## Eating Together: The Family Meal

## Mealtime Considerations

$\square$ Focus on modeling during mealtime; never force your child to eat.Every meal should have:

- at least 1 starch, 1 protein, and 1 fruit/vegetable
- preferred food and non-preferred food
$\square$ Use family-style serving (i.e., bowls of food are placed in the middle of the table in which everyone is served from)
$\square$ Use a "learning plate" if needed (i.e., a small plate with your child's less preferred and/or novel foods placed next to their regular plate)The goal is to have at least four family meals per week



## Flow of a Family Meal

Provide a verbal prompt to prepare
E.g., "We are going to eat in 5 minutes."

Start a transition activity
E.g., Wash hands, clean up toys, set table, etc.

Sit at the table
Everyone starts with an empty plate.

## Serve everyone family-style

- Everyone eats for the first 10 minutes
o Let your child do what they can by themselves
- If your child is not eating after 10 minutes, help them engage with the food
o Use positive comments and teach about the food (i.e., talk about sensory properties like color, texture, and shape)
o Avoid words like "yummy" and "yucky"
o Your child can request more of the mealtime foods, but avoid bringing out additional foods from outside of the meal.


## Begin the clean-up routine after 30 min*

- Your child will line up one piece of each food group or dish from the family meal (including what is on the learning plate) and either throw, blow, or kiss the item into the trash bin
o Your child will bring the rest of the leftover food and plates to the sink
- At this time the kitchen is CLOSED (only water may come out of the kitchen after this point)

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[^0]:    *If your child cannot sit for 30 minutes yet, it's okay to do clean-up sooner

