

WEEK 3: FAMILY MEALS AND ROUTINES

PREPARATION

- Please read the background information for *Session Three: Family Meals and Routines*. Re-familiarize yourself with the training information on the role of discussion leaders in group dialogue learning.
- Arrive 20 minutes prior to the lesson start time. Arrange the tables into one large cluster to promote interaction. The ideal setting for dialogue is in a circle, so if there is a single large table, use that. Make sure that tables and chairs are arranged so that all participants will be able to see one another. Place the handouts for today's session at each seat.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pens and highlighters for participants
- Sign-in sheet for session
- Participant handouts:
 - Think, Pair, Share/Goal Setting
 - Family Meals and Routines
 - Planning a Family Meal
- Mealtime moves and countermoves situation cards

FACILITATOR TIPS TO REMEMBER

WAIT

Wait at least five seconds after asking a question before reframing it, asking another question or changing the subject. Although this silence may seem uncomfortable at first, it will give participants time to gather their thoughts before they answer.

AFFIRM

It takes courage to speak in front of a group. Affirm participants' responses by saying their name and thanking them. Let them know why you are thanking them (e.g., "Thank you for sharing, Lisa. I'm sure many of us can relate to that.") Try to avoid overusing "great," "good," "wonderful," etc. as they can quickly lose their meaning. You can also affirm responses through nonverbal cues, such as nodding and smiling.

BODY LANGUAGE

Use body language to make participants feel safe and welcomed. Turn toward participants who are speaking, stay relaxed and use natural gestures.

WEAVE

Use language to tie the workshop together, transition from one topic to the next, or wrap up a discussion. Example: "We've heard a lot of great ideas on how to introduce new foods so far. Let's take a few minutes to read over this handout that goes over how children learn to like new foods."

ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions invite participants to explore a topic or opinion. These are questions that cannot be answered with a simple one- or two-word statement, such as yes or no. There are suggestions for open-ended questions (labeled as "discussion questions") in the facilitator guide. You do not need to go through all discussion questions listed.

EYE CONTACT

When you look at someone as they speak, it shows that you are paying attention and that you value what they are saying. Additionally, when you look away from a participant who is dominating a group or is off topic, it lets them know their time is up.

LEGEND

- This symbol denotes information you may wish to keep in mind.
- “ ” This symbol denotes suggested dialogue you can use.
- This symbol denotes an action you can take.



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1 WELCOME (10 MINUTES)

- Greet participants as they come through the door. Have them take a seat.
- When it's time to start, welcome everyone to the session. Begin the session on time even if not all participants have arrived. If participants arrive late, briefly catch them up and help them find a seat.
- “ Hi everyone and welcome back to FEAST, a series about how to feed young children. Thank you for joining us today. Last session, we talked about common eating behaviors based on a child's developmental stage. For example, we learned that toddlers tend to have erratic eating behaviors and

may eat a lot one day and hardly anything the next. We also discussed how children learn to like new foods, how to avoid pressuring children to eat and strategies that encourage children to try new foods. Would anyone like to share any changes they've made, challenges or success related to what we talked about last session?

- “ Today we will be talking about adding structure to children's eating by implementing regular, sit-down meals and snacks. We will also discuss letting children serve themselves and the importance of family mealtime.

2 LESSON: FAMILY MEALS AND ROUTINES (55 MINUTES)

- “ Let's begin today by doing the activity “Think, Pair, Share.” I will give you a topic to think about on your own for a few minutes, and then I will bring you back together and you will share your thoughts with a partner. Then I will bring us all together to share our thoughts with the entire class.

ACTIVITY: THINK, PAIR, SHARE (10 MINUTES)

THINK (1-3 MINUTES)

- “ Think about the types of routines or structure in your young child's life. For example, routines at bedtime, nap structure, etc. What happens when something interferes with your child's routine? How does your child react?”
- Give participants a 1-minute warning before you have them pair with a partner.

PAIR (2-5 MINUTES)

- Have participants partner with the person to their left. If there is an odd number, a group of three is fine.
- Ask them to share their thinking about the topic, discuss ideas and ask questions about their partner's thoughts.
- Give participants a 1-minute warning before bringing the group back together.

