



Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care

SUPPORTING HEALTHY EATING






Here's Why...

Mealtimes at your facility should be similar to mealtimes at home. Teachers and kids that eat together as one big “family” have the opportunity to enjoy a relaxing meal. Conversation at the table adds to the pleasant mealtime environment and provides opportunities for modeling appropriate eating behaviors and informal nutrition education.

Serving meals family style is a great way to encourage fine motor skills and table manners as well as teach children how to “listen to their bodies” when serving themselves portions of food.



Choices You Make for Your Facility

-  Serve food family style and let the children serve themselves. They can determine what foods they want to try and how much of each to take.
-  Staff should be positive nutrition role models. If you want the children in your care to eat their vegetables, the staff should eat theirs and enjoy them!
-  Eating together provides an opportunity for staff to teach children about table manners, and to stop eating when full.
-  Encourage, but don't force a child to try a food.
-  Mealtime should be a happy time. This is a great opportunity for staff to talk with the kids and make them feel special.



Checklist

- Our staff and children sit and enjoy meals together.
- We serve meals or parts of each meal family style.
- Our staff eat the same foods that the children eat all of the time.
- Our staff model healthy eating to the children at every meal or snack.
- Our staff informally talk with children about enjoying healthy foods at every meal or snack.
- We provide visible support for good nutrition in 2-to 5-year old classrooms and common areas through use of posters, pictures, and books.



Getting Support From the Parents

- 🍓 Parents influence children's eating habits and interest in food by what they do and say. Talk to parents about how to be a good role model for their children when it comes to healthy eating.
- 🍓 Let parents know that you serve family style meals and snacks. Share positive comments about their children's behaviors that you observed during mealtime.
- 🍓 Suggest that parents sit down as a family for meals as frequently as possible.
- 🍓 Invite parents to join their children at a mealtime so they can observe the positive atmosphere.

Getting the Kids on Board

- 🍓 Pick one child a day to talk about what they see on their plate. Ask the child about the different colors, textures, and food groups.
- 🍓 Ask children to try a new food at home and report back.
- 🍓 Ask children to talk about their favorite foods. Are they foods that should be eaten every day or only occasionally?

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi/Information/Newsletters/meme2004-4.pdf>

<http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Newsletters/meme2003-2.pdf>

<http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Newsletters/meme2002-6.pdf>

<http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/Newsletters/meme2003-3.pdf>