

# Having Dinner Together can help kids read better



Adults and children talking to each other during mealtimes has been shown to improve children's health and learning at school.

- ✓ Dinner conversations help children learn to read.
- ✓ Dinner conversations help children learn new and more words.
- ✓ When kids know more words, they learn to read more easily.

## Tips for Dinner Conversations

- ✓ **Keep mealtimes enjoyable** so that children eat well. Hard discussions about school grades and punishment make mealtimes less enjoyable for children.
- ✓ **Kids benefit from listening and telling stories.** To help kids tell better stories at dinner time you can:

 **talk** about past experiences you have shared together. For example: "Remember when we forgot to take the brownies out of the oven?"

 **ask** a lot of questions that start with "why" and "how." This will allow children to answer using many words instead of answering with just "yes" or "no."

 **Repeat** what your child says, **ask questions**, or **add** to his or her story.

**Follow** your child's lead on what they want to talk about.

To help get the dinner conversations and stories started,  
try the conversation starters on the next page!

How Can You Use The Conversation Starters?



Cut along the dotted lines, pick a different topic each night, and start talking!

Try making up some of your own. These are just ideas to get started.

# Conversation Starters



What is one thing that made you happy today?	If you could have one wish, what would you wish for?
I laughed so hard when...	What musical instrument would you like to try?
If we gave up watching TV for a week, what would we do instead?	Name someone who has done something nice for you. What did they do?
What is your favourite thing to do outside?	What is something that you are thankful for today?
What would you do if you could fly like a bird?	What is the strangest thing that you remember has ever happened to you?
Tell me your favourite story about our family. Why do you like this story?	What is one thing you are really good at?
If you had a superpower, what would you want it to be? How would you use it to help people?	In the book <i>Green Eggs and Ham</i> , Sam-I-am does not want to eat green eggs and ham at first. Later, he does and he likes them. Has something like this ever happened to you?

References: 1. The Family Dinner Project May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 from <http://thefamilydinnerproject.org/>

2. Snow, C. E. and Beals, D. E. (2006), Mealtime talk that supports literacy development. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 2006: 51–66. doi: 10.1002/cd.155