

## ***Enjoying the Family Dinner Table***

### *Apartment Therapy Family*

I can probably count the number of times my family ate dinner together when I was growing up. Most likely it was during a holiday, or someone's birthday. With two working parents, much older siblings and various schedules to keep track of, it was difficult to get us all together to enjoy the family dinner table. The concept was completely foreign to us.

Once our son was born, my husband (having also grown up in similar circumstances) felt just as strongly as I did that every meal in our home should be a family dinner. For some, eating meals together may seem like such a little thing but to us the idea of all three of us (parent, parent, child) preparing and sharing a meal seemed very magical and important.

No surprise that an article in [Time Magazine](#) about the family dinner table states, "...studies show that the more often families eat together, the less likely kids are to smoke, drink, do drugs, get depressed, develop eating disorders and consider suicide, and the more likely they are to do well in school, delay having sex, eat their vegetables, learn big words and know which fork to use." We're just happy our son will think eating together is the norm.

One of our favorite parts of the family dinner table is finding out how our son's day went. Sure he's only five, but he has a lot to say and share with us. If he can feel comfortable talking to us now, we hope the open line of communication will remain well into his 'tweens and teens.

If you're thinking about starting to eat together as a family, or just eating together more frequently, here are some tips and links to help you out:

- Let your children help with the [meal preparation](#). They are more likely to enjoy it, if they had a hand in putting it together. Even very young children can help with washing vegetables and shopping at the grocery store. Older children can have one day a week where they serve their "specialties".
- Have children set the table. This is a great way to get some pre-meal conversations going. Plus, there are so many fun tablecloths, [place mats](#) and [dishes](#) out there. They'll love all the visuals.
- If table setting isn't their thing, they can [wash the dishes](#).
- Although this may seem like an obvious tip, make sure you eat at the table. We'll eat in front of the TV on special occasions -- or as a fun treat -- but for the most part, we use the table. Plus, it makes less mess in our living room.
- Even though this sounds a bit hokey, why not get some [question boxes](#) for your table? Your child can find out what your favorite color is, you can find out what would they take with them to a deserted island. Corny, but totally fun.

What do you do to make your mealtime with family special? Any tips or stories you'd like to share?