

# Cook Together. Eat Together. Talk Together. Making Meals and Memories



## Relaxing Mealtime Know-How



**Remove distractions.** Turn off the television and computer, and avoid talking on the phone or texting. Focus your attention on each other.

**Talk to each other.** Talk about what made you laugh or what you did for fun today. Ask questions!

**Pass on traditions.** Tell the kids about the foods your mom and grandma made that you loved to eat as a child.

**Let go a little to gain a lot.** It's natural for moms to worry about their preschoolers' eating habits. Offer healthy foods, and let your kids choose from them. This will make mealtimes more enjoyable for everyone.



## Relaxing Kitchen Ideas



**Set a regular schedule for meal times.** Young children need routines to practice new skills like trying healthy foods.

**Patience works better than pressure.** Let children choose how much to eat. Kids are more likely to enjoy new foods when eating them is their own choice.

**Help your children feel more independent.** Let them pick from healthy food choices you offer. For example, they may choose between an apple, an orange, or a whole-wheat pita with salsa for a snack.

## Active Engagement

**Cooking together** can mean more “mommy and me” time on busy nights.



**Take them shopping.** Ask your kids to pick a new fruit or vegetable that they want to try for dinner.

**Let them learn by serving themselves.** Let your kids serve themselves at dinner. Teach them to take small amounts at first. Assure them they can get more if they're still hungry.

**Let everyone help.** Kids learn by doing. The younger one might get the napkins while the older kids help with fixing foods and clean-up.

## Trying New Foods

### *Start Simple, and Be Patient.*

Kids learn to like new foods by

- having them offered over and over;
- having them served with familiar foods;
- seeing friends, older kids, and grown-ups eating these foods;
- tasting them prepared in different ways;
- choosing foods to try themselves; and
- starting with small amounts.

Find quick and tasty recipes that don't cost a lot to make at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardhealthylifestyle/QuickandEasy/smartstartrecipes.htm>.



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