

# Nutrition for Early Learning and Child Care

HEALTHY KIDS | HEALTHY SCHOOLS | HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



## Family Meals

### What is a family meal?

- A family meal is when adults and children share a meal together around a table.

### Family meals can...

- create a close bond between family members
- positively influence children's behavior and emotional health
- provide parents with an opportunity to role model positive eating behaviors
- improve intake of healthy food choices (more vegetables, fruit and milk, and less fat, sodium (salt))
- save you money (if you are cooking more meals at home)
- improve mental health, increase resilience, and enhance communication within families

### How do I get started?

- Plan ahead
- Develop a menu, shop for ingredients, organize tasks
- Aim for at least 3 meals together a week
- Could be breakfast, lunch or dinner

### Other tips

- Involve children in meal preparation, setting the table and cleaning up afterwards
- Avoid distractions at the table such as TV, cell phones, toys, etc.
- Engage in conversation about the food and the day's activities