

Best Practices for Serving Foods to Groups of Children

Janice Fletcher, EdD and Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD

PROVIDE SPACE

Young children are learning to control their muscles, especially their hand muscles. They need plenty of space to balance food, drink, and eating utensils. Make sure there is adequate "personal space" for each of the children as they eat.

PROVIDE PRACTICE WITH CHILD SIZED UTENSILS

Fine motor control is a major developmental task of young children. Strength, endurance, and control are minimally developed for using eating utensils. Help children increase skills by giving them plenty of practice with spoons, forks, knives, and serving utensils. Use child-sized eating utensils and equipment.

PROVIDE FOODS THAT CHALLENGE EATING SKILLS

Offer foods to spread, cut, break, spear, or spoon from a bowl. This variety allows children to gain skills. Caution: expect children to have varying degrees of ability. Children should have lots of time and opportunity to PRACTICE these skills before competence is expected.

MAKE SURE ADULTS EAT WITH CHILDREN

Adults are role models for using utensils, choosing and eating foods, and behaving in socially acceptable ways at the table. They help shape children's eating behavior. Adults elaborate and embellish on children's "food" vocabularies. Adults help children trust the eating environment by making sure they are safe both physically and psychologically.

HELP CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT FOOD BY ASSISTING THEM AS THEY PARTICIPATE IN PREPARING IT

Children can participate in preparing food. They enjoy eating what they prepare.

Children gain a sense of autonomy (self control) as a part of food preparation. This results in children feeling healthy control in their relationships with food and eating.

HELP CHILDREN LISTEN TO THEIR INTERNAL CONTROLS ON HOW MUCH OR WHETHER TO EAT

Let children eat until they are full or satisfied, rather than setting limits about how much they eat. Sometimes we feed children in groups by using a principle of equality. This translates to the rule that each child gets an equal amount. Such equality is not fair.

Fairness in feeding children should be based on letting the children's natural body cues tell them when they are full. What is fair is to trust that children will eat as much as they need.

TRUST CHILDREN TO EAT AS MUCH AS THEY NEED

Resist forcing children to clean their plates. When people are forced to eat beyond what their brains tell them is enough, they learn to overcome their bodies' hunger and satiety cues. Be careful of subtle forcing, no matter how gentle or kind-hearted.



LET CHILDREN SERVE THEMSELVES

Children waste less when they are given the opportunity to choose how much they will have. Let them serve themselves rather than depend on adults (who may heap food on unwilling children's plates). As children first serve themselves in family style service, they are begin to use skills for passing bowls and selecting amounts. Support children as they LEARN how to pass bowls without accidents and how to choose portion sizes that match how much they can eat.

FEED CHILDREN OFTEN

Young children need to eat about six times a day. Schedule meals and snacks. The length of time that children may continue to eat should be flexible. Remember that some children, on certain days, take longer to eat than the group. In addition, remember that some foods take longer to eat than others. A ham sandwich takes longer to eat than a half cup of pudding!

SET THE ENVIRONMENT SO CHILDREN DO NOT WAIT TOO LONG.

Since young children are learning to delay gratification, they have greater difficulty than older children in waiting their turns. They are working on the social skills of taking turns and sharing, as well as the omnipresent "table manners" so discussed in middle class families. In group settings where children serve themselves, be alert to how long children must wait to eat. Delay putting food and drink on the table until you are ready for the children to begin serving themselves. Offer enough bowls of food or pitchers of drink so that children have limited waiting periods.



PRESENT FOOD THAT IS COMMONLY KNOWN TO CHILDREN.

RELATE NEW FOODS TO THOSE THE CHILDREN ALREADY KNOW.

Prepare foods so they are recognizable to children. Avoid trying to be "cute." Some recipes for children inappropriately suggest making food into clown sandwiches or vegetable monsters in a misguided effort to attract children's attention. Children want routine and familiarity in their foods.

Sensibilidad de respuesta a las necesidades de los niños a la hora de las comidas

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Los niños se desarrollan mejor cuando el ambiente es SENSIBLE. Las horas de las comidas en ambientes grupales son más exitosas para los niños cuando las personas, la comida, y la distribución del ambiente son sensibles a sus necesidades.

ESTRATEGIAS

CUÁL ES EL PAPEL DE LOS ADULTOS EN LA MESA?

Los niños necesitan que los adultos coman con ellos! Esto proporciona oportunidades para modelar comportamientos. Los adultos enseñan a los niños higiene y convenciones sociales. Es más probable que los niños se sientan relajados y seguros cuando un adulto relajado está cerca. Los niños necesitan a los adultos para que los mantengan a salvo, incluyendo el darles apoyo respecto a higiene, posibles riesgos de atoro, y conflictos que los niños negocian.

UTILIZE A LOS PADRES DE FAMILIA COMO VOLUNTARIOS A LAS HORAS DE LAS COMIDAS

Sostenga un taller de entrenamiento para padres de familia acerca de alimentación infantil. Modele las practicas más apropiadas sentando a los voluntarios nuevos junto con Ud. a una de las mesas de los niños. Asegúrese de darles cosas para leer tales como Cómo hacer que su niño coma pero no demasiado de Ellyn Satter (Publicaciones Bull, San Francisco).

HABLE, ESCUCHE y OBSERVE

Observe el lenguaje y sea sensible a las necesidades de vocabulario de los niños y a su comprensión del significado de las palabras. Sea consciente de las palabras que usa. Las palabras que Ud. usa de manera casual peden ser palabras nuevas para los niños.

Entérese de los pensamientos de los niños acerca de alimentos mediante el análisis del vocabulario que ellos usan. Note cómo ponen los alimentos en categorías. Escuche atentamente lo que dicen. Piense cuidadosamente sus respuestas en lugar de responder en forma casual.

Responsiveness (cont.)

CUÁNTO???????

Enseñe a los niños cómo determinar el tamaño de un bocado. Hable con ellos acerca del tamaño de una porción y de cuánto recogen con sus utensilios para servir. Mantenga disponibles cubiertos de tamaño apropiado para niños. Escoja utensilios de servir que contengan porciones pequeñas (Una cuchara para servir helado funciona muy bien!). Los niños necesitan porciones más pequeñas que los adultos. Si Ud sirve los platos de los niños haga las segundas y terceras porciones más pequeñas que las cantidades iniciales. Si Ud. sirve los platos de los niños pídale a ellos que le digan cuánto poner en su plato.

UNA PALABRA ACERCA DE NAUSEAS Y ATOROS

Si los niños tienen nauseas y se están atorando porque tienen demasiado en su boca, dígalos "Escúpelolo!". Este no es el momento para enseñarles acerca del tamaño de un bocado. Este es un momento para mantener al niño a salvo. Después de que el niño se recupere del trauma emocional de atorarse, hable del tamaño de un bocado, masticar, y tragar o pasar el bocado. Haga recordar al niño de pensar acerca de cuánta comida poner en los utensilios de comer de manera segura.

Sea estricto acerca de imponer reglas para prevenir atoros. Algunas reglas comunes son: siéntate mientras comes; termina de masticar y pasar la comida antes de dejar la mesa; mantente fuera del espacio de otros niños mientras ellos están comiendo.

"QUIERO SENTARME A TU LADO CUANDO COMAMOS, ESTÁ BIEN?"

Las horas de las comidas son grandes eventos sociales. Use servicio estilo familiar. Arregle el ambiente alimentario de modo que los niños puedan servirse solos y compartir el proceso de obtener alimentos. Si es imposible o impráctico que se sirvan solos toda la comida, haga que se sirvan solos por lo menos algunas cosas. Como mínimo déle a los niños oportunidades para decir cuánto va en sus platos.

CUCHILLO, TENEDOR, CUCHARA, o DEDOS!!

