

Less screen time

More play time

50 things to do before you're five

Screen Time & Healthy Eating Habits

Less screen time, more healthy meal times!

Exposing children to a variety of different tastes and textures is a really important part of helping babies and young children to develop healthy eating habits. You can help be a positive role model by eating a healthy, balanced and varied diet together as a family.

When children watch screens during meal times they are more likely to:

- Overeat as they become distracted so don't recognize when they are full
- Lose their natural ability to feel when they are hungry
- Eat more ultra-processed foods which are bad for our health.

You can help make meal times a positive experience by putting away your devices and eating together when you can. Make meal times a positive experience without devices by:

- Letting your child help with preparing your meal, this gives them a sense of ownership and may be more curious to try what they have helped prepare.
- Letting your child feed themselves, as this allows them to explore new tastes and textures at their own pace (expect some mess!)
- Not forcing your child to finish all the food on their plate, this teaches children to ignore those feeling of fullness.
- Staying calm if your child refuses a food and offer praise for trying new things.

Top Tips to support screen free meal times!

- Lead by example. Be a positive role model for your child by putting your phone away during this time.
- ★ Enjoy talking to each other about your day, things you enjoy or the food you are eating. Encourage your child to do the same.
- ▲ Be realistic. Begin by slowly reducing your child's screen time so it feels more achievable
- Turn off other distractions like the TV during meal times.



- Another useful thing to know....Be patient and keep offering new foods, even if they refuse at first.

We know it may be tough to move your child away from screens. We urge you to not give up! The steps you take will help your child develop healthy eating habits.