

News Notes To Parents

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service of Adams County

April 2025

End Mealtime Battles

The key to calm, positive mealtimes is an appropriate division of responsibilities between adults and children. According to child feeding expert Ellyn Satter, MS, RDN, MSSW:

- Adults decide what foods and beverages are served. Plus, they choose where to serve the meal and make mealtimes pleasant.
- Children decide whether to eat and how much to eat. As they get older, they can learn age-appropriate table manners and mealtime behaviors.

6 More Ways to Have Meals without Squeals

1. **Make Regularly Scheduled Meals a Family Priority.** Young children need the reassurance of structured meal and snack times. Eating on the run can be sufficient for adults, but it doesn't work well for children. Whether you are eating at home or at a restaurant, take time to sit down and eat with your child.
2. **Avoid Pressuring or Forcing Children to Eat.** Most adults have good intentions when they try to make children eat "healthy" foods or try new items. The problem with pressure is it doesn't work. Kids like foods less if they are forced to eat them.
3. **Model the Habits You Want Children to Develop.** Young children do not automatically know how to eat like adults. They learn how to behave at the table by watching their most important role model, you, for developing lifelong, healthy eating habits.



4. **Enjoy the Foods You Want Your Children to Enjoy.** Children learn to eat new foods by watching other people eat and enjoy them. If you want a child to eat green vegetables, you eat green vegetables. Serve them regularly in a variety of appealing ways. Talk about how good they taste and how they make you strong and smart.
5. **Create a Relaxed Atmosphere for Mealtimes.** The best family meals have minimal distractions. This means turning off the TV and handheld devices. Music can provide a pleasant background for meals if it is played at low volume and doesn't drown out conversation.



6. **Have Realistic Expectations for Mealtime Behavior.** It takes time for children to master new skills, which includes table manners. Adults need to lay out clear expectations for mealtime behaviors and reinforce appropriate behaviors.

For the FULL article 'End Mealtime Battles' by Esther Ellis, MS, RDN, LDN from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics go to:

<https://www.eatright.org/food/planning/meals-and-snacks/end-mealtime-battles>

Car Seat Safety Through the Ages



Ensuring that children are safe while riding in a car is one of the most important responsibilities for parents. Proper use of car seats and booster seats can significantly reduce the risk of injury during an accident. In fact, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that car seats reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71% for infants and by 54% for toddlers in passenger vehicles. Car seat safety guidelines are based on a child's age, weight, and height, and evolve as the child grows. In this article, we'll guide you through the key stages of car seat safety and provide a fun activity to reinforce these important concepts at home.

At birth, babies are fragile and vulnerable, requiring extra protection. Infants should always ride in a rear-facing car seat in the back seat of the vehicle. Rear-facing seats protect the baby's head, neck, and spine by spreading out the crash forces more evenly across the body. As your baby grows, you can transition to a convertible car seat that can be adjusted from a rear-facing to a forward-facing position. When your child exceeds the limits of the forward-facing car seat, it's time to transition to a booster seat. A booster seat ensures that the vehicle's seat belt fits your child properly. By age 13, most children are ready to use the car's seat belt without a booster seat. However, the seat belt must fit properly. Remember, keeping your child in the correct seat for their age, weight, and height is crucial for their safety. By staying informed and engaging in activities like the one above, you can make car seat safety a family priority.

Car Seat Safety Scavenger Hunt

Instructions:

1. Create a Scavenger Hunt Checklist:

- Prepare a list of car seat safety items for families to find or verify. You can tailor this based on the age of the children and the type of car seat they use. Examples include:
 - * "Find the expiration date on your car seat."
 - * "Check that the car seat is tightly installed (should not move more than 1 inch)."
 - * "Make sure the harness straps are at the correct level (below shoulders for rear-facing, above for forward-facing)."
 - * "Verify that your child fits properly in the seat (chest clip at armpit level)."
 - * "Find out what the maximum weight limit is for your car seat."

2. How to Play:

- Give each family a copy of the scavenger hunt checklist.
- Parents and children work together to go through the list and check off each item as they find or verify it in their vehicle.

Why It Works: This scavenger hunt engages both parents and children in a hands-on learning activity, promoting important car seat safety checks while keeping the experience fun.

Sources:

1. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). (2021). *Car Seat Recommendations for Children*. Retrieved from <https://www.nhtsa.gov>.
2. American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). (2022). *Car Seats: Information for Families*. Retrieved from <https://www.healthychildren.org>.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020). *Child Passenger Safety*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov>.

Lizzy Lenart, *Health & Human Sciences Educator*

www.extension.purdue.edu/adams

News Notes To Parents is a product of Purdue Extension—Adams County. If you have comments or need information, call (260) 724-5322. The office is located at 313 W Jefferson St Ste 213 Decatur, IN 46733. **Tell someone about us!**

Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran.



Extension - Health and
Human Sciences