

Family Style Meals - Sitting Down to Dinner: Ages 4-5

Sitting down to dinner together can help your child learn to:

- Serve himself
- Learn appropriate table manners
- Learn to have conversations with others and listen while others talk



Ideas to try with your child:

- Talk about the day.
"I went to the grocery store and got milk today. What did you do at preschool today?"
- Ask another person at the table about their day. Encourage them to be a good listener while the next person is talking.
"Why don't you ask brother what he did today?"
- Practice serving food with appropriate utensils (tongs, spoons, forks) and describe what is on the plate.
"You have two scoops of corn and five chicken nuggets. It looks like you have both vegetables and meat for dinner today."

If your child is struggling:

- Remind your child about taking turns to talk: "It's grandpa's turn to tell us about his day, then it will be your turn."
- Practice and teach table manners: using utensils, how to use a napkin, chewing with mouth closed and passing food.

Going further:

- Have your child help prepare and serve the meal.
- Compare foods and quantities and use words like: *more, less, most, least, a little, a lot.*

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children's best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 4-5** that parents can help improve at home.