

# THE MAGIC OF MEALTIME



*Make mealtime a safe and interactive space.*

Sitting down for a nightly meal is great for the brain, body, and spirit. The most reliable way for families to connect and find out what is going on with each other is by having regular meals together.

## Children who are regularly involved in family meals:

- ➡ Are more resilient
- 👑 Have higher self-esteem
- 🥦 Consume more fruits & vegetables
- 🚫 Eat fewer fried foods and soft drinks
- A+ Perform better in school and enjoy learning more

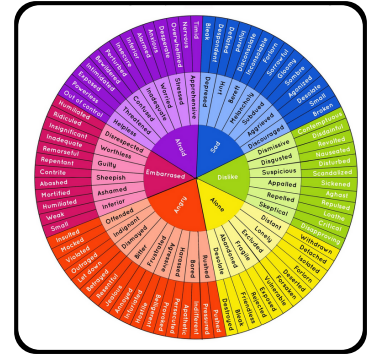
## Turn off electronics!

The dinner table atmosphere is also important. Turn off electronics, and use the time to create a safe time to share. When children trust that their feelings will be responded to with sensitivity, and respect they feel safe. They will be more honest and vulnerable with you, and open to having a conversation.

## 5 Tips for Encouraging Dinner Conversation with Your Kids:

- 1. Go beyond "How was your day?"** Asking open-ended questions results in one of two answers: fine or good. Kids usually don't elaborate, so try to ask more specific questions about their day. For example, *"What's something interesting that happened today?"*
- 2. Talk about your own day.** What better way to encourage conversation than by modeling it? Sharing about your own day helps your kids understand that as adults, we also have ups and downs in our days.
- 3. Share the good and bad.** We know that not every moment of each day is always good. We have moments of frustration, anger, sadness, or a variety of other emotions intertwined with the good parts of our days. It's good for your kids to share those ups and downs as well as hear your own. Try asking what the high/low of their day was.
- 4. Get them to imagine.** Asking questions that get your kids' thinking is a great way to have a fun conversation at the dinner table! From silly questions like *"If you were a superhero what power would you want to have?"* To more practical questions such as, *"How would you get food if you were stranded on an island?"* They love having fun debating and discussing! Be sure to add to the conversation by giving your own thoughts to such questions; oftentimes, your answers will inspire deeper thoughts from the kids.
- 5. Ask about the people in their daily life.** It's likely that your kids are with other people for the better part of their days - teachers, friends, and coaches - they all interact with our children regularly! Asking your children about those interactions or what's going on with their friends can often provide a peek into your child's daily life.

## Interactive Ideas:



[The Feelings Wheel is a great way to help your kids identify with words different emotions they felt throughout the day.](#)

If you could be in any movie, what movie would you choose?	What is your favorite chore? What about your least favorite?
What makes you feel loved?	What are you most proud of?
If you could only take 3 things to a deserted island what would you take?	What is the nicest thing anyone has ever said to you?
Where would you fly if you had wings?	Describe someone else at this table in 3 words.
If you could plan a family trip, where would we go and what would we do?	If you could be any animal, what would you be?
If you had one wish what would it be?	What is your least favorite color?
If you could plan a family trip, where would we go and what would we do?	If you could be any animal, what would you be?

[Fun conversation starter ideas to pull out of a jar!](#)