A calmer mealtime: reflection and planning sheet

Print this sheet, or talk through the prompts together. Use only the parts that help. Keep completed copies private.

Use this to think about the atmosphere around one meal. It is not a food diary or a way to measure your child's nutrition. Follow any individual feeding advice your child has been given.

The meal we are thinking about

When and where it happened: _____

Who was there: _____

What else was happening around us: _____

Write neutral observations. For example, "We were preparing to leave" gives you more to work with than "It was a disaster."

What may have added pressure?

Something about the timing: _____

Something about seating or comfort: _____

Comments, repeated questions or bargaining we noticed: _____

Do not make this a list of things your child did wrong.

Continue: A calmer mealtime: reflection and planning sheet

One change for the adults

What we will try: _____

Who needs to know: _____

A short reminder we can use: _____

Example: “We will avoid comparing how much the children eat. If it happens, we will move the conversation to another subject.”

Afterwards

Was any part of the meal more comfortable? _____

What remains difficult? _____

Do we need advice rather than another home experiment? _____

If you are worried about growth, pain, chewing, swallowing, a very restricted diet or persistent distress, speak to your health visitor or GP. A calmer atmosphere can be useful, but it does not replace assessment when feeding is difficult.

You can read the NHS mealtime guidance for general advice.

Browse all free resources.