Happy Mealtimes for Healthy Kids

Trainer’s Guide

National Food Service Management Institute
The University of Mississippi

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PURPOSE
The purpose of the National Food Service Management Institute is to improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

MISSION
The mission of the National Food Service Management Institute is to provide information and services that promote the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

VISION
The vision of the National Food Service Management Institute is to be the leader in providing education, research, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Headquarters
Administrative Division
The University of Mississippi
Phone: 800-321-3054
Fax: 800-321-3061
www.nfsmi.org

Education and Training Division
Information Services Division
The University of Mississippi
6 Jeanette Phillips Drive
P.O. Drawer 188
University, MS 38677-0188

Applied Research Division
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #5060
Hattiesburg, MS 39406
Phone: 601-266-5773
Fax: 888-262-9631
Acknowledgments

Written and Developed Under Contract for
The National Food Service Management Institute by
Paula Peirce, PhD, RD
Nutrition and Child Care Consultants
15200 E. Girard Ave., Suite 2400
Aurora, CO 80014
Telephone: (303) 627-9207
E-mail: ppeirce@aol.com

Graphic Design by
Vicki Howe
National Food Service Management Institute

Project Coordinators
Barbara Washington
Sharon Walls
Lutina Cochran
National Food Service Management Institute

NFSMI Executive Director
Katie Wilson PhD, SNS
National Food Service Management Institute
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Notes
You are about to begin an exciting training program for your child care center staff or family day care home team. The information presented in the *Happy Mealtimes for Healthy Kids* training is up-to-date, well-researched, and tested. The information is considered best practice in child care across the country. We know the children in your care will benefit from the approach to feeding children outlined in this training. Our goal is to help children eat well today and create a lifetime of healthy eating habits.

We know that many child care programs follow regulations from more than one outside organization. The key to meeting the standards from several organizations is to start with best practice for the children you serve, then assure that you are meeting the standards for each of the organizations. Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Head Start Performance Standards, local licensing regulations, and new research on best practice for feeding children all fit nicely together to make child care programs successful.

The current Trainer’s Guide has been developed to assist trainers in providing four hours of face-to-face training for child care employees. The training may be presented as a 4-hour seminar or as single short lessons on one topic depending on the needs of specific groups. The trainer’s guide includes participant’s handouts to be copied and distributed during training.

Today you will gain knowledge through the *Happy Mealtimes for Healthy Kids* resource. As a trainer/manager you can always find tools and more information at www.nfsmi.org.
Overview of Lessons

Lesson 1: Creating a Pleasant Environment
Objectives:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
• Schedule regular meals and snacks.
• Create a routine for each meal that accommodates both the needs of the children and teacher.
• Create a transition activity to and from each meal.
• Create a pleasant mealtime environment.

Lesson 2: The Picky Eater
Objectives:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
• Implement different tips and strategies for encouraging picky eaters to broaden their choices.

Lesson 3: Managing Food Allergies
Objectives:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
• Create a Food Allergy Policy for child care centers.
• Implement a Food Allergy Policy for children with food allergies.
• Implement basic tips for meeting the needs of children with special diets.

Lesson 4: Family Style Dining, Conversations, and Etiquette
Objectives:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
• Understand the advantages for teachers of family style dining.
• Understand the process of purchasing items to implement family style dining.
• Implement an ideal mealtime using family style dining.
Note: This timeline includes four hours of instructional time.

**How should I begin?**
Read the entire training manual. As a trainer, you should understand all aspects of this manual.

To do so:
- Review the objectives for each lesson.
- Read the entire script.
- Prepare all supplies, handouts, and other materials for the lesson.
- Practice delivering the lesson.
- Deliver and schedule all lessons.
- Make copies of Participant Handouts section (one set for each participant).

Keep in mind that adults learn best when they understand how the information presented applies to their daily work; in other words, how the information presented can make their work easier and benefit the children. We also know that adults learn in different ways. Presenting information in ways that the audience can “hear it,” “see it,” and “apply it” will improve learning for everyone. As you review the content of the lessons, be thinking about when you can use flip charts, demonstrations, and audience participation to help the audience apply the information presented. Trainer’s Tools are listed throughout the training to provide ideas and assistance. Remember to modify the suggested script to fit your teaching style.
## Preparation Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
<th>Done</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schedule Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment Forms (one per participant)</td>
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<td>Flip Charts</td>
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<td>Pens/Pencils</td>
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<tr>
<td>Table Tents, plain (one per participant)</td>
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<td>Note Pad or Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Markers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Style Dining Materials Training Tool Kit (contact NFSMI for more information)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Handouts (photocopy one set per participant)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Opening and Welcome

SAY: Welcome to Happy Mealtimes for Healthy Kids. Happy Mealtimes for Healthy Kids was created to make mealtimes successful for both teachers and children. This training was designed to meet children’s and teacher’s needs throughout mealtimes. While it does not focus on the essentials of planning healthy meals, always remember to follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines for providing healthy meals for young children. Upon completion of this training, each of you should gain valuable information you can apply on a daily basis.

STOP: Group Activity

SAY: Let’s start the training by forming learning teams. Learning teams are another way to network and share valuable information. Break up into groups of four or five members.

In front of you should be a table tent for each of you and a table tent for the group. Please write your name on a table tent and two things you would like each of us to know about you. Upon completion of your personal tent, create a name for your group.

TRAINER’S TOOL: Allow 2–3 minutes for participants to form learning teams. Teams should be based on the total number of participants in the training. If there are only 10 participants, break groups into two or three members. Groups should be no larger than five participants.

DO: Go around the room and allow teams to introduce themselves and their team name.

SAY: Before we begin Lesson 1, which of the following statements appears to be a successful and happy mealtime?

1. Children are required to eat all of their food, throw plates in the trash can, and transition to a new activity.
2. Children with food allergies are allowed to eat food that can cause an allergic reaction.
3. Children sit and eat lunch with their teacher, conversing about their recent field trip to the zoo.
**DO:** Give two minutes for participants to think about the statements.

**SAY:** Which is the correct statement? Yes, number three is the correct statement. The first statement is incorrect because children should never be required to eat all of their food. The second statement is incorrect because children with food allergies should never be allowed to eat food that can cause an allergic reaction.

