

## FORWARD CORNER

### January is Sunday Supper Month

FORWARD DUPAGE is pleased to join others in celebrating January as Sunday Supper Month. FORWARD encourages early childhood and school age programs to share this information with families and promote this monthly focus.

This relatively new celebration is a time to honor meals at the family table. For many families the hectic pace of day to day activities slows a bit on Sunday (especially during the post-holiday and early winter months) allowing families to more easily plan, prepare and enjoy a meal together. While the goal may be Sunday suppers together, the research shows that families who dine together regularly reap the following benefits:

- Improve dietary quality and promote healthy weight
- Lower children's risk-taking behaviors (like smoking or taking drugs, feeling depressed or getting into trouble)
- Improve family relationships and emotional health: children are more emotionally content and are better able to develop positive peer relationships
- Increase children's academic performance: specifically vocabulary, reading skills, higher grades, and improved achievement test scores
- Promote family communication and strengthen family ties

Celebrating the family table is also a good reminder to early childhood staff to adopt and practice family-style dining. NAP SACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity: Self-Assessment Child Care) reminds us of how important it is for staff to serve as role models, sitting with children and eating the same foods that the children are served. This time together provides an opportunity to educate children about healthy and proper table manners, talk about what they are eating and where it came from, and engage children in a pleasant discussion that can help nourish good human relations among the children. Children also tend to eat better when the meal is shared with an adult. Family dining in early childhood programs also means that children are allowed to serve themselves, helping them to identify with hungry and full and to self-regulate their own food intake.

- Click [here](#) for information about Sunday Supper Month
- Click [here](#) for additional information on The Benefits of Family Dining
- Click [here](#) for Family-Style Dining in Early Childhood Programs
- Click [here](#) for NAP SACC

For information on healthy eating and activity initiatives in DuPage, check out [www.forwarddupage.org](http://www.forwarddupage.org)  
For more early childhood healthy resources for families click [here](#).