

## *Eat Better, Eat Together!*



**Conflicting schedules.** Almost every piece of research, story in the popular press and comment from parents themselves points to today's hectic lifestyle crowding out time for family dinners and this is supported by several studies of work, social/personal activities and community activities.

**No time to cook.** With already busy schedules, parents feel they don't have time to cook dinner. Kentucky Fried Chicken reported that take-out food was used by more than a quarter (28%) of families for the evening meal once a week; 20% said they used carryout twice a week and 12% said three times a week. NPCC's 2000 survey found that the meal preparer spends an average of 35 minutes fixing dinner. That survey also determined that about 30 minutes is spent at the table.

Child nutrition expert Ellyn Satter wrote that she often gets resistance when she presses for family meals. People tell her that they just don't have enough time to shop and cook. Her response is that eating well is one of life's important issues, and parents need to be willing to devote time and energy to it.

**Don't know how to cook.** Because of the widespread availability of convenience foods, ready-prepared foods and quick serve restaurants, cooking is no longer a needed skill.

**Would rather watch television.** About half of all families always have the television on in the background during dinnertime, and about a third of the families usually ate in front of the television. A Missouri survey found that some parents actually preferred eating in front of the television to eating at the table with their families.

<http://nutrition.wsu.edu/eat/background.html>