



# PREPP ECS Newsletter

## Eat Your Words: Teaching kids to talk at mealtime

*Now that your child is relaxed and sitting at the table, take the opportunity to introduce some talking goals at mealtime.*

In many homes, mealtime is the most social event of the day; the family is back together after spending the day apart, it is a time to sit and chat about each person's day. With each family member taking a turn, your child learns to "use your words".

### Tips for "Table Talk"

Establishing a routine is important in creating a relaxing atmosphere for a family meal. Help your child anticipate the beginning of a meal by turning off the television, flicking the lights off and visiting the washroom to wash their hands. Giving every child a job to complete will involve them in the mealtime ritual, giving them a sense of responsibility and pride.

### Jobs for little ones

- Placing napkins on plates
- Putting buns in bread basket
- Getting their booster seat
- Wash the table with a damp cloth
- Setting plastic plates/cups out

### Expanding Vocabulary

The rituals of mealtime lend themselves well to practicing vocabulary.

- As you set the table, label the items as you set them out.
- Teach your child words (i.e. colour, size, taste) by describing food items.
  - \* For example, **orange cheese, sweet chocolate, salty crackers, yummy pudding, hot peas, spicy rice.**
- Talk about the colour, texture and shapes of food.
  - \*For example, **red pepper, crunchy toast, round cookie.**

- Before you begin your meal, take a moment to label the items on the table. "**Tonight we are having \_\_\_\_\_**".
- Cover items with lids, or in a basket, have your family guess what is underneath!
- There are many **action verbs** to practice at meals.
  - \* For example, **pour juice, drink milk, cut bread, spread butter, chew carrots**

### Requests and making choices

Practice requesting at mealtime as food is a powerful motivator. If your child reaches for food, ask them to "wait" and encourage them to use their words to request what they would like "**I want cheese please**" or "**more please**".

Some children can be particular when it comes to food they like to eat. Offering them a choice between two foods allows them a sense of control and encourages a successful meal. Label each, "peas, or potatoes" and expect your child to point with a vocalization to get his preference.

With a little practice, and an established routine, mealtime can become a rewarding learning experience for you, your child and your family!

### REMEMBER...

*All children with special needs require increased opportunities to practice independence skills. As adults, we often anticipate our child's needs and do it for them (as it is usually faster). The biggest gift we can give them is the time and opportunity to practice independence skills from a very early age. Taking risks and making mistakes is how we learn and become independent. Give your son or daughter a chance to try new things—they just might surprise you.*

Issue 4

## January

### Upcoming Events

- ☺ February 13 & 14  
Teddy Bear Picnics
- ☺ February 19  
Family Day (Holiday)
- ☺ March 31—April 9  
Spring Break

### Welcome Back



**We hope everyone had a safe and relaxing break!**

### Thank You to...

- ☺ Amber Boyd
- ☺ Louise & Corey Riley
- ☺ Nici & Ken Weipert
- ☺ Jeannie Ing & Lawrence Wong
- ☺ Anne & Chris Carvalho
- ☺ Wendy & Vern Wadey
- ☺ Cynthia Mintz & John Krupa

**For your donations to our program through the Discovery Toys Fundraiser.**