



Teaching Kids Table Manners

Most pre-schoolers are prepared to fight you to the death to gain a little independence, and this doesn't stop at the dinner table. While it's great to recognise and encourage your child's attempts at doing things for herself, try to only give her tasks that she can actually manage.

- Give her a small jug of water that she can pour into her own cup
- Give her a knife to cut up her cooked veggies, rather than her meat
- Ask her to set the table - and show her how to do it properly

And while the days of mashing your child's food are long past, you still need to consider both the texture and consistency of your pre-schooler's food and her capability to chew it. Some foods are still too difficult for her to manage.

Developmental Milestones include:

By four years, your child will:

- Be able to hold her cup in one hand using the handle
- Be able to pour a drink using a small jug
- Be able to use a fork correctly - though she may still prefer to use her fingers!
- Chew a wide range of differently textured food
- Ask for and choose food that she likes
- Want to try foods that she sees advertised on TV
- Want to help with food preparation

By five years, your child will:

- Confidently be able to use a knife and fork
- Drink from a cup without accidents
- Be able to reliably self-feed
- Be easily distracted while eating
- Still have favourite foods that she likes to eat every day

By six years, your child will:

- Be more willing to try new food combinations
- Start to like and dislike the same foods as her friends
- See food as an integral part of a special occasion