



Minding the Baby®
home visitation program

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Greetings from Minding the Baby®

It's hard to believe that summer is passing and fall is upon us. You may be going back to school or sending your child off to school. This can be a tough time. We hope it's going well for you. Remember that sticking to routines can be helpful for you and your child. This can include mealtimes! Enjoy your routines for preparing and eating meals together. Make it fun!



Building Healthy Habits With Family Meals



Life is busy. It may not always work, but there are so many reasons to eat together when you can!

Strengthen family ties just by talking to each other! Ask each other what happened during the day. Share a "happy" moment from the day. Take turns saying something you are thankful for

each day. Routines and traditions are important. They help make a child feel happy and secure!

Teach your child good habits. Children learn from the adults around them. During family meals, you can teach your child to politely pass and ask for food and not grab. Children can also learn not to talk with their mouths full. You can model good table manners for your child, and build good eating habits for a lifetime of meal sharing.

Why eat as a family?

It's good for you and your child!

Research shows that children who eat with family...

- learn about their family's values
- eat more fruits and veggies, and less fat
- have less risk of becoming overweight
- do better in school
- make better decisions



Why don't families eat together?

Have you heard yourself making these excuses?

"Our schedules are too busy."

"I don't have time to cook."

"It's more comfy on the couch."

"I can't go grocery shopping today."

"I'm too tired!"



Combat the Excuses:

Tips for Fun Family Eating!

- Try to plan ahead. Plan out family meals together!

Budget for food, plan meals, and shop for fresh foods on sale ahead of time. If you don't have much time during the week, cook on the weekend and reheat meals during the week.

- Involve your child!

Children love to feel like they are a part of things. Let them help! Young children can set the table or toss a salad. Older children can help prepare food, or wash fruit or veggies.

- Keep meals simple and calm.

Turn off the TV, video games, cell phones, and the computer.

Try not to discipline your child during the meal. Remember that your child does not need a "clean plate" after every meal!

- Enjoy being together!

Focus on the positive -- enjoying your food and your family.

Change is hard! If you start to plan just two or three meals together per week, you're doing great!



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