

# Expert Tips To Help Make Family Mealtimes Simple

(NAPSA)—Gathering together as a family for dinner can be a great idea, research shows. Just 20 minutes a night can positively affect children's development and behavior.

"Shared mealtimes can help reduce behavior problems, eating disorders and drug use in children and teens," says Dr. Barbara Fiese, professor and director of the Family Resiliency Center at the University of Illinois. "But some families find it difficult to eat together on a daily basis," she adds.

To help, the Family Resiliency Center and the Pampered Chef, the largest direct seller of kitchen tools, developed the following tips to make mealtimes easier:

- Try something new. Picky eaters can be a struggle at the dinner table. It can take children up to 10 times to accept a new food, but parents often get frustrated and give up after less than three times. Parents can set the example by trying new foods themselves.

- Institute a no-screen rule. Turn off phones, tablets, laptops and televisions when eating together. Work and home life balance can be a challenge when there are distractions at the table.

- Work together. Kids as young as 3 can help with household tasks and dinner preparations. Incorporate them into the mealtime process.

To make mealtimes quick, simple and affordable, try this family-friendly, inexpensive recipe for Chicken Parmesan Soup with homemade croutons:

## Chicken Parmesan Soup

- ¼ of a 16-oz loaf of French bread
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 3 Tbsp garlic and herb rub, divided
- 1½ cups unsalted chicken stock
- 2 cups marinara sauce



A hearty main-dish soup such as Chicken Parmesan can be easy and inexpensive to make with the right tools and attitude.

- 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes with garlic and onion (about 1¼ cups), undrained
- 2½ cups diced cooked chicken breasts
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 oz fresh Parmesan cheese
- ¾ cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided

1. Cut bread into ¾-in. (2-cm) cubes using color-coated bread knife. (You should have about 2 cups.)

2. Toss bread cubes, oil and 1 Tbsp of the rub in deep covered baker.

3. Microwave bread cubes, uncovered, on HIGH 3–4 minutes or until they begin to brown, stirring every minute. Spread croutons over a piece of parchment paper to cool.

4. Stir stock, remaining 2 Tbsp rub, marinara sauce, tomatoes, chicken and garlic pressed with garlic press into baker.

5. Microwave, covered, on HIGH 11–13 minutes or until soup is hot.

6. Grate Parmesan using microplane adjustable fine grater.

7. Carefully remove baker from microwave and stir in Parmesan.

8. Top soup with half of the mozzarella and sprinkle with half of the croutons. Top with remaining mozzarella.

9. Let stand, covered, 2–3 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve soup with remaining croutons.

*Yield: 6 Servings*

*U.S. Nutrients per serving (about 1¼ cups): Calories 330, Total Fat 13 g, Saturated Fat 4 g, Cholesterol 60 mg, Sodium 980 mg, Carbohydrate 23 g, Fiber 3 g, Protein 28 g*

At the company's in-home cooking shows, you can see and try products, prepare and sample recipes, and learn quick and easy food preparation techniques and tips on how to entertain with style and ease—transforming the simple to the spectacular. For more information, visit [www.pamperedchef.com](http://www.pamperedchef.com) or [www.facebook.com/ThePamperedChef](http://www.facebook.com/ThePamperedChef).

For more mealtime tips, recipes and free resources, visit [www.pamperedchef.com/mealtime](http://www.pamperedchef.com/mealtime) minutes or (800) 266-5562.