

ABCs OF Growing Healthy KIDS:



GOOD TIMES AT MEAL TIMES

“ Please pass the love, unity, and spaghetti. ”

An unlikely request? Perhaps. But in truth, that’s what you give your child when you sit down together at the family table.

This quote from Connie Evers, registered dietitian, in her article “Bringing Back Mealtimes” (*Healthy Kids Magazine*, December ‘94 /January ‘95), emphasizes the importance of family mealtimes. Getting everyone together for a meal can seem like an impossible task. But the benefits of eating together make family mealtime a tradition worth pursuing.

WHY EAT TOGETHER?

- **Nutrition.** Studies show most people eat more balanced meals and a wider variety of foods when they eat with family or friends. Shared meals also save money.
- **Tradition.** Food served at the family table helps to shape and give lasting meaning to your cultural heritage. Positive food memories created during childhood are cherished for life.
- **Family bond.** One strength of emotionally healthy families is spending time together. This includes eating meals together on a routine basis. Family meals offer a chance to communicate, helping to build a stronger bond and commitment to one another.

MAKING THE MOST OF FAMILY MEALTIMES

Just sitting together at the table does not always lead to fascinating family conversations or warm mealtime memories. Here are some ideas for making the most of family mealtimes.

1. Make family mealtimes a priority.

Emphasize the importance of mealtime together. If you’re like most families, you’re caught in a time crunch. Adults and youth all may hold jobs. There are sports, dance lessons, music lessons, homework, a house to clean, clothes to wash, perhaps an older parent or relative to care for, and many other obligations.



