

January is National Sunday Supper Month

[National Sunday Supper Month](#) is an annual designation observed in January. It is just a reminder of how after a hectic week, families (both immediate and extended) can gather to spend time together and share stories about their week. During COVID-19, many of us have transitioned back to eating together as a family several times a week. Research suggests that family dinners help reduce childhood obesity, strengthen families and create more resilient children who do better in school. Family dinners may be one of the most positive things to come out of COVID-19. Take advantage of the COVID-19 slow down to bring families together to sit down and enjoy a meal together.

In COVID-19 times, early childhood providers have had to modify “family style dining” and create distance between the children. This runs contrary to “best practices” but is necessary to keep everyone safe. Do your best to create an atmosphere where children can talk and share freely. Add in elements that might make meals more interesting and enticing. Try theme-related table decorations/centerpieces, occasional decorative paper plates and cups and open-ended questions that encourage children to open up and share their thoughts and experiences. Because children are not “serving themselves” be sure to introduce the concepts of full and hungry. Click [here](#) for tips from NAP SACC and FORWARD DuPage.

Early childhood providers can also be educators and advocates for Sunday Suppers, sharing with families this list of ways to observe.

- Gather with family (safely in COVID-19 times) and prepare a meal together.
- Savor each other’s company around the supper table. Ask questions, share stories, talk about challenges.
- Use #SundaySupper to post a photo of your gathering and table on social media.
- Keep your family warm and toasty and well during the cold Illinois winter by making Sunday Supper (or any night of the week) a soup, salad and whole-grained bread meal. Soups can help you stave off virus like COVID-19, the cold, and the flu. Most soups are loaded with disease-fighting nutrients. In fact, studies show that chicken soup in particular can help prevent the common cold. Look for recipes that include fresh garlic, onions, ginger, celery and carrots (as well as leafy greens). They all contain powerful immune-boosting chemicals. Soups are often nutrient dense and lower in calories (broth-based soups) which helps maintain a healthier weight during those winter months when families tend to be less active.
- Join us on Tuesday, January 12 @ 11:30 (or review the slides and listen to the recording on our website) as FORWARD DuPage and Chop Chop Family presents, ‘*The Benefits of Eating and Cooking Together as a Family*’. Click [here](#) to register for FREE.
- Click on these links ([English](#) or [Spanish](#)) to better understand all of the benefits of the “Family Table”.

JOIN THE HEALTHY MOVEMENT TODAY BY TAKING ACTION!

Families: Commit to make Sunday Supper (or one night a week) soup, salad, and whole-grain bread to help boost your immune system and control your calories this winter.

Early Childhood Providers: Ask families to take a photo of their Sunday Family Suppers. Create a Bulletin Board to celebrate families making this important commitment.

For information on healthy eating and active living initiatives in DuPage County, check out the FORWARD DuPage website at www.forwarddupage.org. For more early childhood healthy resources for families click [here](#).