



OCTOBER: Family Meals Matter

Importance of Family Meals

Eating together as a family benefits children in many ways. When families eat an engaging meal together **3-4 times per week**, research shows that there is a higher chance of:

- Increase vocabulary in young children,
- Early reading,
- Better academic performance,
- Increase in fruit and vegetable intake,
- and lower risk of obesity.



Here are a few things you can do to help make dinners happen:

Plan Ahead

Put family meals on the calendar - just as you would any after school activity. Aim to include as many as you can, but even a few will have benefits.

Keep it Simple

The meal doesn't need to be gourmet, it just needs to happen. Choose foods you are comfortable cooking and your family enjoys. Takeout works too, as long as you are eating together.

Time to Talk

In addition to being together, engaging in conversation is an important part of family meals! Encourage them to talk about their day and tell stories. Prompt them to elaborate with hows and whys instead of yes or no questions.

Additional Resources

- [Easy Weeknight Meals](#)
- <https://thefamilydinnerproject.org/>
- <https://theconversation.com/science-says-eat-with-your-kids-34573>
- [The Picky Eater Project](#)
- [Books to help your picky eater](#)

