GENTLE REMINDER

by:
Carlito C. Pontillas
Principal I, Mariveles National High School – Alasasin (Annex)

It is a mandate from the Department of Education (DepEd) that every school must conduct a supplementary feeding program. This is to address the issue of malnutrition which was found out to be one of the many reasons to hamper an ideal teaching and learning process.

In response to the mandate, the school authorities exhausted all efforts to finance the said program. Because of these efforts and with the help of generous individuals, the supplementary feeding program materialized and envisioned to prevent malnutrition. This act of a good Samaritan paved way to help a lot of children suffering from malnutrition.

Contrary to the notion that malnutrition is viewed as one of the results of poverty, an everyday school scenario could prove that it is not only poverty which leads to malnutrition. Even children from a well-off family suffers from this condition or is categorized as wasted, severely wasted or obese. Parents become in denial of such results with contradicting statements that their children have not been taken for granted especially in the issue of physical health. This leads to retraction of these children from the list of potential beneficiaries of the feeding program. This is one of the reasons why amidst the efforts of the schools to lessen and eventually eradicate a list of malnourished children, annual nutritional status reports that every year there are still children who suffer from this poor health condition.
Parents should always be positive and open to ideas by following some clues why their children are under or over nourished for their children could be picky eaters. Children who are picky eaters are but a normal stage though how frustrating it could be.

The following could help them parents go through this stage with flying colors:

1. Be patient. Children especially in the elementary grades need more exposure to new food and/or expose children to risks of children not eating vegetables. Have a rotation of variety of foods prepared on the table and let them decide of trying or not trying.

2. Cut back on portions. The stomach of a toddler is just a size of a fist. Small portions or slices could be of help to motivate children to try what has been presented and tickle their curiosity.

3. Be creative. Parents must be funny and innovative in food presentation. Colorful ways in arranging food in a bowl or a platter could be of help.

4. Do not force your child to eat. Pressure could backfire and may make food unpleasant for everyone. As this stage is just normal, parents must not push their children for them not to be displeased of food presented and resort to unhealthy snacks.

5. Do not use dessert as a bribe. Better if the children could have a little of desserts no matter what they eat. This could give them an idea that sweets can be a small part of a healthy diet.

As the education sector exerts all effort to eradicate the issue malnutrition, parents must also be in consonance with the department in battling this condition.