Today I will introduce four major topics for making mealtimes happy. The four major topics include:
- Creating a Pleasant Environment
- The Picky Eater
- Managing Food Allergies
- Family Style Dining, Conversations, and Etiquette.
Lesson 1
Creating a Pleasant Environment

Lesson at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Allowed (1 hour)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10 minutes           | Introduction to Creating a Pleasant Environment | • Break into groups (learning teams)         | • Table Tents  
                        |                                            |                                               | • Markers |
| 10-15 minutes        | **Objective 1:** Scheduling Regular Meals  | • Mealtime Assessment  
                        |                                            | • Mealtime Routine Sample  
                        |                                            | • Create a Routine                          | • Worksheet #1: Mealtime Assessment  
                        |                                            |                                               | • Worksheet #2: Mealtime Routine Sample  
                        |                                            |                                               | • Paper and pencil/pen  
                        |                                            |                                               | • Flip Chart |
| 10-15 minutes        | **Objective 2:** Creating a Routine        | • Open Discussion                             |                                                |
| 10-15 minutes        | **Objective 3:** Transition Activities     | • Open Discussion                             |                                                |
| 10 minutes           | **Objective 4:** Creating a Pleasant Mealtime Environment |                                 |                                                |
| 5 minutes            | Conclusion                                  | • Open Discussion  
                        |                                            | • Review Session                           |                                                |
Lesson 1
Creating a Pleasant Environment

OBJECTIVES:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:

- Schedule regular meals and snacks.
- Create a routine for each meal that accommodates both the needs of the children and teacher.
- Create a transition activity to and from each meal.
- Create a pleasant mealtime environment.

SAY: Teachers are responsible for creating a pleasant mealtime environment for children. A pleasant mealtime environment should consist of a warm, welcoming environment that caters to both eating and child and adult interaction. A pleasant environment has routine mealtimes, transitioning activities, limited distractions, and teachers applying direct attention to children during mealtimes. Making mealtime pleasant is a great way to enjoy the meal and help children eat well. Careful planning will allow you to offer meals to children in a relaxed setting.

In lesson one, we will attempt to create a pleasant environment through discussion, individual activities, and group activities.

Looking closely at your current mealtimes, assess a typical day at your center. Turn to Worksheet #1: Mealtime Assessment and complete the individual assessment.

We won’t go over the Mealtime Assessment; it is a way for you to self-assess your operation. Completing the Mealtime Assessment introduces the opportunity to understand the recommended practices. It is not always easy to complete each practice on the assessment. Upon completion of this training, you should be able to complete all practices.
Scheduling Regular Meals

Objective 1:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
• Schedule regular meals and snacks.

SAY: Children have very small stomachs and very large energy needs. Children need to eat smaller amounts and more frequently than adults, eating every two or three hours during the day. This often means a breakfast, morning snack, lunch, afternoon snack, dinner, and evening snack in some child care centers, based on hours of operation.

Sometimes, if children become overly hungry they can become irritable, have a difficult time focusing on tasks, and can act out in a variety of ways. Some children who are not fed on a regular schedule may display behavior problems if they miss meals or snacks or if their meals are served later than usual. Offer children regular meals and snacks at scheduled times for children to be the most successful.

A typical meal schedule in child care is based on several things. When scheduling meals, look at the needs of the children and hours of operation. A typical meal schedule includes a meal every two to three hours. Snacks should be scheduled for at least 30 minutes. Lunch and Breakfast should be scheduled for at least 45 minutes. A typical meal schedule starts with Breakfast at 7:00am–8:00am, Lunch 11:00–11:45am, and Afternoon Snack at 2:15pm–2:45pm.

OPEN DISCUSSION: At your center, what time do you eat breakfast, lunch, snack, or other meals?

TRAINER’S TOOL: Allow participants to respond.

SAY: Let’s take a closer look at specific child care ages.

OPEN DISCUSSION: At your center how many of you have infants? How many of you have fed infants?

TRAINER’S TOOL: Allow participants to respond.
SAY: Infants should be fed “on demand”, meaning we feed infants whenever they show signs of being hungry. Even from birth, infants are very good at knowing when they are hungry and when they are full. When they are hungry, they will try to suck on anything nearby; and when they are full, they close their lips and stop sucking.

Gradually, after about a year, toddlers can begin eating at a more scheduled mealtime. Once toddlers feel hungry, it takes a little practice to learn how much they need to eat each meal to last them until the next meal. By the time a child is about two years of age, he or she can usually wait a short time for the next meal or snack. In other words, when two-year-olds tell you they are hungry, they are usually content if you tell them you’re making the snack and it will be ready in a few minutes.

Offering meals and snacks at regular times assures that children do not have to wait too long for a meal or snack and allows us to plan meals and snacks. We sometimes hear that at home if meals and snacks are not offered at regular times, children become hungry and are then allowed to “graze” through the kitchen cabinets. This can create problems because children may eat chips, candies, and desserts that are available at home and can take away their appetite for healthier foods at the next meal or snack. Grazing also creates a problem in child care. Children who graze typically lose interest in eating nutritious food items at regular meal and snack time.

During the first few days of a new child starting, clearly discuss the meal and snack times with the family and the child. The goal is to gain the support of parents. Give approximate times for each meal. Encourage new parents in child care to talk about mealtimes at home. Always allow parents to ask questions and give suggestions when possible.

Creating a Routine
Objective 2:

Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:

- Create a routine for each meal that accommodates both the needs of the children and teacher.

SAY: After scheduling meals every two to three hours, design and implement a mealtime routine. The routine should include a transition activity entering and exiting each meal, hand washing, setting the table, distribution of food, and any other tradition currently in place.
When creating a routine, understand things will occur that interrupt your routine. For example, the librarian visits your class and reads during the beginning of your routine or lunch is late. What do you do? Create a backup plan that maintains control until lunch arrives. When there is no routine or backup plan, children can become restless and temperamental. Children need stability and respond better when they are aware of the actions taking place around them.

A sample routine is attached in the appendix section of this resource. This routine gives you a basic idea of a mealtime routine.

**OPEN DISCUSSION:** Turn to the Appendix Section, to the page labeled Worksheet #2: Mealtime Routine Sample

**Typical Routine**

- Call For Helpers - Children with daily jobs
- Transition Activity - Song
- Bathroom and Handwash Break
- Children sit as the food is placed on the table
- Teachers sit and eat with children
- Children and teachers talk about various topics
- Children and teachers dispose of plates
- Transition activity - Song

**SAY:** Using this sample, create a routine for your child care setting. Create an individual mealtime routine that works for your schedule. Take five minutes to write a mealtime routine. How does your routine compare to the sample? What changes did you make to the sample to create a routine that best fits the needs of your children?

