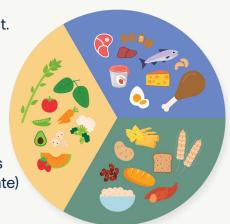


Eating Together: The Family Meal

Mealtime Considerations

- ☐ 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
- Use **family-style serving** (i.e., bowls of food are placed in the middle of the table in which everyone is served from)
- 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)

^{*}If your child cannot sit for 30 minutes yet, it's okay to do clean-up sooner