Table manners were developed to make mealtimes more enjoyable for everyone. If there were no table manners, then mealtime would be pretty gross! Here are a few basics to remember:

- Come to the table with clean hands and face
- Place your napkin in your lap as soon as you sit down.
- Start eating when everyone else does, or when an adult tells you it’s OK to start.
- Stay seated and sit up straight. If you must get up, be sure to ask permission from a parent for the host or hostess. Ask, “May I be excused for a moment?”
- Chew with your mouth closed (enough said)!
- Don’t make rude noises, such as burping or slurping.
- If you have to sneeze or cough, cover your mouth with your napkin or hand. Leave the table to blow your nose.
- When you are finished, ask permission to leave the table and be sure to tell the host (or whomever prepared the meal) “Thank You!”
- If you are served something you don’t like, don’t make a fuss. Just take a small bite or leave it on your plate.

**Finger Friendly Foods**

Did you know that some foods are perfectly acceptable to eat with your fingers? Here’s a list of finger-friendly foods:

- Asparagus (without sauce)
- Bacon
- Bread (tear off one bite at a time)
- Cookies
- Corn on the cob
- Chips
- Grapes
- Hors d’ Oeuvres
- French Fries
- Sandwiches
- Shrimp (with tail still attached)
- Strawberries

TIP: if you are ever unsure whether to use your fingers or not, watch to see what the host or hostess does.

Don’t ever double-dip finger foods! Dip the food once, then don’t dip again until you pick up another piece of good from the plate.
Basic Table Setting

KEY
A. Bread knife
B. Bread plate
C. Salad fork
D. Entrée fork
E. Desert fork
F. Plate
G. Napkin
H. Knife
I. Spoon
J. Tea glass
K. Water glass

Finishing School
Practice eating finger foods. When eating foods with a wrapper (such as a banana or candy bar), unwrap just a few bites at the time, and hold onto it where the wrapping is still covering the food.

Food For Thought
- What ways can you think of to help you remember good table manners?
- How can knowing how to act around others at the table make you more comfortable? How can it make others more comfortable?
- What does how you eat affect what people think of you?
- How can good table manners help you now and when you get older?