

# A Male Caregiver's Experience of Mealtimes

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## Background & Purpose

- The number of primary male caregivers has increased since the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>1</sup>
- Limited amount of research on male caregivers outside of intact families
- Limited amount of research on family occupations, including mealtimes

## Research Question

- What is the experience of a male caregiver during mealtimes with his children?

## Methods

### Single Case Study Design

- Two interviews with male caregiver
- Two observations of family mealtimes; breakfast and dinner

### Participants

- The King's: Ethan, Dave, James, Jackelson

### Data Analysis

- Thematic analysis

## Findings

**Mealtimes as a way to be together**

**Mealtimes as a refuge**

**Learning how to balance time**

**Learning how to have control during mealtimes**

## Discussion

- The experience of mealtimes includes more than just the meal itself, but also includes mealtime preparation and planning
- Families prioritize being together during mealtimes<sup>2,3</sup>
- Routines during mealtimes are key<sup>2</sup>
- Planning ahead is important to prioritize aspects of mealtimes<sup>3</sup>

## Conclusion & Implications

- OS: understanding the lived experience of a family with a male caregiver
- OT: considering interventions around mealtimes based on family context
- Future research is needed on understudied family structures and family occupations

## References

- 1 U.S. Census Data (2014). Living arrangements of children 1960-present. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/children.html>
- 2 Fiese, B. H., Tomcho, T. J., Douglas, M., Josephs, K., Poltrock, S. (2002). A review of 50 years of research on naturally occurring family routines and rituals: cause for celebration? *Journal of Family Psychology*, 16(4), 381-390.
- 3 Mallan, K. M., Nothard, M., Thorpe, K., Nicholson, J.M., Wilson, A., Scuffham, P. A., & Daniels, L. A. (2013). The role of fathers in child feeding: perceived responsibility and predictors of participation. *Child: care, health and development*, 40(5), 715-722.