

Let's Eat—and Learn—Together!

Eating together as a family is an ideal way to build healthy eating habits. But that's not all that happens when you gather around the table for a meal. You also build bonds, and you can even help your youngsters practice skills they're learning in school. Use the advice in this guide.



Make time for meals

Is getting a nutritious meal on the table every night a challenge with your busy schedule? You're not alone! These tips can make it easier.

Plan ahead

Each week, talk about your schedule, and let your child write mealtimes on the calendar. It doesn't have to be dinner. If you know you're working late one evening, have him pencil in breakfast together. Share a picnic before his baseball practice. Or look forward to capping off a hectic week with a Saturday brunch.

Find shortcuts

No time to cook and eat? Skip the cooking part! Stop by the grocery store for a rotisserie chicken, microwavable "steam in the bag" potatoes, and a salad from the salad bar. Or make double batches of soups and casseroles on weekends, and freeze half to defrost during the week. Another idea is to set out a buffet of food you don't have to heat up, such as cold leftover chicken, cheese cubes, whole-wheat crackers, carrot and celery sticks with hummus, grapes, and apple slices.

Use teamwork

Involve your youngster in every aspect of family meals—from helping you prepare and cook food to setting the table and cleaning up afterward.



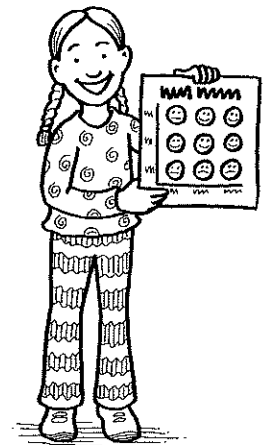
He'll gain experience following instructions and measuring ingredients. As he becomes more independent in the kitchen, his help will save you time.

Tip: Encourage family bonding by turning off the TV and putting silenced phones in another room during meals.

Introduce new foods

Inspire your child to try healthy new foods—and let her see you eating them, too. Then, for a fun math activity, she could graph family members' reactions to new foods.

1. Choose. Take her food shopping with you, and pick out something that's unfamiliar to both of you, like kimchi, bulgur wheat, acorn squash, or dandelion greens. Look up recipes in cookbooks or online to learn ways to cook what you select.



2. Try. Serve the new food at the start of a meal, when your youngster is hungry and more likely to try it. Encourage everyone to take some. Talk about the taste and texture, and what you like (or don't like) about it.

3. Graph. Now your child can make a graph with a column for each family member's name and blank rows to fill in as you sample more foods. Have her record each person's opinion by drawing an emoji: 😊 = "Love it," 😐 = "Just okay," or ☹️ = "Not a fan."

4. Share. After a week, let her report her data: "More people loved acorn squash than anything else we tried" or "Bulgur wheat got two more 'Love it' smiles than dandelion greens did."

Tip: Don't give up on 😐 or even ☹️ them in different ways, and your youngster may update her answer with a 😊.

PUBLIC RELEASE

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Children need healthy meals to learn. **Walker County School District** offers healthy meals every school day to your child(ren).

The **Walker County Department of Education School Nutrition Services** announces its policy for free and reduced-price meals for children unable to pay the full price served in schools under the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program. Local school officials have adopted the following family size and income criteria for determining eligibility.

FAMILY SIZE	COLUMN I FREE MEALS If Family Income is Within	COLUMN II REDUCED-PRICE MEALS If Family Income is Within
1	0 to 15,782	15,679 to 22,459
2	0 to 21,398	21,113 to 30,451
3	0 to 27,014	26,547 to 38,443
4	0 to 32,630	31,981 to 46,435
5	0 to 38,246	37,415 to 54,427
6	0 to 43,862	42,849 to 62,419
7	0 to 49,478	48,283 to 70,411
8	0 to 55,094	53,717 to 78,403

FOR EACH ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBER, ADD \$5,616 PER YEAR TO THE INCOME LEVEL FOR FREE MEALS AND \$7,992 TO THE INCOME LEVEL FOR REDUCED PRICE MEALS.

RED. PR. BREAKFAST COST:	<u>\$.00</u>	RED. PR. LUNCH COST:	<u>\$.40</u>
ELEMENTARY BRK	<u>\$.00</u>	ELEMENTARY LUNCH	<u>\$2.15</u>
MIDDLE/HIGH BRK	<u>\$.00</u>	MIDDLE/HIGH LUNCH	<u>\$2.35</u>

Because Walker County participates in Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternative Provision II, your child(ren) will receive breakfast meals at no charge.

Application forms are being sent to all homes with a letter to parents or guardians. To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households should fill out the application and return it to the school. Children from families whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Foster children may also be eligible for these meals. Families with foster children should contact the school for information regarding benefits. Additional forms are available at the principal's office in each school. The information provided on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and may be verified at any time with each school district required to verify a sample annually. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year.

For school officials to determine eligibility, households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) must list the child's name, their SNAP or TANF case number and the signature of an adult household member. Households not receiving SNAP or TANF must list: child's name, names of all household members, the last four digits of the social security number of a parent or guardian (or an indication that neither possesses a social security number), the amount of income received by each household member, identified by source and frequency, and the signature of an adult household member certifying that the information provided is correct. The information provided by the household is confidential and will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verifying data. We may inform officials connected with other child nutrition, health, and education programs of the information on your form to determine benefits for those programs or for funding and/or evaluation purposes.

If a household member becomes unemployed, or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the levels shown above.

Under the provisions of this policy, a school official will review applications and determine eligibility. If a parent is dissatisfied with the determination, he/she may contact the school either orally or in writing.

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NAME OF HEARING OFFICIAL	ADDRESS	PHONE

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