

Mealtime Conversation Starters

<p>What is the nicest thing you did for someone today? What is the nicest thing someone did for you</p>	<p>What foods on the table are crunchy? What foods are chewy? What foods are sweet? What foods are spicy?</p>
<p>What storybooks do you like to read? Is there a special book you would like to read together after dinner?</p>	<p>If you could be any kind of food, what would you like to be? What would be fun about being that food?</p>
<p>What is one of your favorite colors? Do you see anything on the table that is that color?</p>	<p>Create your own question.</p>
<p>What kinds of food do you like to eat best for breakfast (lunch, dinner or when we go to a restaurant)?</p>	<p>If you could be any animal in the world for a day, which animal would it be? Why?</p>
<p>What made you smile, laugh, feel sad or happy today?</p>	<p>Would you like to help plan dinner for tomorrow night? What foods would you like to help cook for dinner?</p>

10 tips be a healthy role model for children

Nutrition Education Series



You are the most important influence on your child. You can do many things to help your children develop healthy eating habits for life. Offering a variety of foods helps children get the nutrients they need from every food group. They will also be more likely to try new foods and to like more foods. When children develop a taste for many types of foods, it's easier to plan family meals. Cook together, eat together, talk together, and make mealtime a family time!

- 1 show by example**
Eat vegetables, fruits, and whole grains with meals or as snacks. Let your child see that you like to munch on raw vegetables.
- 2 go food shopping together**
Grocery shopping can teach your child about food and nutrition. Discuss where vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein foods come from. Let your children make healthy choices.
- 3 get creative in the kitchen**
Cut food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters. Name a food your child helps make. Serve "Janie's Salad" or "Jackie's Sweet Potatoes" for dinner. Encourage your child to invent new snacks. Make your own trail mixes from dry whole-grain, low-sugar cereal and dried fruit.
- 4 offer the same foods for everyone**
Stop being a "short-order cook" by making different dishes to please children. It's easier to plan family meals when everyone eats the same foods.
- 5 reward with attention, not food**
Show your love with hugs and kisses. Comfort with hugs and talks. Choose not to offer sweets as rewards. It lets your child think sweets or dessert foods are better than other foods. When meals are not eaten, kids do not need "extras"—such as candy or cookies—as replacement foods.
- 6 focus on each other at the table**
Talk about fun and happy things at mealtime. Turn off the television. Take phone calls later. Try to make eating meals a stress-free time.
- 7 listen to your child**
If your child says he or she is hungry, offer a small, healthy snack—even if it is not a scheduled time to eat. Offer choices. Ask "Which would you like for dinner: broccoli or cauliflower?" instead of "Do you want broccoli for dinner?"
- 8 limit screen time**
Allow no more than 2 hours a day of screen time like TV and computer games. Get up and move during commercials to get some physical activity.
- 9 encourage physical activity**
Make physical activity fun for the whole family. Involve your children in the planning. Walk, run, and play with your child—instead of sitting on the sidelines. Set an example by being physically active and using safety gear, like bike helmets.
- 10 be a good food role model**
Try new foods yourself. Describe its taste, texture, and smell. Offer one new food at a time. Serve something your child likes along with the new food. Offer new foods at the beginning of a meal, when your child is very hungry. Avoid lecturing or forcing your child to eat.

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