

Speech Tips at Mealtime For Preschoolers



Why Mealtime?

Mealtime is a natural part of the day and a perfect time to practice speech and language skills with your child.

Mealtime provides a regular routine which allows for consistent, repetitive, and multiple opportunities for using the same language prompts.

Even just picking one meal of the week to focus on speech and language skills is helpful.

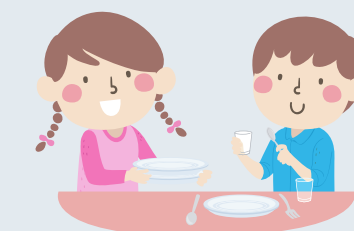
Cook Together

- Cooking together provides opportunities to practice motor, cognitive, and speech skills.
- Narrate each step with simple language.
- Give your child a job to do, such as putting the plates on the table or finding the requested items in the refrigerator.
 - Start with one step directions and work up to two step directions.
- Label your actions and the activities with words in order to model vocabulary. For example: mix, stir, bake, fry, sizzle, crumble, half, divide, measure, pour, cut, peel, melt, boil, etc.



Set the Table

- Identify which dishes or utensils are needed.
- Ask your child to name, locate, and gather all of the items for the table.
- Count out how many of each item are needed.
- If working on articulation, be sure to highlight the items which contain the targeted speech sounds.
- Ask and answer wh- questions, such as "Where do we put the forks?"
- Encourage the use of prepositional phrases, such as "next to the plate" or "on top of the napkin."



Take Turns

- Conversations around the table are a great opportunity to practice speaking and listening.
- Give your child the opportunity to ask and answer questions, as well as watch and listen to your conversations with others.
- Demonstrate how to take turns, wait for your turn, and lead the conversation.
 - Ask your child whose turn it is - this prompts the child to use phrases, such as "my turn," "your turn," or "mom/dad's turn."



Practice Sitting

- Learning to sit and listen is an important step in communication development.
- Some children may find it hard to just stop and sit with family, but mealtimes naturally provide the structure for sitting and listening.
- Other family members can provide a model of appropriate ways to sit. Verbally acknowledge how others are sitting still.
- Use a timer to help show your child how long they need to sit for the meal. Offer rewards and praise for good sitting and listening.



Supporting children where they live, learn, and play.

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