Déle a los niños cuchillos, tenedores, y cucharas. La oportunidad de usar todos estos tres permite a los niños ejercitar músculos, desarrollar habilidades que son valoradas socialmente, y ser más eficientes en comer. Recuerde que los músculos de los niños están en construcción! Fuerza y resistencia aún no están establecidas. Provea utensilios de servir, jarras, y tazones de tamaño apropiado para niños. Enséñeles acerca de cómo sujetar y usar los utensilios cuando los niños estén relajados y sus músculos no estén fatigados. Hablar de cómo utilizar los cubiertos y utensilios funciona mejor cuando los niños no tienen mucho

Responsiveness (cont.)

hambre y no están muy cansados. Momentos de grupo pequeño son buenos para hablar acerca de servirse solos y utilizar cubiertos y utensilios.

“MI MANO ESTÁ SUCIA!”

Enseñe a los niños acerca de qué es TUYO, MÍO, y NUESTRO. Haga oportunidades para que los niños aprendan las reglas acerca de comer y de higiene que son apropiadas para “tuyo, mío, y nuestro”. Enséñeles acerca de higiene cuando se sirven solos. Ayúdeles a determinar qué es “tuyo, mío, y nuestro” y cómo evitar contaminación cruzada.

Enseñe a los niños a lavarse las manos correcta y completamente antes y después de comer. Las profesoras pueden modelar ésto! Asegúrese de describir lo que los niños están haciendo mientras se van lavando las manos. “Estás usando agua tibia. Te estás lavando entre los dedos”.

UNA PALABRA ACERCA DE SERVILLETAS

.Aún los niños más pequeños saben cuando sus caras estan sucias y ellos saben cuando sus manos estan sucias. Ellos lo sienten y lo ven! Tenga servilletas disponibles. Ayude a los niños a usarlas cuando ellos le dejan saber que se sienten sucios.

“QUÉ ES ESTA COSA BLANCA?”

Ayude a los niños a aprender acerca de los alimentos. Modele probar alimentos que son nuevos para los niños. Recuerde que los alimentos pueden ser nuevos para ellos, a pesar de ser comúnmente conocidos en el ambiente. Nombre los alimentos. Hable acerca de como los alimentos son similares. Hable de las características de los alimentos y ayude a los niños a formar categorías de alimentos.

Integre actividades alimenticias a través del día. Incluya alimentos y “conversación de alimentos” en el juego dramático, historias, y libros. Enseñe acerca de los alimentos y de las categorías de la Pirámide de Alimentos, pero no espere que los niños conceptualizen la pirámide. Incluya las palabras: granos, vegetales, y frutas, carnes, y productos lácteos. Típicamente, los niños pequeños no piensan en abstracto. La mayoría no entiende la jeraquía de la pirámide. Sin embargo, ellos pueden empezar a poner alimentos en categorías. Evite usar los términos “buenos alimentos” y “malos alimentos”. En lugar de eso hable de como nuestros cuerpos *necesitan* granos, frutas, y vegetales. Asegúrese de ayudar a los niños a asignar nombres y descubrir similitudes y diferencias en tanto que aprenden acerca de alimentos.

ADVERTENCIAS

EVITE FORZAR A LOS NIÑOS A COMER

No obligue a los niños a comer. Monitoree comentarios hacia los niños acerca de las cantidades que ellos comen. Forzamiento subrepticio es tan dañino como forzamiento obvio. Haga que alguien tome notas de los comentarios que Ud. hace en la mesa con los niños. Analice sus comentarios para ver qué mensajes está Ud. enviando a los niños acerca de comer. Esté consciente de frases que dificultan que un niño desarrolle auto regulación.

TAMAÑO DE LA PORCIÓN

Si Ud. tiene que servir los platos de los niños, no les sirva porciones grandes. Sea cuidadoso acerca del tamaño de las segundas porciones. A pesar de un niño puede pedir más no asuma que el niño quiere una cantidad extra grande o ni siquiera tanto como había en la primera porción. Déle al niño la opción de escoger cuánto desea.

ROL del ADULTO

No haga del almuerzo su hora de descanso. “éste es momento de responder y apoyar los intentos de los niños de ser exitosos en comer. Si Ud. debe tomar un descanso a la hora de la comida, insista que aquellos que comen con los niños sigan buenas prácticas. Evite pararse, caminar alrededor de las mesas, o hacer tareas múltiples mientras los niños comen. Organice las personas, tazones de servir, y los niños de manera que el placer de sentarse juntos esté asegurado.

Prácticas mas apropiadas para servir alimentos a grupos de niños

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Proporcione espacio

Los niños pequeños estan aprendiendo a controlar sus musculos,especialmente los músculos de sus manos. Necesitan amplio espacio para equilibrar comida, bebidas, y utensilios de comida. Asegúrese de que hay suficiente y adecuado “espacio personal” para cada niño mientras comen.

Permítales practicar con utensilios de comida de tamaño apropiado para niños

El control de actividad motora fina es un logro muy importante en el desarrollo de los niños pequeños. Fortaleza, resistencia, y control están todavìa muy poco desarrollados para el uso correcto de utensilios de comida. Ayude a los niños a incrementar sus habilidades y destrezas dándoles amplia practica con cucharas, tenedores, cuchillos, y utensilios para servir alimentos. Utilize cubiertos y otros utensilios que sean de tamaño apropiado para niños

Provea alimentos que sean un reto para las habilidades y destrezas alimentarias de los niños

Ofrezca alimentos que necesiten ser esparcidos, cortados, rotos, pinchados, o recogidos con cuchara de un tazòn. Esta variedad permite a los niños desarrollar destrezas. Advertencia: Los niños tienen diferentes grados de habilidad y destreza. Los niños deberian tener bastante tiempo y oportunidad de PRACTICAR estas destrezas antes de que se pueda esperar que las dominen perfectamente.

Asegùrese de que los adultos coman con los niños

Los adultos son modelos de comportamiento para el uso de cubiertos, la elecciòn y la ingestiòn de comida, y el comportamiento socialmente aceptable en la mesa, o buenos modales. Ellos moldean el comportamiento alimentario de los niños. Los adultos elaboran y embellecen el vocabulario de comida de los niños. Los adultos tambien ayudan a los niños a confiar en el ambiente en el que comen aseguràndose de que es física y psicològicamente seguro.

Ayude a los niños a aprender acerca de los alimentos asistiéndolos mientras participan en su preparaciòn.

Los niños pueden participar en la preparaciòn de alimentos. Ellos disfrutan comiendo lo que han preparado. Los niños obtienen un sentimiento de autonomìa (auto control) como parte del proceso de preparaciòn de alimentos. Esto resulta en que los niños desarrollen un sentimiento saludable de control en sus relaciones con los alimentos y el acto de comer.

Ayude a los niños a prestar atenciòn a sus controles internos que regulan si comen o no y què cantidad

Permita que los niños coman hasta estar satisfechos en lugar de establecerles límites acerca de cuànto comen. A veces alimentamos a los niños en grupos usando un principio de igualdad. Esto se traduce en una regla en que cada niño obtiene la misma cantidad de comida. Esta igualdad no es justa. Alimentar a los niños con justicia deberìa estar basado en permitir que los indicadores corporales naturales de los niños les comuniquen individualmente cuando estan satisfechos. Lo que es justo es confiar en que los niños comeràn tanto como necesitan

Confíe en que los niños comieran tanto como necesitan

Resista el impulso de obligar a los niños a limpiar su plato. Cuando la gente es obligada a comer más allá de lo que su cerebro le dice que es suficiente, aprende a ignorar sus indicadores corporales de hambre y saciedad. Tenga cuidado con forzamientos sutiles, no importa que tan delicados, cariñosos, y bien intencionados sean.

Permita que los niños se sirvan solos

Los niños desperdician menos cuando se les da la oportunidad de decidir cuánto van a comer. Permítalos que se sirvan solos en lugar de depender de adultos (quienes pueden que amontonen comida en el plato de niños que no lo desean). Cuando los niños empiezan a servirse solos en estilo de comida en familia, ellos empiezan a usar destrezas para pasar la comida y seleccionar cantidades. Brinde apoyo a los niños en tanto APRENDEN como pasar los recipientes de comida sin accidentes y como escoger tamaños de porciones que coinciden con cuánto pueden comer.