**STOP:** Individual Activity (Give participants five minutes to create a routine)

**SAY:** Would anyone like to share their Mealtime Routine?

**TRAINER’S TOOL:** Always remember to thank participants for sharing.

Routines are not easily implemented in a single day. Some children take three days to three weeks to adjust to any form of change. A major key to success is consistently following a routine each day and being flexible to unpredictable changes.
Transition Activities

Objective 3:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
• Create a transition activity to and from each meal.

SAY: During the preparation routine, a transition activity between play and mealtime can assist in a smooth transition. Transition activities are small activities between major activities that can be implemented during any change of activities.

Children tend to respond better when they know and understand what will happen next. This is also a good time to remind children of what they can expect and what you expect during the meal. When children understand what will happen next and how they are expected to behave, they feel more comfortable and can relax during the meal. For example, tell the class we will have lunch together in a few minutes, we are going to wash our hands, and then we will sit down at the table together. Remember we want to use our inside voices. Today we will have beef and spaghetti casserole, pears, peaches, and milk. Following this statement should be a transition activity. A transition activity could be a song, a saying, or game played to end an activity and start mealtime activities.

OPEN DISCUSSION: Does anyone here have a transition activity that you use on a daily basis? How does it work in your class?

TRAINER’S TOOL: If the participants are hesitant to respond, share one or two of the following:
• A transition song – Clean up, Clean up, Everybody Everywhere
• Relocate to circle time for large group time
• Helping to set the table with daily helpers

SAY: When implementing a transition activity there are several things you should do:
• Alert children when a change is about to take place
• Set clear expectations and enforce them
• Give simple directions
• Use a buddy system
• Model desired behaviors
• Use developmentally appropriate transitions
Creating a Pleasant Mealtime Environment

Objective 4:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:

• Create a pleasant mealtime environment.

SAY: Making mealtimes pleasant is a great way for everyone to enjoy the meal and help children eat well. Careful planning will allow you to offer meals to children in a relaxed setting.

If this is an option for your class, separate meals from restrooms, major walk areas, and any other physical distraction. All background noise should be eliminated, tables should be free of clutter, and all food and beverages should be placed on the table at the same time. Teachers should refrain from adult conversations that are not directly related to mealtime. Adult conversations can be a direct distraction and affect mealtimes in a negative manner.

OPEN DISCUSSION: How do distractions affect mealtimes in your classroom?

TRAINER’S TOOL: If participants are hesitant to respond, give an example of a distraction that can affect mealtime.

SAY: Another aspect of making mealtimes pleasant is the type of conversations we encourage. Conversations should be child-directed, focusing on the child’s interests and experiences. All of your conversations at mealtime will not be about food. You may want to draw the children’s attention to the food to encourage them to try new food or to help them focus on eating. The mealtime conversation around food may include what kinds of foods are being offered, the colors of each food item, how they are prepared, if the children eat similar foods at home, the origin of the food, and a variety of related topics. Conversations should not focus on which food choices, or how much a child eats. Occasionally, if the meal is about to end, ask the children if they have had enough to eat and remind children that the next meal or snack will be offered after the next activity or a certain time.

Children should not be rushed through their meal. Careful planning and experience will let you know how much time children need to eat in a relaxed setting.
Conclusion

SAY: Children and teachers benefit from having a routine in place. Routines are designed to be predictable, but flexible. A key tool to a successful routine is a transition from each activity as we have discussed today. Transitions bridge activities and assist in making routines run smoothly. Once you have a set schedule with regular meal and snack times, planned transition activities, prepared healthy meals and snacks, seated children at the table, and created a positive mealtime, you have created a pleasant mealtime environment for children.

OPEN DISCUSSION

SAY: Time for review.

TRAINER’S TOOL: Ask each question and allow participants to respond. Provide feedback as needed with the suggested answers.

REVIEW SESSION:
1. Why do children need a pleasant environment during mealtimes? The environment has a major effect on eating habits. Typically the better the environment, the better children will eat.
2. What are two things to eliminate distractions during mealtimes? Eliminate background noise and remove clutter from the table.
3. What is a transition activity? An activity that bridges routine activities
4. What are two transition activities? Song or hand movement
Lesson 2
The Picky Eater

Lesson at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Allowed (1 hour)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Introduction to Picky Eating</td>
<td>• Open Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Objective 1:</strong> Tips and Strategies for Picky Eating Implementing Strategies for Picky Eating</td>
<td>• Creating Food Activities</td>
<td>• Flip chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>• Open Discussion</td>
<td>• Review Session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 2
The Picky Eater

OBJECTIVES:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
• Implement different tips and strategies for encouraging picky eaters to broaden their choices.

SAY: Mealtimes are an exciting time to share food and conversation. Unfortunately, many of us who care about nutrition find ourselves continuously correcting children, worrying about what they ate and didn’t eat, clearing up spills, and settling little arguments. Picky eating is no exception, but how do we approach and manage children and picky eating?

First, understand picky eating is a common behavior that many children experience. Children are cautious about trying new things and mealtimes can be a major challenge for both children and teachers. Some children enjoy trying new foods, while others are very particular about the food they choose to eat. Typically, picky eating peaks between the ages of 2–5 years old. Picky eaters identify favorite foods and it is often hard to introduce new foods. Some children will whine or cry when introduced to new foods. It is also not uncommon for children to get upset, have temper tantrums, or refuse to eat.

Some children are picky eaters based on location. A parent may notice that her child won't eat fish while at home, but will eat fish when at school. Also children may experience food jagging. Children who choose to eat the same food item for each meal are experiencing Food Jag.

OPEN DISCUSSION: Think back when you were a child. Think of a funny or distasteful food experience that happened to you as a child. Would anyone like to share your experience?
DO: Allow participants to share their stories, thank them for sharing.

SAY: Most of these stories evolve around one of two issues: being asked to eat a food you don’t want or being asked to eat more than you want.

Well-intentioned adults in our lives forced us to eat foods we did not want because they thought it would be good for us in the end. What’s interesting is that insisting that children eat a food they do not want does not seem to make them like that food. In the past maybe we thought that we would help children develop a taste for a food if we insisted they eat it, but in the end we now know that is not the best way to help children try new foods.

Throughout this lesson, we will attempt to find solutions for picky eating through discussion, individual activities, and group activities.

Tips and Strategies for Picky Eating

Objective 1:

Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:

• Implement different tips and strategies for encouraging picky eaters to broaden their choices.

SAY: What do you do when you have a picky eater?

1. Don’t Force Children to Eat During Mealtimes – Allow children to choose how much food he or she would like to eat. Ask them if they would like to try all items on their plate, but don’t force them to eat. The goal is to introduce the food item and allow children to make their own decision. Some foods will have to be introduced several times before children develop an acquired taste for the food.

