

Table Time Tips

Show your child how we eat together

- Have an adult eat with your child.
- Focus on the food, not the child's behaviour
- Show your child what to do. Use big actions. For example, you can say "I have food on my tongue", "I will chew it with my teeth".
- Talk about the food. What colour is it? Is it soft?
- Your child must stay at the table. Make sure they sit correctly in the 90, 90, 90 position.
- Make food fun
- Let your child help you cook food.



Do the same thing every meal time

- Start: Wash hands
- Middle: Give everyone plates. Serve the food from a big bowl to the plates. Put new food on a "learning plate" in the middle of the table.
- End: Clean up. Putting food in the bin lets your child touch the food. Have a "bin" at the table for your child to put food into. This will let you know when they have finished eating.
- Give them one food they like every meal
- Keep each meal to no longer than 30 minutes
- A child should eat every 2 – 2.5 hours.



Praise eating

- For example, you can say “good eating” or “well done for trying that fruit!”
- Praise other children and adults for eating
- Praise your child for touching and smelling food. Let them play with food! Help them make food fun.

Teach them about food

- 0 – 3 years – Talk about how food looks, smells, and feels. Talk about how food changes. Teach them words they can use to talk about food.
 - e.g. Use your fingers to show if food is hard or soft
 - e.g. Use a spoon to show how much food they can put in their mouth.
- 3 – 7 years – Use play to pretend to eat. Teach them how food makes them strong and helps them play.
 - e.g. Your tummy makes noise when it is hungry
 - e.g. Tell them how a new food is similar to a food they already like
 - e.g. Change food to look or feel similar to a food they like

Stop ‘food jags’!

- A ‘food jag’ is when the child eats the same food cooked the same way at every meal. Your child may get tired of eating the same food and stop eating it.
- Make a list of foods your child is eating. This will help you plan meals, so you can choose a different food they like for each meal.

10 times rule!

- Your child has to try a new food 10 times before they can decide they do not like it. Each time has to be at a new meal.
- You could say to your child “People have to try something 10 times to know if they like it or not”.