Alimente a los niños a menudo

Los niños pequeños necesitan comer alrededor de seis veces al día. Programe comidas y refrigerios. La duración de tiempo que los niños pueden continuar comiendo debería ser flexible. Recuerde que algunos alimentos requieren más tiempo que otros. Un emparedado de jamón requiere más tiempo que media taza de pudín!

Establezca el ambiente de modo que los niños no esperen demasiado tiempo

Debido a que los niños pequeños aún están aprendiendo a esperar por gratificación, ellos tienen más dificultad que los niños mayores para esperar por su turno. Los niños pequeños están desarrollando las destrezas sociales de tomar turnos y compartir, así como los omnipresentes buenos modales en la mesa, tan discutidos en las familias de clase media. En situaciones de grupo en que los niños se sirven ellos mismos, manténgase alerta de cuánto tiempo deben esperar los niños antes de comer. No ponga la comida y bebida en la mesa hasta que Ud. esté lista para que los niños empiecen a servirse. Ofrezca suficientes recipientes de comida o jarras de bebida para que los niños solo tengan limitados periodos de espera.

Presente comida que sea bien conocida para los niños. Relacione comidas nuevas con comidas que los niños ya conocen.

Prepare comidas que los niños puedan reconocer. Evite tratar de hacer cosas “lindas”. Algunas recetas para niños sugieren inapropiadamente preparar comida en la forma de emparedados que asemejen payasos, o verduras que parezcan monstruos, en un intento errado de atraer la atención de los niños. Los niños quieren rutina y familiaridad en sus comidas.





Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships

An Inventory for Feeding Young Children in Group Settings

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Using the Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships Inventory (BMER)

Introduction

Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships: An Inventory for Feeding Young Children in Group Settings is designed to examine group care and education settings including child care centers, preschools, and Head Start centers. The BMER is not designed for use in family child care mealtimes, or for family meals. The BMER is an inventory of strategies for evaluating feeding children ages 24 months through five years. It is designed for evaluation of full meals, but may be used to inventory strategies at snacktimes. The BMER is most appropriate for settings where food is prepared and served, though programs that use lunchbox meals may adapt the tool to fit their needs.

Who should use the Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships Inventory?

Managers and supervisors, lead teachers, nutrition consultants, and health consultants are appropriate users of the BMER. Researchers may use the BMER to inventory mealtime strategies across group settings, though the BMER is still under study for statistical reliability and validity.

Why should I use the BMER Inventory?

The BMER Inventory is designed to help staff examine mealtime practices and mealtime environments. Lead teachers or supervisors make observations to develop a profile of the meal setting. Staff can use the criteria from the BMER to confirm current practices, and to discuss changes or improvements in their meal practices. Ratings may be used to plan staff in-service programs to focus on specific mealtime practices.

Directions for Use

How do I use the BMER Inventory?

The rater selects one room and observes all the staff and the children at the mealtime in that room. If the children eat in a cafeteria setting, the rater evaluates only those staff and children who are in the selected group.

The BMER Inventory is a direct observation tool. Make a copy of each Topic Area page from the inventory and a Summary Recording Graph for each classroom to be observed. The rater starts the observation when the transition to a meal begins. This is usually signaled by tables being cleaned for the meal, and when children and staff begin to wash their hands in preparation for the meal. The observation ends when the last table is cleared and all the children complete mealtime routines, such as hand-washing, clearing their places, or pushing in chairs.

What if I want to use part of the BMER Inventory?

The BMER includes 12 Topic Areas arranged in three Clusters. Users may rate all 12 Topic Areas for a comprehensive review of mealtime practices in a center or room. Alternatively, users may choose to rate all Topic Areas in a single Cluster. Most simply, users may choose to rate only one Topic Area from a Cluster. Here are the three Clusters and the Topic Areas in each Cluster:

Cluster One: Mealtime Setting

- Equipment
- Mealtime Environment
- Sanitation at the Table
- The Food
- Preventing Choking

Cluster Two: Children's Development

- Food Intake
- Social and Emotional Development (Self-regulation)
- Mealtime Motor Skills
- Conversations (Listening and Speaking Skills)

Cluster Three: Guiding Individuals and Groups at Mealtimes

- Routines and Schedules
- Adult Practices at Mealtimes
- Community Building

Directions for Using the BMER

Scoring

Each Topic Area earns a categorical rating. The categories are **Inadequate Practice**, **Minimal Practice**, **Effective Practice**, and **Ideal Practice**. Raters directly observe for the criteria listed under each category within each Topic Area.

Under each category, make a check beside the practice if it is observed. Total the number of checked items, and write that number in the oval in the lower right-hand corner of each category column. If all items are checked in a category, the category is considered complete, and a step is achieved.

Center Name: ABC Center Classroom Name: Preschool Date: 4/24

TOPIC AREA: Equipment

Mealtime equipment helps children develop skills for eating. Equipment refers to eating and serving utensils, dishes, tables, and chairs. Look for quality of equipment, use of equipment, and types of equipment.

0 Inadequate Practice

- Styrofoam plates, which are a choking hazard, are used.
- Food is placed on napkins, or on the same table-top.
- Fillable or breakable plastic with sharp edged corners and forks.
- Chairs are not available for all children.

* This practice is effective with preschoolers. Toddlers should have blankets that is appropriate to the food prepared for them. Ask classroom staff about opportunities for toddlers to use forks, spoons, and knives.

1 Minimal Practice

- Children eat at tables with a place to sit for each child.
- Tables and chairs are in good repair.
- Tables and chairs are used so that children's feet are on the floor or on a footrest for stability.
- Furniture is splinter free and non-porous, heavy duty plastic.
- Plates and/or bowls are non-porous and unbreakable, or heavy weight, single-use paper.
- Serving dishes are non-porous and unbreakable, or heavy weight, single-use paper.
- Serving dishes are available for children at table level.
- Serving utensils are provided for all foods.

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2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

3 Effective Practice

- Enough tables are available for children to eat in small groups.
- Child sized tables and chairs are used.
- Chairs are a comfortable height with knees being mid-thigh on the children.
- Child sized plates and/or bowls are used.
- Plates have curved lips for children's ease of scooping food.
- Child sized eating utensils are available.
- Forks, knives, and spoons are available at every meal.
- Child sized beverage containers are used.
- Beverage containers are stable and do not tip easily during use.
- Child sized serving dishes are used.
- Small pitchers are used.
- Serving bowls with rims are used.
- Child sized serving utensils are used to help children serve child sized portions.
- Spare utensils are readily available at the table side.

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4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

5 Ideal Practice

- Tables and chairs are appropriate size for individual children.
- Tables and chairs are free of permanent stains, cracks, and chips.
- Chairs match and are attractive.
- Serving utensils are equally different from eating utensils in size and/or color.

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TOPIC AREA: Equipment
Rating: 0 1 **2** 3 4 5

2 The second step is reached by achievement of ALL of the items in **Minimal Practice**, and at least half of those in **Effective Practice**. A rating of 2 is earned.

3 The third step and category is **Effective Practice**. If ALL items are checked in this category in addition to ALL those in **Minimal Practice**, a rating of 3 is earned. Items in **Effective Practice** reflect practices that support and challenge children for healthy mealtime development.

4 The fourth step is reached by achievement of ALL of the items in **Minimal Practice** and ALL of the items in **Effective Practice**, and at least half of those in **Ideal Practice**. A rating of 4 is earned.

5 The fifth and highest step is **Ideal Practice**. This step is reached by achievement of all items in **Minimal Practice** and **Effective Practice**, plus ALL items described in the **Ideal Practice** category. Items in the **Ideal Practice** category represent practices that offer a comprehensive, highly supportive feeding environment for children. A rating of 5 is earned for reaching this step.

Assigning Ratings to the Scores

In the lower right-hand corner of each Topic Area page is a box to record the Topic Area rating, based on the steps achieved. Circle the number that indicates the highest step achieved in a Topic Area.

TOPIC AREA: Equipment
Rating: 0 1 2 3 4 5

Graphing Ratings

A Summary Reporting Graph is provided to develop a visual representation of the ratings for a classroom (see pg. 19). Use a separate graph for each room that is rated. Place ratings on the graph by putting a dot on the graph for each Topic Area rating.

