

Make Mealtimes Learning Times

Mealtimes are great opportunities for preschoolers to have conversations, use their manners, and even practice math. Here are some ways to keep the fun and learning going at your next family meal.

Set the table. Together you and your child can count the number of forks you need, note where each piece of silverware goes, and point out that there is one place setting for each person. This lets preschoolers use and practice an important math skill: one-to-one correspondence.

Try new foods. Preschoolers learn to be more independent and open-minded when they choose to try a new food. Vary the foods you serve and introduce new items. Set a good example by trying the food first and describing why you like it. Be patient! It can take up to 12 tries before a child decides she likes a new food.

Talk during the meal. Talking with preschoolers helps them learn new words and understand how to use sentences. They can share their ideas, tell you about the day's events, and make requests. Encourage listening too, so preschoolers can learn about taking turns and the patterns and rhythms of conversation.

Encourage self-service. Preschoolers are able to use utensils, drink from cups, serve themselves, and more. Help your child grow his independence. He can prepare his own plate and pour a drink from a small pitcher.

A message from your child's teacher
