

# THE BENEFITS OF FAMILY STYLE MEALS & SNACKS

“Family style” is when kids and adults sit together for a meal or snack. Food and drinks are served from shared plates, pitchers, etc. When kids eat family style, they learn independence, social skills, and other important habits, like the appropriate use of utensils and how to set and clean up the table.



## WHEN KIDS SERVE THEMSELVES, THEY:

- Improve motor skills
- Learn about portion sizes
- Recognize when they are hungry or full
- Gain self-confidence as they “do it myself”

## BY EATING TOGETHER IN A GROUP, KIDS:

- Gain conversation skills
- Practice taking turns and sharing
- Learn table manners
- Increase their vocabulary



## YOU CAN START DINING FAMILY STYLE BY:

- Serving meals using dishes and utensils that are kid-friendly and easy for them to maneuver
- Offering a variety of familiar foods and new foods (kids are more likely to try new foods when they serve themselves)
- Thinking about your kid’s skill level – are they good with a fork and spoon or should you serve more finger foods?
- Sitting down next to your kids to eat and talk with them