Resources

Guidelines from national agencies, professional organizations, and research literature provide a foundation for the items in each Topic Area. A bibliography is provided for raters to use to learn more about the items.

0 The first category is **Inadequate Practice**. A rating of 0 is earned if ANY practices are observed in this category. Practices listed under this category are unsafe and potentially harmful to children. Note that this category is not a step in building quality mealtimes. It appears below the step threshold.

1 The first step and next category is **Minimal Practice**. If ALL items are checked in this category, a rating of 1 is earned. Practices in this category are necessary for providing an emotionally and physically safe environment.

Cluster One: Mealtime Setting

Use the **Mealtime Setting** Cluster to examine the setting in which meals are served and eaten. This grouping of five Topic Areas focuses on the physical environment and practical surroundings of the mealtime.

Topic Areas in the **Mealtime Setting** Cluster:

Equipment - Mealtime equipment helps children develop skills for eating. Equipment refers to eating and serving utensils, dishes, tables, and chairs. Look for quality of equipment, use of equipment, and types of equipment.

Mealtime Environment - The physical space for eating includes the sights, sounds, smells, and layout of the mealtime area.

Sanitation at the Table - Sanitation at the table refers to the cleanliness of the feeding environment and the hygiene practices of those who are eating. Aspects of cleanliness are observed in how tables are cleaned, how spills are dealt with, and how adults ensure children's health and safety during passing and serving of food.

The Food - When determining what children are offered to eat, it is necessary to look at the total picture over a course of several menus. This section should be rated by examining written menus and speaking with caregivers, cooks, or the center director, as well as through direct observation.

Preventing Choking - Choking is a special hazard for young children who are just developing swallowing and chewing skills. Choking on food can be fatal to children. Adults must offer mealtime settings that minimize choking hazards.

Common choking hazards for young children are:

raw carrots	peanuts and other whole nuts
raisins and other dried fruit	chunks of peanut butter
whole grapes	chunks of meat
raw apples	hot dogs (whole or cut into rounds)
popcorn	pretzels and chips

Guideline for food preparation:

Infants – Cut foods into pieces no larger than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cubes.

Toddlers up to age 4 – Cut foods into pieces no larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cubes.

TOPIC AREA: Equipment

Mealtime equipment helps children develop skills for eating. Equipment refers to eating and serving utensils, dishes, tables, and chairs. Look for quality of equipment, use of equipment, and types of equipment.

1 Minimal Practice

- Children eat at tables with a place to sit for each child.
- Tables and chairs are in good repair.
- Tables and chairs are sized so that children's feet are on the floor or on a footrest for stability.
- Flatware is stainless steel or non-porous, heavy duty plastic.
- Plates and/or bowls are non-porous and unbreakable, or heavy-weight, single-use paper.
- Serving dishes are non-porous and unbreakable, or heavy-weight, single-use paper.
- Serving dishes are available for children to pass food.
- Serving utensils are provided for all foods.

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2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

3 Effective Practice

- Enough tables are available for children to eat in small groups.
- Child-sized tables and chairs are used.
- Chairs are a comfortable height with tabletops hitting mid-chest on the children.
- Child-sized plates and/or bowls are used.
- Plates have curved lips for children's ease of scooping food.
- Child-sized eating utensils are available.
- Knives, forks, and spoons are available at every meal.*
- Child-sized beverage containers are used.
- Beverage containers are stable and do not tip easily during use.
- Child-sized serving dishes are used.
- Serving bowls with rims are used.
- Small pitchers are used.
- Child-sized serving utensils are used to help children serve child-sized portions.
- Spare utensils are readily available at the table-side.

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4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

5 Ideal Practice

- Tables and chairs are appropriate size for individual children.
- Tables and chairs are free of permanent stains, cracks, and chips.
- Dishes match and are attractive.
- Serving utensils are visually different from eating utensils in size and/or color.

__ / 4

0 Inadequate Practice

- Styrofoam plates, which are a choking hazard, are used.
- Food is placed on napkins, or on the bare table-top.
- Flatware is breakable plastic with sharp edged spoons and forks.
- Chairs are not available for all children.

* This practice is effective with preschoolers. Toddlers should have flatware that is appropriate to the food prepared for them. Ask classroom staff about opportunities for toddlers to use forks, spoons, and knives.

TOPIC AREA: Equipment						
Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5

TOPIC AREA: Mealtime Environment

The physical space for eating includes the sights, sounds, smells, and layout of the mealtime area.

0 Inadequate Practice

- Noises and sounds unrelated to the mealtime predominate.
- Non-food odors are present in the eating area (e.g., diapering, cleaning agents, garbage, air fresheners).
- Eating area is cluttered.
- Children sit at the tables with limited space for eating.
- Children stand or kneel to eat.

1 Minimal Practice

- Adequate space is provided for each child to pass, serve, pour and eat.
- There is adequate space for adults to move easily up and down from their chairs and around the table.
- Sounds in the room are mostly those related to the mealtime.

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2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

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3 Effective Practice

- Mealtime has few distractions such as background noise, clutter on the table, adults getting up and down from the table, traffic in the room, uncleaned spills, and adults talking over children's heads.
- Non-carpet flooring in the eating areas facilitates sanitary conditions.
- Furniture is spaced so that children can sit, rise, and walk around the table without interfering with others at the table.

_ / 3

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

_ / 3

5 Ideal Practice

- Mealtime tables are located away from the flow of activities such as handwashing, toileting, diapering, and setting up for nap time.
- To decrease distractions, meal-related items are readily available to staff on table-side carts or shelves.
- A source of running water is easily accessible by children and staff during the meal.

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TOPIC AREA: <i>Mealtime Environment</i>						
Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5

TOPIC AREA: Sanitation at the Table

Sanitation at the table refers to the cleanliness of the feeding environment and the hygiene practices of those who are eating. Aspects of cleanliness are observed in how tables are cleaned, how spills are dealt with, and how adults ensure children's health and safety during passing and serving of food.

1 Minimal Practice

- Adults are present during the entire meal.
- Tables are washed with soap and water before and after the meal.
- Tables are sanitized with non-toxic sanitizing solution before and after the meal.
- Adults and children wash hands before the meal, during the meal if necessary, and after the meal.
- Staff and children use warm, running water, soap, and paper towels for handwashing.
- Food arrives ready to be served with minimal handling by the adult.
- Food is covered until it is served.
- Each child has a plate or bowl for food to be placed on.*
- Children have adequate space to pass, serve, and eat.
- Adults ensure children use serving utensils for serving only.
- Food and tableware are removed immediately if they become contaminated.
- Soiled tableware is removed immediately after completion of the meal.
- Spills are cleaned up immediately.
- Cloths and paper towels are used only once.
- Soiled paper towels or cloths are removed from the table immediately.
- Floors are swept and mopped during and after the meal to remove spills or crumbs.

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2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

_ / 5

3 Effective Practice

- Adults are seated to attend to contamination issues during passing and serving.
- Children are within arms reach of adults.
- Children know and use routines for passing, serving, cleaning up spills, and clearing their place after meals.
- Napkins are available at the table.
- The eating environment is set up to address contamination situations immediately (i.e., extra eating and serving utensils are readily available, and materials for cleaning up spills are at the table side).

_ / 5

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

_ / 3

5 Ideal Practice

- Serving utensils are visually different in color and/or size from eating utensils.
- Adults anticipate contamination issues, and use preventive strategies.
- Adults talk with children to avoid cross contamination including discussion of concepts such as "yours," "mine," and "ours."

_ / 3

0 Inadequate Practice

- Food is served directly on the table rather than on a plate.
- Adults and children wash their hands sporadically either before or after the meal, or not at all.
- Sponges or cloths are used and reused for clean-ups.
- Food sits uncovered, waiting to be served.
- Food arrives needing significant additional handling by the classroom staff.

* Eating from plates helps reduce contamination. Though food may be put on sanitized highchair trays for infants, plates should be provided for older infants and toddlers.