TRAINER’S TOOL: If participants are slow to respond give this example:

A child was served broccoli in child care. He had never seen broccoli before. When he refused to eat it, the teacher told him they had a one-bite rule. He sat at the table for 1½ hours while all the other children played until he took his one bite.
2. Avoid Bribery – Bribery is to provide compensation in return for completing a certain act. As teachers, you want to avoid all methods of bribery. For example, Ms. Collins says to Michael, “if you eat your beans, I will give you a special treat”. Bribery says to a child if you complete this, you will get that. It is a short-term remedy and it positions children for problems in the future. Life is not built on short term goals and the initial problem will then escalate into larger problems. Children may begin to barter treats for other food items. Long term effect, children may associate receiving items in exchange for things they don’t like.

3. Allow Children to Role Model – Children tend to model after each other. During mealtime this is a perfect time for children to model for each other. Ask less picky eaters if they would like to sit with picky eaters. This technique can motivate picky eaters to try different foods they typically don’t try because their friends are trying them.

4. Explore Food – Allow children to explore their food. Allow children to touch, feel, submerge, or mix all the food together. As adults, it appears as playing with their food, but it is a rewarding process for children. Children should have full control of their food when it is offered to them. Even though children should be given the right to explore their food, common table etiquette should be implemented. Remember to set small developmentally appropriate rules. Model appropriate behaviors for children.

5. Be Persistent – Follow the same routine each day; offer all food being served at the same time. Place all food and beverage on the table at the same time. Ask each child to try food items they are refusing to eat. The key is to be persistent and patient. Avoid anger and frustration; children tend to model the behaviors of the people around them regardless of the behavior.

6. Introduce Food with Activity – Children are explorers. They love to learn and explore the things around them. Food can be introduced to children as a project or study, allowing them to explore the new food item. Find books pertaining to the new food being introduced. Also prepare simple cooking activities where children are able to try the new food.
Implementing Strategies for Picky Eating

SAY: Now we can shift our attention to how we can increase the chances of a child trying new foods. We know that a direct approach of coaxing a child to eat, simply takes control away from children. Some children have to try new foods 10–15 times before they develop an acquired taste for new foods. A key tool for assisting picky eaters is incorporating food and nutrition into child care activities. The more food activities children participate in, the more likely they will want to try the food in the future. A second key tool is to only introduce one new food at a time. Introduce new foods with well liked foods to assist children in liking the new food.

We sometimes forget that food and nutrition activities can go beyond food tasting and cooking activities in the classroom. There are a variety of simple ways to increase children’s exposure to new foods and nutrition concepts through our curriculum.

Teaching nutrition through activities can take a variety of forms. We could teach nutrition from stories like *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *The Three Bears*, or *Oliver’s Vegetable Garden*. Children often learn about nutrition through role play such as playing restaurant or chef and through food tasting activities. An alternative to full cooking activities is to allow the children to help with the final steps of food preparation. This is often called food assembly activities. If all of the ingredients are prepared, it is simple for children to make individual salads or their own tacos. We certainly would not want to neglect full-scale cooking activities like making muffins or soup. We can also teach nutrition through art projects, gardening, and the incorporation of nutrition into pre-reading, sequencing, counting, and math skills. Teaching based on culture or geography is always fun and children can experience different foods and cultures.

STOP: Group Activity

SAY: In your groups, how could you incorporate nutrition in activities and curriculum? Take a minute to write down your ideas.

TRAINER’S TOOL: Allow the audience to brainstorm their ideas. You may want to write these on a flip chart or suggest the participants write ideas on a chart and present their chart. There are no right or wrong answers. Make a list of what the class would call “Best Practice”.
DO: Discuss the ideas and thank the participants for sharing.

SAY: We have certainly seen and heard a variety of ways that we can incorporate nutrition into our classroom’s curriculum. The next challenge is to find the time to incorporate nutrition into other subject areas like story time, math, and geography. Nutrition often makes the subject come alive for children. They see a real connection between themselves and the subject.

Conclusion

SAY: Some food items require children to sample at least 10–15 times before they will have a true interest. Picky eating is not a negative behavior, but children need assistance to modify these eating habits to healthy eating habits. Children desire to be independent and often will say no to food that they love and desire. Also children may try to entertain their peers with different behaviors. Remember never force children to eat, avoid bribery, allow children to explore food, and be persistent when working with picky eaters.

OPEN DISCUSSION

SAY: Time for review.

**TRAINER’S TOOL:** Ask each question and allow participants to respond. Provide feedback as needed with the suggested answers.

**REVIEW SESSION:**
1. What age do children peak at being picky eaters? 2
2. Why shouldn’t you force children to eat during mealtimes? Forcing children to eat can create short and long term problems. Children can develop a sense of resentment towards the forced food.
3. How should you introduce new foods? Through activity
4. What is an example of bribery? I will give you a cookie if you eat your brussels sprouts.
5. What can you do to assist picky eaters? Avoid forcing children to eat, avoid bribery, allow children to explore food, and persistence
Lesson 3
Managing Food Allergies

Lesson at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Allowed (1 hour)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>Introduction to Managing Food Allergies</td>
<td>• Open Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Objective 1:</strong> Creating a Food Allergy Policy</td>
<td>• Open Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Objective 2:</strong> Food Allergies</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sample Child Care Allergy List</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Objective 3:</strong> Food Allergies and Mealtime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>• Open Discussion</td>
<td>• Review Session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 3
Managing Food Allergies

OBJECTIVES:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
• Create a Food Allergy Policy for child care centers.
• Implement a Food Allergy Policy for children with food allergies.
• Implement basic tips for meeting the needs of children with food allergies.

SAY: Approximately 8% of children have food allergies and often children are diagnosed between the ages of 1–4 years. But what are food allergies? Food allergies are abnormal responses from the body’s immune system to food. Usually the proteins in food trigger the abnormal response in people who have food allergies. The body’s immune system thinks the protein is harmful and attempts to protect the body. Allergic reactions can happen within seconds or a few hours of eating. If precautions are not made, some reactions can be life threatening.

Typical food allergens are:
1. Milk
2. Eggs
3. Peanuts
4. Tree nuts
5. Fish
6. Shellfish
7. Soybeans
8. Wheat

Key symptoms include:
1. Itching in the mouth and throat
2. Skin rashes or eczema
3. Swelling of tongue or throat
4. Difficulty breathing
5. Cramps, nausea, diarrhea, and/or vomiting
6. Decline in blood pressure
7. Loss of consciousness
**OPEN DISCUSSION**: Does anyone have children with food allergies? What are some of the requirements for meeting their needs? Do the required accommodations have an effect on mealtimes?

