**Behavior:** Dining

**Why/Purpose:** To be safe, be respectful, be productive, and be responsible when eating.

* To show respect by listening to others, taking turns, including others and sharing during meals.
* To maintain a caring, nurturing environment during mealtime*.*

**Teaching Examples:** *The following are situations that your child might find himself/herself in. Use these examples to discuss with your child ways of making good decisions about their behavior during meal times.*

* **Guests:** Your child has a friend over for lunch. Your older child does not like the friend. When you call them in for lunch, your older child comes into the kitchen pouting and saying that he/she isn’t hungry. You tell him/her to sit at the table whether they are eating or not. He/She is about to argue. Discuss with your child that you expect your child to show respect by including others even when they don’t especially like the person. Discuss other situations where this might occur and what they will do.
* **Enough food?:** Your child is having dinner with relatives or adult friends of the family. They have cooked your child’s favorite food, perhaps spaghetti. Your child ate quickly and wanted a third helping. He/she is about to take the spaghetti off of the platter. Ask your child what he/she should look for before taking another helping (ex. have others had more than one helping?). Talk about how being respectful during meals includes waiting for others to eat and using words to ask if it’s ok to have another helping.
* **Wanting attention**: Your child is at having breakfast with you and your older/younger child. Both children want to be tested on their spelling lists during breakfast. The older child thinks he/she should go first because their spelling list is longer. Your child starts disagreeing by yelling and saying that he/she is sick of the other being first. Remind your child to be respectful. When things quiet down, ask your children to come up with a plan for practicing spelling lists on Friday mornings (ex. taking turns going first, flipping a coin, whomever makes it to the table first with the bed made).

**Role Plays:**

1. Role-play any of the teaching examples above or make up your own role-play based on situations that have occurred in your household. Practice using respectful alternatives in each situation.
2. While dinning together, discuss how meal times can be a chance for family members to be together, talk, and share how their day is going. Use this time to connect as a family.
3. Bring up how to be respectful by letting everyone have a chance to talk and by showing that you are listening to the person who is talking (ex. eye contact, responding, asking questions).
4. Practice taking turns by using a “talking stick”. Only the person who has the stick (or other item of your choice) can talk. Pass the stick around and share something from your day.
5. Give children a responsibility at meal time such as setting the table or cleaning up after a meal. Reinforce manners such as chewing with your mouth closed, using utensils properly, and not playing with your food.

**Follow-up/Reinforcement Activities:**

Praise your child when you catch him/her being respectful at meal times.