



FAMILY STYLE MEAL TIPS

- Get everyone involved in meal prep. Setting the table is fun for children.
- Make mealtimes fun and distraction-free.
- Introduce a new food at least once per week. family-style meals are the perfect opportunity to expose children to a variety of new foods.
- Include whole grains, a variety of fruits and vegetables, a calcium-rich food and a protein source.
- Allow children to serve themselves. This helps the child develop independence and autonomy, further strengthening their skills.
- Be a positive role model. Model food acceptance by offering and choosing a variety of different foods at meal times

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY STYLE MEALS

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Sitting down for family-style meals can help you slow down and connect with loved ones. It's no secret, they can also help you eat more mindfully. What you might not know is that Family-style meals may also be the best-kept secret to address picky eating, nutrition, and even mental health issues in your family. There's research to back this up!

Did you know that children eat more nutritious foods like fresh fruits, vegetables, and calcium-rich foods when participating in Family-style meals? They also have less micronutrient deficiencies and improved psychological and academic success.

Children who regularly participate in family-style meals have been shown to spend more time in healthful, extracurricular activities like art projects, sports, and community activities. They also have more success in school.

As children get older, those who participate in family-style meals are more emotionally and socially well-adjusted with lower rates of early drug and alcohol-use.

Making an effort for sit-down, family-style meal and snack times can not only help children develop independence and autonomy, it also provides a learning opportunity for proper table manners and social skills.

Family-style meals give children the opportunity to determine which foods they will eat and how much of them they will eat. This allows children to be exposed to a variety of foods without the pressure that pre plated meals bring. They also expose children to new foods in a calm, relaxed, and natural setting.

During meal times, providing a variety of both nutrient-rich and fun foods allows children to practice listening to their internal regulation system around food and eating.

Family style meals in preschools and care settings allow children to get familiar with the family style setting. Parents can support this experience by starting this tradition at home as well.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can incorporate family style meals into the home routine, check out the tips to the left.

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