TOPIC AREA: <i>Sanitation at the Table</i>
Rating 0 1 2 3 4 5

TOPIC AREA: The Food

When determining what children are offered to eat, it is necessary to look at the total picture over a course of several menus. This section should be rated by examining written menus and speaking with teachers, cooks, or the center director, as well as through direct observation.

1 Minimal Practice

- Drinking water is available in the room during the meal.
- Enough food is available to satisfy individual children's hunger needs.
- Menus include a variety of foods.*
- Menus are posted for staff and parents.
- Menu planning is based on a nutritionally sound meal pattern. *See next page for USDA Child Care Meal Pattern Guidelines.**

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2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

_ / 8

3 Effective Practice

- Drinking water is available in pitchers at the table.
- Children are allowed additional portions.
- Food served at a meal includes a variety of textures, shapes, temperatures, sizes, and colors.
- Foods are served that reflect the ethnicity and culture of all children in the center.*
- Menus are discussed with children.
- The center has a plan for cooperating with physician-prescribed diets (e.g., allergies, diabetes).**
- The center has a plan for working with parents who have dietary requests (e.g., religious, cultural, vegetarian) for their children.**
- Menu planning is flexible, allowing new foods to be introduced routinely.***

_ / 6

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

_ / 6

5 Ideal Practice

- Food is arranged in bowls or on platters to be visually appealing and appetizing.
- When a new food is offered, it is offered more than one time during the meal so children become familiar with the new food.***
- When a new food is offered, it is offered repeatedly in the menu cycle so children become familiar with the new food.***
- Children have opportunities to provide input on food and menus.****
- Menus are approved by a nutrition professional.**
- Nutrition professional is regularly involved in staff training.**

_ / 6

0 Inadequate Practice

- Drinking water is not available during the meal.
- Vegetables and fruits are not offered.
- Food runs out before children's hunger is satisfied.
- Milk is not offered.
- Fruit drinks other than 100% juice are offered.

* Review menus.
 ** Ask director.
 *** Ask cook.
 **** Ask classroom staff.

TOPIC AREA: The Food

Rating 0 1 2 3 4 5

USDA Child Care Meal Pattern Guidelines

Breakfast ¹	# per meal	Ages 1 - 2	Ages 3 - 5
Milk - fluid milk	1	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Fruit or vegetable or juice ²	1	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Grains/bread ³ - bread, bread alternative, or cereal bread (enriched or whole-grain) combread/biscuit/roll/muffin cold dry cereal hot cooked cereal pasta/noodles/grains	1	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/4 cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/3 cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup
Lunch or Supper¹			
Milk - fluid milk	1	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Fruit or vegetable or juice ²	2	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Grains/bread ³ - bread, bread alternative, or cereal bread (enriched or whole-grain) combread/biscuit/roll/muffin cold dry cereal hot cooked cereal pasta/noodles/grains	1	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/4 cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/3 cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup
Meat/meat alternative meat/poultry/fish (cooked, lean meat without bone) alternate protein product cheese egg cooked dry beans or peas yogurt	1	1 oz. 1 oz. 1 oz. 1/2 1/4 cup 4 oz.	1 1/2 oz. 1 1/2 oz. 1 1/2 oz. 3/4 3/8 cup 6 oz.
Snack¹ include two of the four components			
Milk - fluid milk	1	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Fruit or vegetable or juice ²	1	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Grains/bread ³ - bread, bread alternative, or cereal bread (enriched or whole-grain) combread/biscuit/roll/muffin cold dry cereal hot cooked cereal pasta/noodles/grains	1	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/4 cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/3 cup 1/4 cup 1/4 cup
Meat/meat alternative meat/poultry/fish alternate protein product cheese egg cooked dry beans or peas yogurt	1	1/2 oz. 1/2 oz. 1/2 oz. 1/2 1/8 cup 2 oz.	1/2 oz. 1/2 oz. 1/2 oz. 1/2 1/8 cup 2 oz.

¹ The meal patterns specify minimum portion sizes for each meal component. Children may be offered larger portions based on their greater food needs. They may not be offered less than the minimum quantities listed above.

² Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength, 100% juice.

³ Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Cereal must be whole-grain or enriched or fortified.

TOPIC AREA: Preventing Choking

Choking is a special hazard for young children who are just developing swallowing and chewing skills. Choking on food can be fatal to children. Adults must offer mealtime settings that minimize choking hazards. Common choking hazards for young children are: raw carrots, raisins and other dried fruit, hot dogs (whole or cut into rounds), whole grapes, chunks of meat, popcorn, pretzels and chips, raw apples, peanuts and other whole nuts, and chunks of peanut butter.

1 Minimal Practice

- Adults sit down to supervise children before food is passed.
- Food is prepared, presented, or modified to avoid choking hazards that are common to the youngest child in the group.
- Adults are always within sight, sound, and physical response range to children.
- Adults stay with children throughout the meal.
- Adults give directions to prevent choking (i.e., keep all four chair legs on the floor, avoid talking or laughing with food in mouth, take small bites, and finish chewing before leaving the table).
- Adults provide assistance to children who gag or choke.*
- Throughout the mealtime, at least one adult is in the room who is CPR and First Aid certified.**

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2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

_ / 2

3 Effective Practice

- Adults eat the same foods as the children to identify subtle choking hazards.
- All staff in the room are CPR and First Aid certified.**

_ / 2

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

_ / 3

5 Ideal Practice

- The center provides choking education for children, parents, and staff.***
- An ideal adult/child ratio of 1:4 at each table for toddlers and 1:6 at each table for preschoolers is maintained during the mealtime.
- The center has an established plan for flexible staffing at mealtimes as needed (e.g., floater available).

_ / 3

0 Inadequate Practice

- Foods that are high risk choking hazards are on the menu.
- Children eat at tables without an adult near the table.
- Children are allowed to walk around with food in their mouths.
- Adults provide inappropriate modeling by eating and drinking while walking around the room.

* If no incidents are observed, ask how gagging and choking at the table are handled.
 ** Current CPR/First Aid card on file.
 *** Ask staff.

TOPIC AREA: Preventing Choking
Rating 0 1 2 3 4 5

Cluster Two: Children's Development

Use the **Children's Development** Cluster to examine the responsiveness and appropriateness of mealtime environments for children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive needs. Cluster Two includes four Topic Areas.

Topic Areas in the **Children's Development** Cluster:

Food Intake - Adults help children stay in touch with their internal cues of hunger and fullness using many different strategies. This section includes strategies that support children to self-regulate their intake of food. Concepts for this Topic Area are the amount of food provided, whether or not children are allowed to serve themselves, and the level of children's choice in what and how much they eat.

Social and Emotional Development (Self-regulation) - During mealtimes, children learn skills that help them regulate their emotions and behaviors with others. Learning social skills such as passing and requesting food allows children to be successful during mealtimes. Gaining emotional skills such as trusting and making choices helps children become healthy eaters. Adults who have developmentally appropriate expectations of children set physical and emotional environments where children are challenged, but not frustrated.

Mealtime Motor Skills - Mealtimes offer opportunities for children to develop physical skills. Serving style at the table, utensils and dishes provided, and how food is presented impact the physical skills that children practice during meals.

Conversations (Listening and Speaking Skills) - This Topic Area is focused on the talk that takes place during the meal. This talk ranges from adults giving directions to children, to adults and children using give and take in their conversations. Observations in this Topic Area include examinations of how adults encourage or extend children's talk at the meal.

TOPIC AREA: Food Intake

Adults help children stay in touch with their internal cues of hunger and fullness using many different strategies. This section includes strategies that support children to self-regulate their intake of food. Concepts for this Topic Area are the amount of food provided, whether or not children are allowed to serve themselves, and the level of children's choice in what and how much they eat.

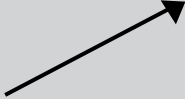
1 Minimal Practice

- Children serve themselves, at least part of the meal.
- Enough food is available to satisfy individual children's hunger needs.
- Adults support children as they learn how to choose portion sizes to match how much they can eat.
- Children are not required to eat either a set amount of food, or a particular food.*
- Children are not required to try or taste a food they refuse.*
- Adults acknowledge children's differences and preferences for food, but do not compare children's eating characteristics.
- Food is offered at least every three hours so that children's hunger does not overwhelm their ability to self-regulate food intake.**

_ / 7

2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.




