

# Let's Pretend - Mealtimes

Pretend play provides opportunities for children to learn as they create, improvise and imagine. This game of pretend offers children an opportunity to talk about changes to family mealtimes that may be occurring as going out for meals and shopping habits have changed.

## Pretend food possibilities

- Cut up recipe cards from home delivered meal services or food magazines
- Wool or ribbons for spaghetti or noodles
- Leaves from the garden for salad. Make sure your child knows if the leaves are fresh herbs and safe to smell and taste, or other plants that are to just 'pretend'
- Small blocks or beads or bottle lids to represent chopped vegetables
- Stones, gum nuts or seed pods from the garden may be muffins, meatballs, all sorts of foods

\*\*\*\* Be aware of hazards such as choking and ensure you supervise your child or children during this play.

## Things you will need

- A small table, a cardboard box will do the job
- A tablecloth, a tea towel or pillowslip
- Small plates, cups, cutlery, or a picnic set
- Dolls or Teddies, or even better, family members to play
- A camera

## How to Do It

Involve your child in gathering items from around the house to build their own little home. Older siblings could be recruited to carefully cut pictures from magazines or recipe cards.

Join your child in a pretend time meal game. Invite your child to choose the roles. They may want to be the parent or another sibling and can practice turn taking.

A few prompting questions or comments will invite your child to create their own story lines, express their feelings or initiate questions about their current situation. You may ask:

- *What can we make for Teddy's dinner?*
- *Let's look at choices we have here.*
- *Is there something new that reminds you of something you like?*
- *I wonder how it might feel for Teddy to try something new.*