**TRAINER’S TOOL**: If participants are hesitant to respond, give examples of a food allergy and some of the requirements needed to manage students with food allergies.

**DO**: Allow participants to respond and thank them for participating.

Yes or No: Do children who are lactose intolerant have food allergies? No, children who are lactose intolerant do not have food allergies, but they do have food intolerance. Food intolerance is a food-induced reaction and usually not life-threatening. This reaction does not involve the body’s immune system. Children who are lactose intolerant do not have the enzyme needed to digest the sugar in milk, causing a food induced reaction. There are four major types of food intolerances: dairy, gluten, yeast, and fructose. Typical symptoms include gas, bloating, and abdominal pain.

In this lesson, we will discuss how to meet the needs of children with food allergies. We will also discuss key points for managing food allergies with special diet requirements during mealtimes.

**Creating a Generic Food Allergy Policy**

**Objective 1**: Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
- Create a Food Allergy Policy for child care centers.

**OPEN DISCUSSION**: How many of you have a Food Allergy Policy? Can you tell the class about your Food Allergy Policy?

**TRAINER’S TOOL**: If participants are hesitant to respond, state that we will discuss in this lesson how to create a Food Allergy Policy.

**DO**: Allow participants to respond and thank them for participating.
SAY: Creating a Food Allergy Policy for your center/home can be beneficial to everyone. The policy should clearly define the course of action required to meet the needs of children with food allergies. Creating and implementing a Food Allergy Policy can be made easy with collaborating and planning as a team.

First, bring together a team, including the center's food service worker, the management team, and teachers, who will work as a Food Allergy Policy Development Team. Also invite a parent of a child and a medical specialist, who has experience with food allergies. The key is to have a mixture of professionals who can provide insight on the needs of children and managing food allergies.

The policy should include all applicable laws and regulations required by your local or federal government. Be sure that your policy incorporates your state and federal disability laws and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations regarding children with food allergies. Food allergies that are life-threatening are considered to be a disability. With regards to this, know and understand all applicable federal laws and state laws.

When creating the Food Allergy Policy, remember that although any food could potentially lead to anaphylaxis, the most common foods are peanuts, tree nuts, and shellfish. Consider not allowing outside foods in the center from families and employees if there are a large number of children with food allergies. Also consider allowing parents to provide food for children with multiple special diet requirements, to decrease the chances of an allergic reaction. Remember to include in your Food Allergy Policy, parent and teachers responsibilities and expectations when in the care of the child care facility.

The policy should be signed each year by all teachers, managerial members, and parents.

**Anaphylaxis**—rapidly occurring reaction that may involve hives, swelling, enlargement of the larynx (voice box) with choking, wheezing, severe vomiting, diarrhea, and shock. This is a life-threatening reaction that can occur minutes, hours, or days after exposure to the food allergen.


Food Allergies

Objective 2:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:

• Implement a Food Allergy Policy for children with food allergies.

SAY: With the number of food allergies on the rise in young children, it is necessary that we all know how to keep children safe. When a parent reports a child to have a food allergy and requests a special diet, there are key steps needed to make sure mealtimes remain safe.

What is the first step? (Allow Participants to respond) First implement the Food Allergy Policy. Discuss with the parents the Food Allergy Policy and the accommodations the child care center can reasonably make for a child with food allergies. Request a signed medical statement from a recognized medical authority or the child’s physician that clearly describes the food allergy, food restrictions, substitutions, instructions, and medications. Also request the parent provide the center with prescribed labeled medications with directions for administering. Be sure to follow the laws and regulations of your state regarding who is allowed to administer medications and discuss this with the parent or guardian.

The second step is to review the child’s allergies. Everyone should know and understand food allergies and key symptoms when working with children who have food allergies. All medical statements and signed Food Allergy Policies should be placed in each child’s file. A list of all children who have a food allergy should be placed in a designated area in each class and in the kitchen or food prep area. This list should be updated as needed, when changes occur. Some centers refer to this list as an Allergy List, Red List, or Food List when in the classroom or food prep area.

The food allergy list assists all teachers and substitute teachers. Teachers are able to remind themselves of all food allergies using the posted list. Just imagine, you have twelve students and four students have food allergies. If the food allergy list is located in the classroom, teachers can remind themselves of foods to avoid when working with children with food allergies. The food allergy list should be easy to read and understand. The list should include the child’s name, allergy, symptoms if ingested, and treatment. If posted on a wall, the list should be covered with a cover sheet to protect the privacy of all children with food allergies. A Sample Child Care Allergy List is located in the Appendix and Participant Handouts.
The third step is to learn how to create safe meals and environments for children who have food allergies. This step includes trainings on reading food labels, how and who is allowed to administer medication, safe activity planning, creating a safe environment, and any other training needed to keep children safe.

A key training needed is learning how to read food labels to locate possible food allergens. Some food manufacturers include warning statements on the labels about possible cross-contamination that caregivers should be trained to recognize and some manufacturers do not. Unfortunately, labeling laws do not require manufacturers to list common allergenic ingredients resulting from shared equipment and cross-contamination issues. Therefore, it still remains the responsibility of the caregivers to read labels carefully and to contact manufacturers to ensure that each food is safe for a child’s unique allergy issues prior to preparing meals.

All staff that interact with children with food allergies should be trained on food allergies, symptoms, actions to take in an emergency, and emergency contacts. Staff should practice “what to do” if an allergic reaction should occur. There should be a designated place to store all medication. Staff should know who is allowed to administer medication if an emergency should take place. The goal is for staff members to be informed and aware of what should happen and steps to take if a child has an allergic reaction.

Managing food allergies requires everyone’s involvement for success. This includes parents, teachers, cooks, administration, and the child’s physician to assist in maintaining the best care for all children with food allergies. Teachers should exercise caution to prevent exposure to food allergens. Children should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces with bleach and water, and avoid extracurricular activities using food that a child is allergic to. For example, a child in your class has a severe cinnamon food allergy and today’s lesson plan discusses cinnamon. As a teacher, think of alternative ways to teach children about cinnamon.

