



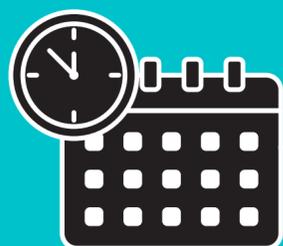
E.A.T

Speech Therapy

Moving Meals from TV to Table

There are so many benefits to eating at the table, particularly for our picky eaters! They are exposed to foods that they may not be eating yet (which in turn can help them learn to like these foods!); they engage in the social aspect of mealtime which helps to increase enjoyment and eating at the table is also incredibly helpful for building structure around meals and snacks.

However, in today's busy world it can also be really difficult to achieve. Particularly if you're little human is resistant! So, if the perfect family dinner times aren't working for you right now. Shed that Mum guilt and know that mealtimes are complex for our little humans! Below are some steps that, when used together, can support a gradual move towards eating at the table more often. For the full blog post related to this handout visit <https://www.eatspeechtherapy.co.uk/moving-mealtimes-from-tv-to-table/>



Routine - make mealtimes more predictable with a countdown, warnings and special mealtime rituals and roles



Schedule - meals and snacks 2.5-3 hours apart so you can be sure your child is hungry and not hangry when they get to the table.



Set expectations - "We sit at the table for dinner, if we get down the mealtime is finished and you can eat again at the next meal/snack time"



Small steps - start with how long your child can sit at the table for now and stretch to another two minutes.



Serve like and love it foods - putting these on the table helps to build comfort and confidence. to try



Buy yourself time - distract your child from wanting to leave the table by starting a conversation or engaging their curiosity about the food e.g. "Is your carrot harder than your broccoli?"



Seating - use foot support, towels and the high chair strap to ensure stability and comfort.



Ride out the meltdown - it's going to happen! Take a deep breath, stay calm, stay consistent.

If your child finds mealtimes frequently stressful, coughs/gags or eats less than 20 foods they may require specialist support. Contact www.eatspeechtherapy.co.uk for a free 15 minute consult.