WHY MEALTIMES MATTER

After-school activities, long workdays and commutes – it's no wonder that family mealtimes have become harder to fit into our busy lives! However, numerous studies have shown that sitting down as a family for dinner has a positive impact on children. Here are a few reasons why eating together can benefit your family:

✓ When families eat together, they are more likely to eat more nutritious and healthful meals, full of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein.

✓ Children are less likely to be overweight or obese when they have frequent family dinners. Being overweight puts your child at high risk for many health problems later in life, such as high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.

✓ Having family mealtimes strengthens family relationships – talking with your children about their daily activities over food is a great way to bond and stay involved in their lives.

✓ Cooking your own meals allows you to have control over what goes into your children's bodies. Restaurant versions of some of your favorite dishes are often full of extra and unnecessary calories, fat, and salt.

✓ Family meals allow you to serve your children different foods each day. Children who are exposed to a variety of foods are more likely to eat a balanced diet.

✓ Eating with your children allows you to role model healthy eating habits.

✓ Cooking your own meals is much cheaper than going to restaurants to eat. In 2012, the average family spent over $2,500 on eating-out. This expense could be substantially reduced by buying your own groceries and preparing home cooked meals.