SHARE (2-5 MINUTES)

- Now ask if a few pairs would like to share what they discussed with their partner. If after a few moments no one wishes to share, move onto the next topic.
- “ Thank you for sharing. Young children need structure in all things. Toddlers and preschoolers crave predictability and want to know what will happen next because this gives them a sense of control and security. When something happens to break their structure, it can lead to discomfort and fear. This often shows itself through tantrums, crying and so on.
- “ Structure is especially important when it comes to eating because it helps children feel secure in knowing that they will be fed. Structure and routines with feeding help to manage hunger and reduce mealtime tantrums.

DISCUSSION: FAMILY MEALS AND ROUTINES (15 MINUTES)

- “ We are now going to read over the handout, *Family Meals and Routines*. Please circle, highlight, or underline anything that stands out to you as we go through the handout. Keep in mind structure and routines that work for one family might not work for another. It’s important to find a structure that works best for you and your children.
- “ **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What makes it difficult to stick to a routine feeding schedule with kids? Does anyone have tips for overcoming these difficulties?
- “ **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What is a good first step for setting up structure and routines?
- “ **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What makes it hard to have family meals? How might you make mealtime or having family meals easier?
- “ **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Why do you think it’s important to allow children to serve themselves? (Self-regulation of food intake, developing motor skills, increased interest in being at the table, etc.)
- “ **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What are some meals that would work well to serve family-style?
- “ Thank you for sharing. Even if you already have family meals, an increase in the frequency and quality will have great benefits for your child and your family. It takes practice and planning to have quality family mealtime.

ACTIVITY: PLAN A FAMILY MEAL (15 MINUTES)

- “ We are now going to do an activity to help us plan for family meals. You each have a *Planning a Family Meal* handout in your folder that you can use as a template. The template will help you to plan a day and time for a family meal. It will also ask you to come up with strategies to increase the quality of mealtime and to get around any barriers that might come up. You will have about 10 minutes to do this.
- After participants have completed the handout, ask if anyone would like to share their plan for a family meal. If no one would like to share, move onto the next activity.

ACTIVITY: MEALTIME MOVES AND COUNTERMOVES (15 MINUTES)

- “ One of the barriers to successful family meals can be children’s behavior before or at the meal. In small groups, we are going to go through a few mealtime situations related to child behavior. I would like you all to read over these situations in your group and brainstorm together how you might handle them.
- Break participants up into small groups and pass out one *mealtime moves and countermoves* situation card to each group. Some groups may have the same situation, depending on the number of participants. Give participants five minutes to problem-solve their situation, then bring the group back together to discuss the situations.

SITUATION 1:

A 4-year-old child is watching TV before dinner. When dinner is ready, the adult asks the child to come to the table to eat. The child starts to whine — the adult knows a tantrum is coming. Now the child is too worked up to eat. What might the adult do to prevent this situation in the future?

SITUATION 2:

There is a family of two adults and a 3-year-old child. At dinner, the child is being very messy — messier than what is appropriate. The child drops, smears and throws food to get a rise out of the adult. How could the adult handle this situation?

SITUATION 3:

A 2 and a half-year-old child sits down at the table with the family for dinner. The child sits and eats for five minutes, then asks to be excused from the table. The adult tells the child, “You may leave the table if you are full, but we are not eating again until breakfast.” The child then comes back to the table five minutes later asking for food. How could the adult handle this situation?

SITUATION 4:

There is a family of two adults and a 2-year-old child. The family always has dinner around 7 p.m.. The toddler never accepts food at dinner, always throws a tantrum, and then has to be removed from the table. The toddler then cries before going to bed because they are too hungry. How could the adults handle this situation?

3 CLOSE (10 MINUTES)

ACTIVITY: GOAL SETTING (5 MINUTES)

“ We are coming to the close of today’s session. Please take out your goal setting sheet from your folder. When you make changes, it’s best to start small. I’d like you to write down one or two things you learned today and one or two goals you would like to work on related to today’s session.

- **EXAMPLE:** This week, I will sit with my child while she eats her snack on Monday and Wednesday.
- Allow a few participants to share what they learned or what their goals are.

RECAP (5 MINUTES)

“ In today’s session, we talked about the importance of structure for young children and how to build structure and routines into mealtime with planned, sit-down meals and snacks. We also learned about the importance of family meals and how to handle behavioral issues before or during mealtime.

- Thank participants for coming and remind them of where and when the next session will be. Wait to leave until all participants have left. Re-arrange the room in the way it was when you first arrived.