



Dinner Decoded:

MEAL PLANNING TIPS TO HELP CALM THE CHAOS

As a working parent, meal planning can be a significant source of stress. Meal planning can be one way to help reduce this stress and free up some mindshare. In the end, it needs to be realistic for you - whether that means microwave dinners, Michelin-worthy feasts anything in between. This tip sheet provides some practical strategies and examples to help you clear your mind and calm the chaos.

JOSIE'S TOP 8 TIPS FOR MEAL PLANNING:

1. **Plan for at least one “flexible night / back up meal” each week (frozen meals, leftovers, order in):** Unexpected things will likely happen – a last minute late meeting, baby day care’s closed, etc. Having a “flex night” where a frozen meal is planned and can potentially be moved around will give you a good backup plan on those crazy days.
2. **Plan for an experimental night (usually easier on weekends):** If you enjoy cooking and want to try something new, try building that into your plan, but not every night – and better to do on weekends when you may have more time.
3. **Share weekly meal ingredients:** Try to group together meals that share ingredients so there’s less waste, and fewer groceries to purchase.
4. **Make a double batch:** When possible, try to make multiple batches of the same recipe – then freeze or package the leftovers for next-day lunches or future dinners
5. **Do the same thing each week / have theme nights (e.g., Sundays are groceries):** Consistency in when you will cook, shop for groceries, order in, etc. will support that freeing up of headspace. Having theme nights helps with remembering and planning for each night, making the whole task less daunting (Soupy Sundays and Frozen Pizza Fridays are a few of our personal favorites!)
6. **Switch up proteins (with same recipe!):** A good “cheat” for meal planning is to take a recipe you know well, then swap the protein to make it just different enough that it feels like 2 different meals.



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- 7. Wash, chop, and store your fruits and veggies right away:** If you are able, washing and chopping produce after grocery deliver can save time across the week when prepping snacks and dinners.
- 8. Ease into it / Be kind to yourself!:** This may not be the best for trying out new Michelin star recipes every night! It's best to give yourself some grace and go for easy – especially in the first week back to work.

Check out this meal planning template one of our clients at Josie created for one week's worth of dinners. Importantly, it helped this person think about who could help with meal prep.

And remember: at the end of the day, if you don't follow this exactly or you end up microwaving meals for a week – **you are doing great!**

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
What	Pasta	Tacos	Order in	Dinner from work cafe	Frozen Pizza	Grill	Leftovers
Backup Plan	Frozen pizza/ dumpling	Frozen pizza/ dumpling	Frozen pizza/ dumpling	Frozen pizza/ dumpling	Order in	Frozen pizza/ dumpling	Frozen pizza/ dumpling
Who Can Help?				Partner		Partner	

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Get in touch with team Josie:



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