**Food Allergy Tips**

**Objective 3:**

Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:

- Implement basic tips for meeting the needs of children with food allergies.
Tips to be successful:

**SAY:** When you have children in your class with special diets you should:
- Have a positive attitude.
- Implement the Food Allergy Policy.
- Have a teacher/parent conference with the parent of the child who has a food allergy.
- Request all paperwork including Medical Statement and any other required documentation.
- Know who is allowed to administer medications and discuss this with the parent.
- Place a list of children with food allergies in designated areas including the kitchen and the classroom.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water before and after each task (using water alone or hand sanitizer is ineffective for removing food allergens).
- Remember keeping children safe requires a team.

**Conclusion**

**SAY:** Serving children with food allergies can be made easy with proper planning. When working with children with food allergies, remember to be positive and respect the child. Learn the policy, implement the policy, and make children feel comfortable and safe when doing so.

**OPEN DISCUSSION**

**SAY:** Time for review.

**TRAINER’S TOOL:** Ask each question and allow participants to answer the questions. Provide feedback as needed with the suggested answers.

**REVIEW SESSION:**
1. What is a key step in creating a Food Allergy Policy? Forming a policy team, incorporating state and federal regulations, creating a treatment procedure.
2. What are two tips for having a successful meal with a food allergy? Learn the food allergy requirements and have a positive attitude.
3. Where are two major places a food allergy list should be posted? Posted in the classroom and in the kitchen.

4. What is an allergy list? A list of all the allergies a child may have based on an allergen.
## Lesson 4

**Family Style Dining, Conversations, and Etiquette**

### Lesson at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Allowed (1 hour 40 minutes)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10-15 minutes                    | Introduction to Family Style Dining | • Family Style Mealtime Checklist  
• Open Discussion | • Worksheet #3: Family Style Mealtime Checklist |
| 10-15 minutes                    | **Objective 1:** Family Style Dining Advantages | • Ideal Family Style Meal | • Flip chart  
• Markers |
| 10-15 minutes                    | **Objective 2:** Family Style Dining and Purchasing |                                            | |
| 30 minutes                       | **Objective 3:** Implementing Family Style Dining |                                            | |
| 20 minutes                       | Happy Mealtime | • Happy Mealtime Skit | • Family Style Dining Materials Training Tool Kit |
| 5 minutes                        | Conclusion | • Open Discussion  
• Review Session | |
Lesson 4
Family Style Dining, Conversations, and Etiquette

OBJECTIVES:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
• Understand the advantages for teachers of family style dining.
• Understand the process of purchasing items to implement family style dining.
• Implement an ideal mealtime using family style dining.

SAY: Adults are responsible for planning and preparing healthy meals and snacks for children. Children are responsible for deciding which of the healthy foods offered they would like to eat and deciding how much they would like to eat. Our goal is not to just feed children, but rather, to meet the child’s nutritional needs today and create positive eating habits that last a lifetime through family style dining.

Family style dining is such an important time for children. Family style dining implements several different skills that follow children for life.

Family style dining reinforces social skills. This includes taking turns, passing food in serving dishes, saying please and thank you, and last helping to set the table for their friends. Children feel in control of their eating. They are able to take small servings of food and take additional food later in the meal. Children might choose not to take a food item initially but change their minds as the meal proceeds. Family style dining encourages children to feel confident that additional food will be available throughout the meal.

Family style dining consists of serving food in bowls and platters and beverages in pitchers on the table and is the ideal method of offering food to young children. Our goal is to plan a transition that will assure that we can be successful in offering family style meals.
The most common mistake in starting family style meals is making the decision that it’s a good idea one day and then return to the original serving style the following day. Guess what? It’s likely to be a disaster!

**OPEN DISCUSSION:** How many of you use family style dining? Does it work well with your children? What are some of your concerns? Is this the first time for anyone to hear about family style dining?

**STOP:** Individual Activity

**SAY:** Turn to Worksheet #3: Family Style Mealtime Checklist and complete the checklist.

The checklist gives you an idea of what is expected during mealtime. We will not share our checklist, but we will talk about each section throughout this lesson.

In this lesson, you will learn the advantages for teachers when implementing family style dining. We will also learn what items to purchase for family style dining. Last, we will learn how to introduce and implement family style dining.

**Family Style Dining Advantages**

**Objective 1:**

Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:

- Understand the advantages for teachers of family style dining.

**SAY:** Teachers benefit from family style dining, just as kids do. All food is available at the start of the meal. The teachers can enjoy sitting with the children throughout the meal. Teachers can have a more relaxed meal knowing they will not be going back to the kitchen to get extra food or be responsible for other mealtime tasks.

When the teachers are sitting at the table with the children, it allows them to act as role models, demonstrating appropriate mealtime behavior for children. Teachers can redirect behaviors and apply direct supervision to children as they eat. This goes a long way toward maintaining a pleasant mealtime atmosphere throughout the meal.

When we have a pleasant mealtime atmosphere, it is easy to enjoy pleasant conversation with the children and establish a relaxed family-like atmosphere.

**STOP:** Group Activity
SAY: In your learning teams, take a moment to visualize an ideal meal served family style. What would it look like? Take a minute to write down some ideas.

**TRAINER’S TOOL:** Allow the audience to brainstorm ideas. You may want to write these on a flip chart or suggest the participants write ideas on a chart and present their chart to the class. There are no right or wrong answers. Enthusiastically encourage more and more comments and the ideal meal.

SAY: All of these are great; thank you for sharing.

**Family Style Dining and Purchasing**

**Objective 2:**

Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:

- Understand the process of purchasing items to implement family style dining.

SAY: When first starting out to implement family style dining, to be successful several items are needed. It is not recommended that you use your standard kitchen bowls. Typically kitchen bowls are not child friendly. To be safe and child accessible, items should be purchased that are specialized for children. Many of these items can be purchased at your local kitchen warehouse or specialty store.

Items should include:

- Plastic wide lip bowls and platters
- Short handled hard plastic serving spoons
- Cups
- Pitchers
- Plates
- Spoons
- Measuring cups
- Plastic tongs
- Cleanup supplies

SAY: After purchasing the items, what do you do? First send a letter home to parents explaining to them the new implementation. Ask parents to talk to their
children about the new method of dining. In your trainer’s manual, Worksheet #4 is a sample family letter introducing family style dining. Second, during large group time, explain to the children that we will be implementing a new eating style. Explain the entire process to the children. The process can be practiced with empty serving dishes.

An example:

“Good morning boys and girls. Today we have something planned that is very fun and exciting. Has anyone heard of family style dining? Family style dining is an activity we do during mealtime. During breakfast, lunch, and snack, I will allow you to fill your own plate with foods you enjoy. Does this sound exciting? A couple of bowls with different items will be placed on the table. Each bowl will have a spoon. Because we share with our friends, we take a spoonful of what’s inside the bowl and pass the bowl to our friends. How many of you like peaches, or chicken, or green beans? Many of these items will be in the bowls. If you happen to drop a food item, it is okay. Ask me for assistance. We will also talk about different things during mealtimes, so if you would like to talk, we are ready to listen. I am so excited about family style dining and I hope you have the best time. Now let’s practice”.

