

Make An Unplugged Box!

The research is clear: Having regular unplugged meals together as a family leads to behaviors all parents want in their kids:

- **lower rates of substance use and depression,**
- **better peer relationships,**
- **more self-esteem,**
- **better grades and performance in school.**

Yet, all too often, screens, alerts, pings and dings interrupt family meal time. Make your meals more meaningful by creating a designated place where devices are kept during this intentional time: an Unplugged Box!

To Make An Unplugged Box:

1. Pitch the Idea: Talk to your kids and spouse/partner (yes, adults need to unplug too) and get their buy in for having an unplugged box. Tell them your hopes and dreams of finding time to connect over meals. Ask them to help you create the box and set the expectations for where and how you'll use the box. If this is a new practice for your family, consider starting slow (10 minutes of unplugged time at meals, etc.). Decide if devices are going to be silenced to reduce interruptions. What about watches?

2. Find a Box: Find a shoebox or any other unused box from around your house that is sturdy enough and big enough to hold your family's devices. Or, purchase a sturdy box from a craft store or dollar store. Use a box that is at least 8 inches long and 4 inches wide if you want it to hold multiple devices and tablets. A box with slats allows the devices to be charged while they're in the box.

3. Decorate the box with sayings, pictures, and quotes. Use any of these sayings below, or create your own quotes and pictures:

- Be Present with the People Who Are Here. Drop your phone in this box
- Unplug: it's family time
- The ____ Family is Unplugged
- Unplug Box
- Be Present with Those Around You
- Unplug Here



4. Put the Unplugged Box to Use! If this is a new practice, it might be hard at first but you and your family are adaptable and YOU CAN DO IT! If you're struggling to make mealtime meaningful, visit our resources and tips at RayCountyCoalition.com.