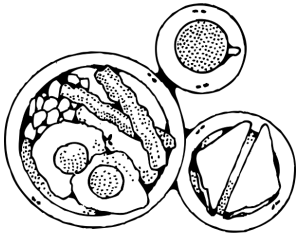


Communication During Mealtime

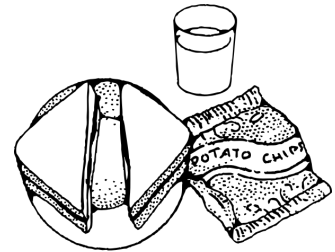


Mealtime is a great time to work on communication skills with preschoolers, no matter their goals! Here are some ways you can encourage your child to actively participate in mealtime and work toward growing their communication skills in three different areas.

Requesting:

Encourage your child to ASK for what they want during mealtime! Requesting can be done verbally with words or nonverbally by establishing eye contact, gesturing, vocalizing, signing, or using a picture.

- You can create opportunities for requesting specific items by asking them what they need or want, offering choices, or by presenting a preferred food/drink that your child must get from you.
- You can create an opportunity for requesting more by giving them small amounts of food at a time.
- You can encourage your child to ask for help by giving them food items in containers that are difficult to open or by withholding items they need (utensils, cup, straw, etc.).



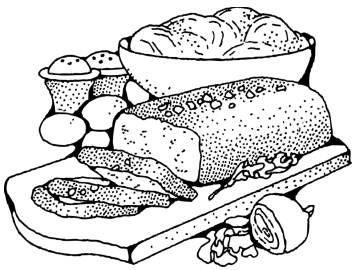
If your child does not eat orally, you can encourage them to request what they want to do during their feeding by offering them activities, toys, etc.

Vocabulary Development:

Talk about what you are making and/or eating during mealtime! You can model (use) or talk with your child about a variety of words, including:

- Labels for meal-related items: plate, cup, napkin, sandwich, table, chair, etc.
- Action words: open, cut, sit, eat, chew, drink, get, pour, bite, clean up, etc.
- Prepositions: on/off, in/out, under, behind, next to
- Adjectives: hot/cold, soft/crunchy, yummy/yucky, messy, wet/dry, sweet, etc.

Concept Development:



Mealtimes also present opportunities to talk about a variety of basic concepts! You can pick one concept related to your meal to talk about with your child, or compare and contrast items if they have mastered opposite concepts. Concepts that may relate to mealtime include:

- Big/little
- More/less
- Full/empty
- Same/different