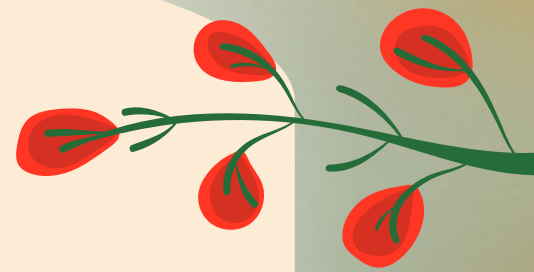


Importance of Mealtime in Social-Emotional Development



Mealtime plays an important role in social-emotional development. Children can experience challenges with trying new food, learning new routines and skills, and listening to their bodies. Therefore, mealtime is an opportunity to connect with young children and help them build a healthy relationship with food.

Adults can follow these suggestions to support children during mealtime:



Using positive language when describing food
Ex: "Does it make your tummy happy?"



Allowing children to serve themselves and tell adults when they're full or still hungry can help them learn to make their own choices and build confidence



Sitting down and eating with children provides the opportunity for adults to connect with a child.