This is a statement that would help introduce family style dining to children. Display excitement and enthusiasm when discussing family style dining. The more excited you are about family style dining the more excited the children will be.

Implementing Family Style Dining

Objective 3:
Upon completion of this lesson, the participants will be able to:
• Implement an ideal mealtime using family style dining.

SAY: We know that it is not always easy to have all of the food ready and at the table at the start of the meal. Sometimes the cook doesn’t always bring the food at the same time. Sometimes the food takes a long time to cook and some classes have to start without the main dish or there are not enough teachers to take care of the children and prepare the food in a timely fashion. As teachers, we have to begin to look at ways to reschedule time or work with the child care director and administrators to help solve some of these challenges.
Now we begin to get into skills that our children will need to learn. We said that in the ideal family style meal everyone is eating and conversing between their friends and teachers. Children love to know what is expected of them, and it is always easier to teach children what’s expected of them when we talk to them about expected behavior. A simple discussion of how “we eat at our center” can include the concepts that we all come to the table at the same time and we wait until everyone is at the table before we start serving ourselves and passing food to our friends. Children often need to hear this information several times before they understand the new routine. We don’t expect perfect patience from the start but know that most children can learn these basic table manners when they receive supportive reinforcement on a consistent basis.

The first skill children will need to master is the skill of passing serving dishes of food from one person to another. To do this successfully requires that we have serving bowls that are small, easy to handle, and made of a material that does not become too hot that the children cannot easily pass the dish. Small bowls are easier to pick up and pass than larger bowls. Often the same food will need to be divided into several bowls to assure that it is easy to pass and serve. Bowls with a wide rim or lip are often easier to pass and help to prevent spilling of liquid foods. Metal bowls like stainless steel, although they are durable, are really only suitable for cold foods since they become too hot to handle when filled with a hot food.

We will want to talk to children about passing bowls with two hands, holding the bowl on the outside and not letting their fingers touch the food. We can practice these skills with empty bowls and bowls filled with dry foods even before we try passing foods during the meals. We would recommend you avoid serving platters until the children are skilled at passing food. Keeping food balanced on a serving platter is much more difficult than handling a bowl. Most foods that we would think about serving on a plate or platter can be easily served in a bowl. Sandwiches cut in half can be passed very successfully by 3-year-olds when they are served in small bowls. After children have mastered the concept of handling.

A key to having children serve themselves successfully is the type of serving utensils we provide. Small hard plastic spoons and tongs are easier for children to handle than long-handled spoons or sharp serving forks. Small pitchers with handles are often an ideal size and shape for children to manage.
One concern that we sometimes encounter in having children serve themselves is that some children may take such a large portion of a food that there is not enough left for the other children at the table. Using a measuring cup or a measured hard plastic spoon of a specific volume often has the added advantage of subtly controlling the portion size a child may take. The teachers may recommend that each child take a serving of whatever food they want and that they may take additional food after everyone has been offered the food. This helps to assume that all of the children will be offered food.

Plastic tongs are an easy way for children to pick up foods. Practicing picking up items with tongs before the meal can help children feel comfortable in handling the tongs during the meal.

Pouring skills have long been a part of fine motor skill practiced in the child care setting. We usually begin with pouring water during outdoor play or practice pouring skills with sand or beans. If we carefully select small pitchers and consider small pitchers with lids and pouring spouts for the young child, we can easily make the transition to having the children pour their own beverages at mealtime. Some centers have been successful at having children pour their own milk by using the standard milk carton as the pitcher. Children are encouraged to pour their milk into a glass. Once this has been mastered, they can use developmentally appropriate pitchers that are shared at the table.

Of course we do not expect all children to master these skills at the same rate. We know that some children will be able to serve themselves with assistance from teachers.

During family style dining, there should be plenty of food. It is difficult to relax and enjoy a meal if you are worried that you may not be able to get enough to eat. We have also said that for children to learn lifelong eating habits, they need to feel in control of their eating. They need to be assured that if they don’t want a food initially, they can change their minds during the meal, or if they decide they want more food, the option is available.
Finally, when we talked about the ideal family style meal, we said that everyone is happy and talking. Mealtimes should be fun and pleasant for everyone. The major points discussed were having all of the food ready at the start of the meal and having everyone sit down together. It is obvious that if we are going to be available to assist children in family style dining, teachers need to be sitting with the children from the start of the meal. If we get behind in preparing the meal or if we need to leave the table unattended, we can only expect that children will not have an ideal mealtime experience.

We also need to expect spills. We’ve seen that the skills we learn in order to develop healthy eating habits can be complicated. Children need time to learn passing and pouring skills, and little distractions can cause those inevitable spills. Little accidents should be handled in a relaxed manner. Children should never be reprimanded or criticized for spills at the table. Child-size sponges and small pails of soapy water make cleanup easy and fun for children. We have even seen miniature mops used by the children to clean up spills on the floor. We don’t expect cleanup to be perfect. Sopping up spilled milk or drying the floor to prevent slipping is really all that is necessary to continue a relaxed and pleasant meal. Full cleanup can be done by the teacher after the meal has been completed.

**Happy Mealtimes Skit**

**SAY:** Does anyone have any questions pertaining to family style dining? (Allow Participants to respond)

**STOP:** Group Activity

**SAY:** Now it’s time for a group activity. A set of family style dining materials will be distributed to each learning team. Using the materials, create a happy mealtime skit. Decide who will play the roles of the teacher and the children. Be creative and include real life mealtime challenges and solutions. Some challenges may include a picky eater, lunch being served late, or a child with a special diet. Remember to use family style dining during the skit. Take about 10 minutes to create a skit.

**DO:** Allow participants to perform their skits.
Conclusion
Today we discussed four main topics; creating a pleasant environment, managing the picky eater, special diet inclusion, and family style dining. All four topics contribute to making mealtimes happy and successful for children. The ultimate goal is better nutrition for our children. As teachers, we are responsible for meeting children’s nutritional needs and creating good eating habits that will last a lifetime, in return creates happy mealtimes.

OPEN DISCUSSION

SAY: Time for review.

TRAINER’S TOOL: Ask each question and allow participants to answer the questions. Provide feedback as needed with the suggested answers.

