the food shortage and starvation problems of the world
2. Children are intelligent and bright. Up until the age of five, they can self-regulate how much food they need based on their internal hunger cues. If you continually force-feed them, they will lose these internal cues
3. Along similar lines, force-feeding at each meal would cause the child to overeat (eating more than his/her bodily requirements at that time). This in turn would lead to a slump in their levels of agility and alertness—simple pleasures that you certainly don't want to deprive your child of; not ever but especially not at an age where they are growing up and discovering numerous things with each passing minute
4. Do we really want to decide how much they should eat at each meal and raise them to be ever-dependent as opposed to independent thinkers and decision-makers?
5. As a parent, it's a cycle you will have started very early for yourself. Childhood spent asking them to eat more and subsequently, adolescence spent asking them to eat less

Save yourself the drama and for the most part, let them do as they please. To tackle the wastage issue, teach them to underserve and re-serve themselves as opposed to take on a huge portion onto their plate all at once. Trust us—this won't make you a bad mother.

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