



Social & Emotional Strategies:



An Early Learning Resource

Sharing a meal together can be both educational and enjoyable! Here are some great ways to help your child develop healthy social and emotional habits.

Preparing Your Meal:

- You could begin your discussion about the meal you will create by reading a book. Suggestions: “Spaghetti with the Yeti” by Adam and Charlotte Guillain and “Growing Vegetable Soup” by Lois Ehlert.
- Discuss the book and the purpose of the meal you will create.
- Make a list together of the ingredients needed.
- Go over rules for the kitchen as well as proper etiquette while eating.



Ways to be Successful in the Kitchen:

- Discuss knives – specifically the reasons for why an adult should only use sharp knives.
- Talk with your child about why appliances, such as a stove, microwave, blender, dishwasher, garbage disposal, etc., should only be used with an adult.
- Go over “hot items” in the kitchen, such as the stove or oven, explaining the danger of high temperatures.
- Explain the importance of a “listening body” while working in the kitchen, such as following directions and active listening.
- Be a model for your child when working in the kitchen and talk to them about helpful hands and kind words when working together.



Eating Together:

- Practice healthy habits such as washing hands before eating.
- Show manners by waiting until everyone has been seated before eating as well as using words such as “please,” “thank you,” and “excuse me.”
- Meal time is a great opportunity to converse about positive topics: one’s day, the meal, special interests, etc.
- Model healthy eating habits such as nutritious choices, appropriate portions, and trying new foods.
- Encourage your child to stay seated in a calm manner during dinner as well as to eat the food at the meal versus having a snack later.
- Establishing positive mealtime expectations and consistency might take time and effort, but it is well worth it! Children will enjoy meal time when there are clear expectations set and they are able to be part of the process.

Stay Positive:

- Giving your child positive feedback can go a long way! Catch your child making positive choices:
 - “Thank you for helping me plan dinner tonight. I love working together!”
 - “I love how you are using your inside voice at the dinner table.”



*You're doing
a great job!*