

CARE Connection

Happy Mealtimes Family Materials

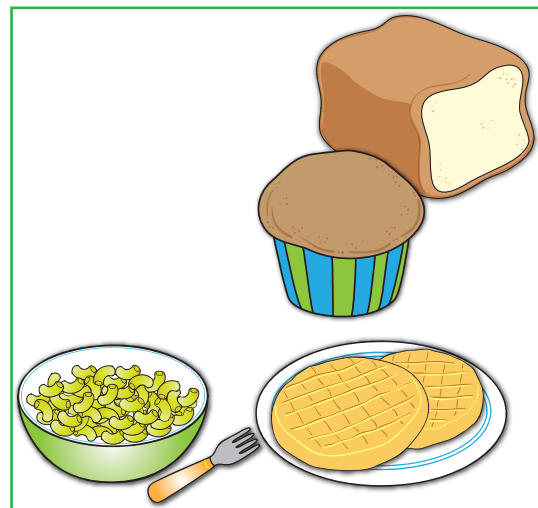
A Family Guide to Mealtime with Children

- Eat with your child and set a good example. Children eat what they see others eating and enjoying.
- Have regularly scheduled meals and snacks. Children usually need to eat every 2-3 hours during the day.
- Introduce new foods with old favorites. Children are more likely to try a new food when they feel they have choices.
- Encourage your child to serve his/her own plate.



- Avoid using games or bribes to get your child to eat. Avoid forcing your child to eat.
- When your child does not want to eat, make it clear that food will be available at the next regularly scheduled meal or snack but not before.

- Make mealtime pleasant and relaxed. Children eat best when they do not feel pressured during mealtimes.
- Offer new foods regularly. It's normal for children to be hesitant about trying new foods. Children often need to see a new food 6 to 12 times before they want to try it.



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- Create a mealtime environment that focuses on positive family conversation.
- Let your child help plan and prepare family meals. Setting the table can be a proud accomplishment for a child.
- Use books and activities to increase your child's interest in food and eating. Take a trip to the library and look for children's books that tell a positive story about eating and healthy food choices.
- Plant and tend a garden with your child. Children enjoy eating vegetables they help grow. (Hint: Choose some fast-growing vegetables such as lettuce or radishes.)

