

12 Reasons to Eat Mindfully as a Family

1. Eating mindfully encourages us to create a conscious relationship with our food – to be conscious of what we are eating, how we are eating, what we notice about our food– rather than eating on automatic pilot or while multi-tasking.
2. When parents teach children how to eat mindfully, we are reminded to eat mindfully ourselves – and we may be the ones who need it most.
3. As Hippocrates said, “Food is medicine...” Eating mindfully encourages gratitude towards our food and the nourishment it provides – rather than taking it for granted.
4. Your stomach takes 20 minutes to tell your brain you are full, so eating mindfully supports developing awareness of when we have eaten enough.
5. Food brings people together – it is surrounded by rich traditions of family and community gatherings. Mindful eating invites us to partake in no other task but eating – not television, texting, working – just enjoying a meal in solitude or with others.
6. Sharing a mindful meal together, away from the distractions and busy demands of everyday life, creates a space for kids and families to be present not only with their food, but with each other as well.
7. Eating mindfully is an invitation to slow down from the busyness of everyday life and to savour the moment by savouring our food.
8. Kids are constantly bombarded with attention zappers – from video games to fast-paced commercials, leaving their minds jumping from one thing to the next. Mindful eating provides an antidote -- through a fun and engaging way to focus on and explore one thing at a time, thus building their attention span.
9. Kids are surrounded by unhealthy food and manipulative marketing that encourages their consumption. Mindful eating is a way to support children to learn to develop awareness of how they *feel* during and after eating, which supports them in making healthier food choices – both in content and portion. Developing such food intelligence is an antidote to the growing epidemic of childhood obesity in North America.
10. Eating mindfully can be a lovely launching pad into rich discussions about ecology and the interconnection of all things.
11. Eating mindfully nurtures children’s natural curiosity by creating a moment for them to reflect on both familiar and novel foods with a beginner’s mind.
12. Mindful eating can support families with a picky eater by inviting a curiosity about new foods with a playful, light sense of curiosity and adventure, rather than automatically assuming the food won't be liked.

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