3 Effective Practice

- Staff, in addition to the cook, cooperate in determining how much total food is necessary to meet the group's hunger needs.***
- Adults assure children that there is enough food.
- Children have enough time to eat until they are no longer hungry.
- Adults do not praise children for finishing food, or cleaning their plates.

_ / 4

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.



5 Ideal Practice

- Adults have a system for informing parents about what their child ate throughout the day.****
- Adults have a system for informing parents about how much their child ate throughout the day.****

_ / 2

0 Inadequate Practice

- Not enough food is available to satisfy children's hunger.
- Adults determine how much food is placed on children's plates.
- Adults insist that children eat more or less than they want.
- Children are required to eat all the food on their plates.
- Adults talk negatively about children's eating characteristics to staff or parents, within hearing range of children.
- Adults compare children's behaviors and characteristics as a strategy to get children to eat.

* Exception may be made if a documented health order is on file.
 ** Check schedule.
 *** Ask how the cook determines the amount of food to be prepared.
 **** Ask staff to see forms used to report to parents.

TOPIC AREA: Food Intake						
Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5

TOPIC AREA: Social and Emotional Development (Self-regulation)

During mealtimes, children learn skills that help them regulate their emotions and behaviors with others. Learning social skills such as passing and requesting food allows children to be successful during mealtimes. Gaining emotional skills such as trusting and making choices helps children become healthy eaters. Adults who have developmentally appropriate expectations of children set physical and emotional environments where children are challenged, but not frustrated.

0 Inadequate Practice

- Mealtime is rushed.
- Adult-sized eating utensils that limit children's success in eating are used.
- Adult-sized serving utensils that limit children's success in serving are used.
- Children have few choices (e.g., children's plates are served for them, portion sizes are pre-determined, children have to eat all the food on their plates).

1 Minimal Practice

- There is a predictable sequence for mealtime activities so that children can develop security and trust.
- Opportunities to eat are scheduled no more than three hours apart so that children's hunger does not overwhelm their ability to regulate their emotions and behavior.*
- There is enough food for children to eat until satisfied.
- Children have enough personal space for serving their own plates, eating, and passing food to others.
- Adults help children take turns as they pass or wait for food.
- Adults diffuse conflicts.**

__ / 6

2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

__ / 7

3 Effective Practice

- Adults use a variety of strategies to support children as they learn to wait.
- Children have appropriate serving utensils for the food being offered.
- Adults use strategies that match the abilities of individual children for self-control (e.g., varying expectations for children's ability to wait, children's messiness, or children's ability to request food).
- Children have opportunities to make choices within limits.
- Adults help children cope with successes and failures (e.g., serving themselves, cleaning spills, or waiting).
- Children have ample time to eat and practice new interaction skills.
- When conflicts arise, adults help children negotiate.**

__ / 7

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

__ / 2

5 Ideal Practice

- Children have opportunities to solve their own challenges.
- Children have opportunities to take risks (e.g., choosing food, taking turns, trying new foods, and mixing foods together).

__ / 2

* Check schedule.

** If no conflicts are observed, ask adults how conflicts at the table are handled.

TOPIC AREA: Self Regulation: Social and Emotional Development						
Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5

TOPIC AREA: Mealtime Motor Skills

Mealtimes offer opportunities for children to develop physical skills. Serving style at the table, utensils and dishes provided, and how food is presented impact the physical skills that children practice during meals.

1 Minimal Practice

- Food is prepared and presented so that children can eat independently.
- Child-sized serving utensils are available.
- Child-sized eating utensils are available.
- Children pass and serve some items from serving dishes.*
- Utensils offered are appropriate for the food served (e.g., fork for a salad).
- Adults respond calmly and non-punitively to spills and imprecise motor movements during eating and serving.

_ / 6

2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

_ / 8

3 Effective Practice

- Menus allow for opportunities to spread, pour, spear, ladle, and cut a variety of foods.**
- Food is prepared and presented considering children's physical skills for passing and serving food.
- Knives, forks, and spoons, and/or culturally relevant utensils are available at every meal.***
- The mealtime schedule allows time for children to practice using utensils.
- Serving bowls and pitchers are not too full or too heavy for children to serve themselves.
- Adults allow children time to try skills without stepping in prematurely.
- Adults use hand-over-hand assistance only when necessary to assist a child in learning a new skill or when a child is frustrated.
- Adults plan menus to match children's biting and chewing skills, including attention to consistency, size, hardness, shape, and how children can move the food around in their mouths.**

_ / 8

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

_ / 3

5 Ideal Practice

- Children have non-meal opportunities to experiment with serving and eating equipment (e.g., sand and water tables include pitcher and cups for pouring, or art centers include plastic knives for cutting clay or play-dough).****
- Adults give specific directions to individual children to reinforce motor skills.
- Adults model skills for eating and serving, offering a physical model paired with a verbal description of what they are doing.

_ / 3

0 Inadequate Practice

- Adults are unavailable to model eating and mealtime skills.
- Adults serve all foods onto children's plates.
- Children's sole utensil is either a spoon or a fork.
- Children are served only finger foods.

* When toddlers arrive at the table very hungry, it is appropriate to serve initial small portions, with toddlers self-serving additional portions after their hunger has lessened.
 ** Review menus.
 *** This practice is effective with preschoolers. Toddlers should have flatware that is appropriate to the food prepared for them. Ask classroom staff about opportunities for toddlers to use forks, spoons, and knives.
 **** Ask classroom staff.

TOPIC AREA: Mealtime Motor Skills						
Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5

TOPIC AREA: Conversations (Listening and Speaking Skills)

This Topic Area is focused on the talk that takes place during the meal. This talk ranges from adults giving directions to children, to adults and children using give and take in their conversations. Observations in this Topic Area include examinations of how adults encourage or extend children's talk at the meal. When observing toddlers, note that "talk" may be single words and syllables, or non-verbal gestures.

0 Inadequate Practice

- Most of the adults' responses are brief, including comments such as, "Oh, really," or "Umhmm."
- Children are asked to be silent at meals.
- Nearly all of the adults' comments are directive and/or corrective.
- Adults discourage conversation by hurrying children's comments and responses.

1 Minimal Practice

- Children use verbal requests to ask for food.
- Children talk with each other and with adults.
- Adults talk with children to impart knowledge, to explain how to do something at the table, or to ask children questions.
- Adults respond to children's questions and comments with information and interest.

_ / 4

2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

3 Effective Practice

- Adults make certain all children have a chance to talk.
- Adults use genuine comments, rather than dismissive statements.
- Adults clarify children's thoughts and ideas.
- Adults model listening and give and take in conversation.
- Adults offer conversation starters.
- Adults move conversation along when it loses steam by offering information about a topic, or offering a new topic.
- Adults allow adequate wait time for children to complete thoughts and answer questions.

_ / 7

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

5 Ideal Practice

- Adults observe, assess, and act on the variations in the flow of conversations (e.g., adding vocabulary, asking open-ended questions, filling in information).
- Adults validate children's feelings and ideas, and help children process those thoughts, feelings, or ideas.
- Adults extend children's conversations by adding descriptive and action words.

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TOPIC AREA: <i>Conversations and Language Development</i>
Rating 0 1 2 3 4 5

Cluster Three: **Guiding Individuals and Groups at Mealtimes**

Use the ***Guiding Individuals and Groups at Mealtimes*** Cluster to examine strategies for successfully leading mealtimes that support individual eating skills, and to observe strategies that help build children's skills for eating in groups. Cluster Three includes three Topic Areas.

Topic Areas in the ***Guiding Individuals and Groups at Mealtimes*** Cluster:

Routines and Schedules - Routines and schedules help children feel secure and trusting. They also help adults manage the meal environment. Routine refers to the sequence and process of the mealtime. Schedule refers to the timing of meals in the daily plan and the time allowed for eating.

