

# Sharing a Meal With Your Child



Sharing a meal together is a great way to engage your AAC learner and give them the chance to use their device for multiple communication functions! Help your child communicate by modeling language on the device during meal time. Customize icons to make the ingredients and kitchen materials more meaningful and recognizable for your child. Here are the steps for incorporating AAC into mealtime.

## Discuss Meal Options

- ✓ Ask your child what they would like to eat by navigating to the “food” page and showing options that are available. Provide the options both verbally and on the device.  
*Example:* Select “mac and cheese” + “peanut butter and jelly” on the device while saying them out loud.
- ✓ If your child selects an item that is not available, acknowledge it! Honor their communication attempt.  
*Example:* Verbally say “We do not have hamburgers today. Would you like to eat mac and cheese or peanut butter and jelly?” while selecting the two options on the device.
- ✓ Expand requests on the device by modeling word combinations or short phrases.  
*Example:* “I+want+peanut butter and jelly” or “eat+mac and cheese”!

## Make the Meal Together

- ✓ Set up the device so that it is within reach and accessible. Allow your child to assist in making the meal while you model language on the device.
- ✓ Navigate to food and kitchen items you need during the cooking process. Explore and locate vocabulary together!  
*Examples:* cheese, bread, plate, knife, napkin
- ✓ Label actions on the device as you are cooking.  
*Examples:* “cut”, “wash+hands”, “open+it”, “need+help”

# Enjoy the Meal

- ✓ Consider all communication functions during mealtime. Instead of only asking questions, narrate and explore the device together. Describe how the food tastes, smells, or looks, and discuss whether you like it.

*Examples:* “delicious”, “I love it”, “yucky”, “no thank you”

- ✓ Explore other topics besides food that you can discuss during your meal together.

*Examples:* school, friends, games, pets, or movies!

- ✓ Model how to finish the meal both verbally and on the device

*Example:* Verbally say “You got up from the table! I see you are all done eating. Let’s clean up” while selecting “all done” + “clean up” + “thank you” on the device.



After enjoying your meal, discuss what you will make next and what ingredients you may need! Make a shopping list with the device. This is a great way to turn your meal activity into a **grocery store activity** to keep your device use going.