When a family sits down together at the table, it helps all of the family members handle their stresses of the day. When children see their parents and siblings eating habits, they learn to eat different foods. Eating meals together strengthens family bonds. For the younger children in the family, this routine of eating together can provide security and a feeling of belonging to their family. Eating together provides a time for conversation, without phones, or other distractions. Time spent together at meals gives value to each member of the family by finding out what is going on in their lives. Children who eat meals with their families are receiving the attention they desire.

When a child is sitting at the dining table with their loved ones, he is learning self-control. Children must learn there is a time to be still and listen. Toddlers can be defiant but a confident parent will get their wits about them and find their parenting backbone. Parents need to be proactive instead of reactive to teach their child to sit for a period of time. This is called intentional teaching. When your child is in a happy, receptive place, teach expectations and self-control. Remember, PRAISE goes a long way.

Reading time is a great time to help gradually build self-control. Read a child’s favorite book to them. Take your time and be animated. If your child becomes restless, instruct them to please listen, and continue. Remember to STOP reading before your child loses interest or gets super antsy. Each time you read to your child, try to lengthen the sitting time. This will make a world of difference when a tantrum tries to sneak in. Proactive beats reactive every time!

As we raise children, we learn new ways to make them happier and more independent. A parent’s work is never done. But this may help. ***Teach, praise, and repeat!***

