

Mealtime Is More Than Feeding

Everyday activities, like mealtime, are fantastic opportunities for children to learn. When caregivers use responsive strategies, children develop healthy eating habits, self-help skills, communication, and strong relationships with the important people in their lives.



Make the **Most** of mealtime with these strategies:

Seat Your Child Safely

Make sure they're seated upright with no slouching.

Join Your Child

Sit and eat with them. Model how to use utensils and enjoy your meal together.

Make Mealtimes Social

Talk with your child about the food, what they're doing, and what you enjoy about the experience.

Encourage Food Exploration

Let your child touch, smell, finger-feed, and hold utensils to explore their meal.

Introduce New Foods

Pair new items with foods or sauces your child already likes.

Offer Choices

Give options for types and amounts of food to support independence and communication.

Respond to Your Child's Cues

Let them decide how much to eat instead of encouraging them to clean their plate.

Embrace The Messiness

Let your child dip, squish, and play with their food to get comfortable with new textures and flavors.

Avoid Distractions

Turn off the TV and other distractions so your child can focus on eating, expressing preferences, and enjoying your attention.

Serve Age-Appropriate Foods

Offer a variety of safe, easy-to-grasp foods with different tastes, colors, and textures.

Create A Mealtime Routine

A consistent schedule helps your child know what to expect and feel secure.



Family, Infant and Preschool Program
of the
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