

MEALTIME

SUPPORTING EXPLORATION AND SENSORY DEVELOPMENT

Children with vision impairments learn best through hands-on experiences. Touching, moving, listening, and interacting with objects and people helps them understand how things work and connect. Everyday routines—like circle time, playground, or going to centers—offer consistent, familiar moments to explore, communicate, and make sense of the world around them.

Prepare the child by telling them what you are going to do **before** you do it.



PREPARE THE ENVIRONMENT

- Notice and adjust room lighting and sound.
- Consider allowing the child to wear a visor or hat.
- Use predictable placement of mealtime objects.
- Provide wait time for the child to respond.
- Remember to think about using the child's best visual field.
- Think about opportunities to use visual contrast.



WHAT TO SAY

WHAT TO TRY

"Time to eat, let's go find your chair at the table."	Help the child locate their chair using a cue.
"You're next to Emily, she has a red shirt."	Use peers to help the child locate their spot.
"I heard the door and the cart. Lunch is here."	Use sounds to find the door/cart.
"Your cup is on the left. Your milk is cold."	Help the child find their cup. Keep it consistent.
"Applesauce is on your plate. It's wet and sweet."	Support the child in locating and exploring food.
"All done. Wash your hands at the sink."	Use cues to help the child go to the sink.



WHAT TO TEACH

- Colors
- Textures
- Locations
- Mealtime objects
- Foods/drinks
- Hungry/thirsty
- Temperature
- More/all done
- Sounds
- Smells/taste

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Licking lips
- Reaching/Pushing food away
- Widening eyes, making eye contact
- Making or imitating sounds or words
- Facial expressions/interacting with peers



End mealtime the **same** way each time so the child learns when they are done.