Adult Practices at Mealtime - Adults set the feeding environment for children. This section includes an examination of adults' practices at the table. This examination focuses on how adults assist children, whether or not adults eat with the children, and how adults respond to what children do.

Community Building - Meals are a time for building community. Community members help each other and show respect for each other. They take turns with each other and share thoughts and activities. Adults set a feeding environment that helps children develop a sense of community around mealtimes.

TOPIC AREA: Routines and Schedules

Routines and schedules help children feel secure and trusting. They also help adults manage the meal environment. Routine refers to the sequence and process of the mealtime. Schedule refers to the timing of meals in the daily plan, and the time allowed for eating.

0 Inadequate Practice

- Mealtime routines support managing the setting rather than guiding children's skills.
- End time for the meal is governed by the clock, rather than by children's needs.
- Mealtime is scheduled for staff and center convenience rather than around children's needs. (i.e., adults hurry children to eat to meet a schedule).
- Mealtime rules are applied rigidly.

1 Minimal Practice

- Adults use established pre-meal, during meal, and post-meal routines.
- A majority of the children know and use an established sequence for mealtime activities.
- Adults sit with the children to support and maintain routines.
- Adequate time is scheduled for children to finish their meal without hurrying.
- During end of the meal transitions, an adult visually oversees children at the table until the last child is finished.

_ / 5

2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

3 Effective Practice

- Serving routines minimize children having to wait before beginning to eat.
- Children help maintain the meal environment by setting tables, helping to clean spills, and clearing dishes.
- Adults expect and respond to minor variations in routines, but still keep meal-times focused.
- End of meal routines offer transition activities so that a child can independently leave the table as he or she finishes the meal.
- Transition from eating to subsequent activities is routine and orderly.

_ / 5

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

5 Ideal Practice

- Mealtime routines are designed to guide children's skills (e.g., taking turns, learning about new foods, and practicing spearing, spreading, serving, and pouring).
- Enough staff are available to facilitate safe, smooth post-meal transitions such as toileting and transitioning to nap or other activities.

_ / 2

TOPIC AREA: Routines and Schedules
Rating 0 1 2 3 4 5

TOPIC AREA: Adult Practices at Mealtime

Adults set the feeding environment for children. This section includes an examination of adults' practices at the table. This examination focuses on how adults assist children, whether or not adults eat with the children, and how adults respond to what children do and say.

0 Inadequate Practice

- Adults sometimes leave the room during part of the mealtime.
- Adults offer little or no assistance to children.
- Adults over-help children to the point of interfering with their independence and learning.

1 Minimal Practice

- Adults are in the room, checking mealtime safety needs and attending to children's needs.
- Adults sit at the table.
- Adults ensure each child is offered all foods.

_ / 3

2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

_ / 7

3 Effective Practice

- Adults anticipate safety issues and take action as indicated.
- Adults sit at the table and eat the same food as children.
- Adults intentionally model verbal and motor skills that children are learning.
- Adults talk about food and nutrition concepts, including texture, vocabulary, and appearance.
- Adults talk to children about how food gives them energy, helps them grow, and keeps them healthy.
- Adults scan the group constantly and address individual children's needs.
- Adults support children's needs with the least intrusive assistance that fits a child's level of skill (i.e., adults use the less intrusive gestural or verbal assists before using more intrusive hand-over-hand assists).

_ / 7

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

_ / 3

5 Ideal Practice

- Adults accept children's reactions to foods.
- Adults embrace children's mistakes as opportunities for children's learning.
- To assure that adults' attention is on children's mealtime needs, adults have a separate meal break for their actual meal, though they eat a small meal with the children.

_ / 3

TOPIC AREA: Adult Practices at Mealtime						
Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5

TOPIC AREA: Community Building

Meals are a time for building community. Community members help each other and show respect. They take turns with each other and share thoughts and activities. Adults set a feeding environment that helps children develop a sense of community around mealtimes.

1 Minimal Practice

- Adults call children by their names.
- Adults encourage children to call each other by their names.
- Children are seated around tables where they can see each other to communicate easily.
- Children's individual needs and interests are acknowledged by adults.
- Adults maintain group routines, but make exceptions as needed.
- Adults talk about and model strategies for cooperating in the group (i.e., sharing serving bowls, listening to each other, speaking one at a time, acknowledging shared preferences, calling each other by name, and acknowledging those who set the table).
- Adequate food is available so that children do not have to compete for food.
- Adults help children take turns in passing food.
- Adults make sure children know routines and procedures for eating and being at the table.

_ / 9

2

Meets all Minimal Practices, and at least half of the practices from Effective Practice.

3 Effective Practice

- Adults use "we" and "ours" to describe shared aspects of the mealtime.
- Children serve themselves, passing around common bowls and pitchers.
- Mealtime conversations include all children.*
- Adults facilitate turn-taking in conversations.*
- Children are reminded to acknowledge each other's conversations.*
- Mealtime conversations focus on sharing personal and individual aspects of children's lives.*
- Adults take cues from child initiated topics.

_ / 7

4

Meets all Minimal Practices and Effective Practices, and at least half of the practices from Ideal Practice.

5 Ideal Practice

- Opportunities are offered for children to help each other.
- Adults help focus children on shared experiences from past events.
- Adults lead discussions to help solve mealtime issues that affect all the children at the table.

_ / 3

0 Inadequate Practice

- Group routines are non-existent or followed rigidly.
- Children are told to mind their own business if they show interest in others.
- Adults compare children's behaviors as a strategy to get children to eat.

* "Conversation" means watching others, and listening, as well as speaking to others.

TOPIC AREA: Community Building						
Rating	0	1	2	3	4	5

BMER Summary Recording Graph

Place a mark in the white bar that corresponds with the rating for each Topic Area.

Ideal Practice	5												
	4												
	Effective Practice	3											
		2											
	Minimal Practice	1											
0													
Inadequate Practice		Equipment	Mealtime Environment	Sanitation at the Table	The Food	Preventing Choking	Food Intake	Social & Emotional Development (Self-regulation)	Mealtime Motor Skills	Conversations (Listening & Speaking Skills)	Routines & Schedules	Adult Practices at Mealtime	Community Building

Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships Resources

Guidelines for Feeding Young Children in Group Settings

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Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships Resources

Topic Area: Sanitation at the Table

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Topic Area: Adult Practices at Mealtime

Baker, M., Foley, M. F., Glynn, T., & McNaughton, S. (1983). The effects of adult proximity and serving style of pre-schoolers' language and eating behavior. *Educational Psychology*, 3(2), 137-148.

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Topic Area: Community Building

Baker, M., Foley, M. F., Glynn, T., & McNaughton, S. (1983). The effects of adult proximity and serving style of pre-schoolers' language and eating behavior. *Educational Psychology*, 3(2), 137-148.

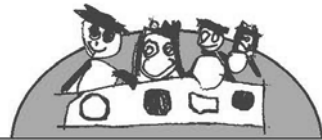
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About Feeding Children

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Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Stages Application for Helping Children Develop Healthy Eating

Janice Fletcher, EdD and Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD

Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development includes a principle that significant others in a child's life impact a child's growth and development. Adults who work with young children set physical and emotional environments to help children develop healthy eating behaviors. Erikson identified developmental stages that typically developing children face as they grow emotionally and socially. Each developmental period brings skills to be learned. There are four stages of a child's lifespan and the issues they may experience as they develop. We paired Erikson's stages with adult feeding strategies that affect each stage.



AGE: INFANT
STAGE: TRUST and MISTRUST

Children develop feelings that they can rely on the consistency and security of their environment.

FEEDING BEHAVIORS

TRUST

- Adult sets a comfortable mood and tone, including securely holding and responding to the child as he/she eats.
- Adult provides appropriate foods when the baby shows hunger cues.
- Adult determines that food temperature is appropriate.
- Adult does not unnecessarily interrupt the child's focus on eating.
- Baby is fed when hungry.
- Adult stops feeding the baby when the baby shows that he/she is finished eating.
- Adult discerns which cues are hunger cues and which cues are indicators of other discomforts, refraining from using feeding as the answer to all cries.
- Adult stops feeding when baby turns away from the food.

