

VISION FOR MEALTIMES

A Visually Impaired Child's Tips For You

- Be Consistent
- Make sure that I am positioned to be able to SEE to my best abilities
- Do NOT feed me directly in midline, it is often easier for me to manage food presented slightly to the right or left of midline
- TALK to me, tell me what is happening, what I am about to eat, discuss some of the taste and texture to me; let me know when you are bringing the food to my mouth
- Start by letting me smell the food, give me some time to process what is happening, then bring the food to my lips
- Remember, what I don't see affects how I respond to information. If needed use a sensory approach to mealtime presentation. In other words, let me smell, put it by me, give me directions, encourage prompting and fading strategies. Once I know the food and the expectation, I will remember the food and respond accordingly
- When presenting me with a liquid, let me prepare myself so that I am able to control the liquid. Using a cut out cup may help but bringing the drink to my lips, letting me smell it and then slowly allowing me to take the liquid is best
- Introduce one to two different tastes/textures at a time, I need time to process and get used to anything new in my mouth and on my hands
- When giving me finger foods, protect me by giving hand under hand support and making sure that I get to smell the food first. Let me take the lead, but don't forget to encourage me....
- When I am able to manage to 'self feed' teach me 1-2 skills at a time, don't overwhelm me. Use contrast and visuals when and where appropriate and try to prompt me from the elbow when I am trying to learn
- Make sure that there is appropriate lighting during my mealtime. If possible, turn off overhead fluorescent lights and use lighting that doesn't shine in my face
- Use coloured (single) utensils for eating, my bottle and my placemat. It helps me to focus