REVIEW SESSION:
1. What are 3 items needed to implement family style dining? Utensils, children, and a table
2. What is one thing you should do before implementing family style dining? Send out a parent letter explaining family style dining.
3. What is something you should avoid doing during family style dining? Preparing for an activity during mealtime, focusing on other tasks during mealtime, or anything else that does not focus directly on children during mealtime.
### Worksheet #1
#### Mealtime Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeding Practices</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mealtimes are pleasant and relaxed for the children and teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Children are allowed plenty of time to eat.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. A variety of food is offered to meet the child’s nutritional needs.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 4. Easy-to-like foods are offered at each meal.  
a. Brightly colored foods  
b. Finger foods  
c. Easily defined foods |        |           |       |
| 5. New foods are offered several times a week to broaden the children’s food experiences. |        |           |       |
| 6. Portion sizes are appropriate for the children. |        |           |       |
| 7. Second servings of fruits and vegetables are available to assure the children can satisfy their appetites. |        |           |       |
| 8. A safe and sanitary environment is offered to the children. |        |           |       |
| 9. Food is not used as a reward, punishment, or pacifier; for example:  
  • Children are not asked to eat their vegetables before they can have a second serving of food or dessert.  
  • Children are not given a cookie for finishing a task or promised a candy if they get hurt.  
  • Milk is not delayed until certain foods have been eaten (“Always indicate that each of these statements are true at your center”) |        |           |       |
| 10. Children are allowed to decide the amount of food they eat. |        |           |       |
| 11. Children are allowed to serve themselves (family style) from bowls and platters of food on the table. |        |           |       |
| 12. Adults sit at the table with the children throughout the entire mealtime. |        |           |       |
| 13. Adults eat the same food as the children. |        |           |       |
| 14. Adults and children share pleasant conversations at mealtimes. |        |           |       |
Worksheet #2
Mealtime Routine Sample

Typical Routine

Call For Helpers - Children with daily jobs
Transition Activity - Song
Bathroom and Handwash Break
Children sit at the table as the food is placed on the table
Teachers sit and eat with children
Children and teachers dispose of plates
Transition activity - Song
Worksheet #3
Family Style Mealtime Checklist

Mealtime Routine
☐ Teachers routine allows for food to be prepared and ready at the designated mealtime.

Appropriate size bowls and serving utensils
☐ Food is served in bowls of appropriate size that children can lift and pass.
☐ Serving bowls are of appropriate material so they do not conduct heat and are not too hot to pass.
☐ Small size scoops, one-piece plastic tongs, and short-handled hard plastic serving spoons are used.

Mealtime expectations to review with children
☐ We eat together at the table.
☐ We all come to the table at the same time.
☐ We wait until everyone is ready before we begin our meal.
☐ We serve ourselves and pass food to each other.
☐ We use inside voices.

Passing food practice for children
☐ Pass with both hands.
☐ Keep food over the table when passing it.
☐ Hold the bowl by the side to keep fingers out of food.

Serving utensils practice for children
☐ Practice with scoops, tongs, and short-handled hard plastic serving spoons

Pouring practice for children
☐ Pretend practice.
☐ Practice with dry liquid such as sand or beans.
☐ Practice with water.
☐ Practice with water and pouring into child size cups.

Cleanup practice for children
☐ Pretend cleanup with sponge or cloth.
☐ Pretend floor cleanup with mini-mop or cloth
☐ Practice cleanup of table and floor with water.
# Sample Child Care Allergy List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Food Allergen or Intolerance</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Emergency Directions</th>
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Date: ________________________________
Dear Family,

Over the next few weeks, we will be discussing good behavior at the table. We will be discussing that at our center:

- We all come to the table at the same time
- We wait until everyone is at the table before we start serving the food

Your child will be learning:

- How to serve food for her/himself
- How to pass food to others at the table

We invite you to discuss these ideas with your child and help him or her with serving skills at home.
References


National Food Service Management Institute (2003). *From the Trainer’s Tablet*. University, MS: Author


Happy Meal Times for Healthy Kids


Participant Handouts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeding Practices</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mealtimes are pleasant and relaxed for the children and teachers.</td>
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<td>2. Children are allowed plenty of time to eat.</td>
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<td>3. A variety of food is offered to meet the child’s nutritional needs.</td>
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<td>4. Easy-to-like foods are offered at each meal.</td>
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<td>a. Brightly colored foods</td>
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<td>b. Finger foods</td>
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<td>c. Easily defined foods</td>
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<td>5. New foods are offered several times a week to broaden the children’s food experiences.</td>
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<td>6. Portion sizes are appropriate for the children.</td>
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<td>7. Second servings of fruits and vegetables are available to assure the children can satisfy their appetites.</td>
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<td>8. A safe and sanitary environment is offered to the children.</td>
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<td>9. Food is not used as a reward, punishment, or pacifier; for example:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Children are not asked to eat their vegetables before they can have a second serving of food or dessert.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Children are not given a cookie for finishing a task or promised a candy if they get hurt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Milk is not delayed until certain foods have been eaten (“Always indicate that each of these statements are true at your center”)</td>
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<td>10. Children are allowed to decide the amount of food they eat.</td>
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<td>11. Children are allowed to serve themselves (family style) from bowls and platters of food on the table.</td>
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<td>12. Adults sit at the table with the children throughout the entire mealtime.</td>
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<td>13. Adults eat the same food as the children.</td>
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<td>14. Adults and children share pleasant conversations at mealtimes.</td>
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Worksheet #2
Mealtime Routine Sample

Typical Routine

Call For Helpers-Children with daily jobs
Transition Activity - Song
Bathroom and Handwash Break
Children sit at the table as the food is placed on the table
Teachers sit and eat with children
Children and teachers dispose of plates
Transition activity - Song
Worksheet #3

Family Style Mealtime Checklist

Mealtime Routine
☐ Teachers routine allows for food to be prepared and ready at the designated mealtime.

Appropriate size bowls and serving utensils
☐ Food is served in bowls of appropriate size that children can lift and pass.
☐ Serving bowls are of appropriate material so they do not conduct heat and are not too hot to pass.
☐ Small size scoops, one-piece plastic tongs, and short-handled hard plastic serving spoons are used.

Mealtime expectations to review with children
☐ We eat together at the table.
☐ We all come to the table at the same time.
☐ We wait until everyone is ready before we begin our meal.
☐ We serve ourselves and pass food to each other.
☐ We use inside voices.

Passing food practice for children
☐ Pass with both hands.
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Worksheet #4
Sample Family Letter

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