MISTRUST (*Avoid these strategies.*)

- Adult feeds child on strict schedule, out of harmony with the child's hunger cues.
- Adult forces the nipple or spoon into a child's mouth.
- Adult props the bottle for feeding, rather than holding the child while feeding.
- Adult is overly talkative and active during feeding, distracting the infant from eating.
- Adult feeds the child on every discomfort cue.
- In child care settings, older babies are fed in a round robin fashion as they sit in high chairs.
- Adult moves from child to child on a rotation schedule determined by the adult, feeding each child mechanically.



AGE: TODDLER

STAGE: AUTONOMY AND SHAME AND DOUBT

Children sense that they are separate human beings and that they have some control over their environments. “No, me do it!” is a common phrase.

FEEDING BEHAVIORS

AUTONOMY

Children are encouraged to feed themselves, regardless of mess.

Children may say no to foods, and the adult responds with patience, offering the food again in a short time without scolding.

Children may combine foods in the way they decide, with the adult being nearby to offer support as needed.

Children may go on food jags eating only one type of food for days...adult keeps offering a variety of foods.

Child-sized portions of food are presented.

Food is served to children so that they can be successful, rather than frustrated. For example, food is cut into bite-sized pieces, rather than served whole.

SHAME AND DOUBT (*Avoid these strategies.*)

Adult feeds children even though the children have adequately developed grasps and finger control.

Adult takes over feeding when the children are eating messily.

Adult excessively interrupts the children's eating for hand and face-wiping.

Adult forces children to clean their plates and to eat all foods, with little regard to the children's hunger or satiety cues or individual preferences.

Adult serves child's plate with adult sized portions.

Adult does not sit down at the table with the child to offer support for learning new skills.



AGE: EARLY CHILDHOOD

STAGE: **INITIATIVE AND GUILT**

Children balance taking risks with feeling safe. “I will try” shows a healthy sense of initiative.

FEEDING BEHAVIORS

INITIATIVE

Adult accepts child's decision to stop eating when the child says, “I'm full.”

Adult encourages child to determine how much, if any, of a new food to try.

Adult respects child's ability to dislike or like a new food.

Food is presented to the children so that they can serve themselves, deciding how much to put on their plates.

Child-sized dinner plates are offered, so the child can judge amounts to serve themselves successfully.

Child-sized utensils are provided so the child can more easily develop skills for feeding and serving self.

Spills are expected and treated as routine, rather than crisis events.

GUILT (*Avoid these strategies.*)

- Adult pressures children to eat more food or to eat a specific food.
- Adult scolds children for not cleaning their plates.
- Adult takes over serving or feeding when a child fails in serving self or in using eating utensils.
- Children are offered eating utensils and serving utensils that are too big or heavy for successfully manipulating the food.
- Child is chastised when he/she grows fatigued and sloppily uses utensils.
- Child is scolded for spills.
- Adult shows disappointment or disgust when a child shows dislike of foods.
- Adult puts more on child's plate than the child can comfortably eat.
- When a child puts too much food on his/her plate, he/she is admonished and made to eat all the food on the plate.
- Children are expected to try everything on their plates, and are teased or pressured if they have a negative opinion of that food.



Age: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD
Stage: **INDUSTRY AND INFERIORITY**

Children develop feelings that they can make things, a sense of "I can do this. I am capable."

FEEDING BEHAVIORS

INDUSTRY

- Child discerns when he or she is hungry or full and acts on these cues.
- Environment is set so the children can make snacks or simple meals.
- Children choose menus for meals.
- Children make suggestions for trying new foods and combinations of food.
- Children prepare foods for sharing with friends.
- Children help set schedules for mealtimes.

INFERIORITY (*Avoid these strategies.*)

- Children's plates are pre-served.
- Adult admonishes and demeans child's attempts at making or serving food.
- Children are required to clean their plates.
- Children are required to taste everything at the mealtime.
- Children's opinions about food are ignored or rejected.

Estadios psicosociales de Erik Erikson
Aplicación para el desarrollo de las destrezas alimentarias de los niños
Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD and Janice Fletcher, EdD

La teoría de desarrollo psicosocial de Erik Erikson incluye un principio de que las personas importantes en la vida de un niño impactan su crecimiento y desarrollo. Los adultos que trabajan con niños pequeños pueden crear un ambiente físico y emocional que ayude a los niños a desarrollar comportamientos alimentarios saludables.

Erikson identificó crisis evolutivas típicas que los niños en desarrollo atraviesan a medida que crecen emocional y socialmente. Cada período evolutivo trae destrezas que deben ser aprendidas. Él identificó cuatro estadios de la vida de un niño y los problemas que ellos pueden experimentar a medida que desarrollan. Nosotros hemos pareado los estadios de Erikson con estrategias alimentarias de adultos que afectan cada estadio.

Edad: Infancia

Estadio: CONFIANZA VERSUS DESCONFIANZA

Los niños desarrollan sentimientos de que pueden confiar en la consistencia y seguridad del mundo que los rodea.

Comportamientos alimentarios

Confianza

- El adulto establece un tono y ambiente emocional confortables, esto incluye sostener al niño segura y cómodamente y responder a sus necesidades y expresiones en lugar de acomodarlo para que tome sólo su biberón, o alimentar niños en grupos sentándolos en sillas para comer.
- El adulto provee alimentos apropiados cuando el bebe muestra señales de tener hambre.
- El adulto no interrumpe innecesariamente la concentración del niño cuando está comiendo.
- El bebe es alimentado cuando tiene hambre.
- El adulto deja de alimentar al bebe cuando éste muestra señales de que ya terminó de comer.
- El adulto discierne cuales señales son señales de hambre y cuáles son señales que indican otra clase de incomodidad en el niño, absteniéndose de alimentar al niño como respuesta a todos sus llantos.
- El adulto deja de alimentar al bebe cuando éste se voltea para alejarse de la comida.
- El adulto determina que la temperatura de la comida es apropiada.

Desconfianza (Evite estas estrategias!)

- El adulto alimenta al niño en un horario rígido que no está en armonía con las señales de hambre del niño.
- El adulto fuerza el pezón, la mamila, o la cuchara en la boca del niño.
- El adulto alimenta al niño cada vez que éste muestra cualquier señal de incomodidad.
- En centros de cuidado de niños, los bebés mayores son alimentados al mismo tiempo en una rueda mientras todos están colocados en sillas de comer. El adulto se mueve de niño a niño en un orden rotatorio determinado por el adulto, alimentando a cada niño mecánicamente.

Edad: 18 to 30 meses

Estadio: Autonomía versus Vergüenza y duda

Los niños tienen un sentido de que ellos existen como seres humanos separados e individuales. "Yo soy" Mírenme!" es la frase que describe este estadio.

Comportamientos alimentarios

AUTONOMIA

- Los niños son alentados a comer por sí mismos, sin importar el desorden o los embarres.
- Los niños están permitidos de decir no a los alimentos.
- Los niños pueden combinar alimentos de la manera que ellos quieran.
- Los niños pasan por etapas preferenciales de comida.
- Se presentan porciones de tamaño apropiado para niños.
- La comida es servida a los niños de modo que ellos puedan sentirse exitosos en lugar de frustrados. Por ejemplo, la pizza es cortada en pedazos de tamaño suficiente para un bocado en lugar de servirla en tajadas grandes.

•

VERGÜENZA Y DUDA (Evite estas estrategias)

- Los adultos alimentan a los niños aún cuando los niños han desarrollado adecuadamente el control de sus dedos y su habilidad prensora.
- El adulto se hace cargo de alimentar a los niños cuando éstos se ensucian al comer.
- El adulto interrumpe a los niños excesivamente para limpiarles las manos y la cara.
- El adulto obliga a los niños a limpiar el plato y a ingerir todos los alimentos, sin consideración a las señales de hambre y saciedad de los niños, o a preferencias individuales.
- El adulto sirve el plato del niño con porciones para adultos.

Edad: **Niñez temprana**

ESTADIO: **Iniciativa versus Culpa**

Los niños tienen un sentido de que tomar riesgos es aceptable, un comportamiento seguro. "Trataré" es la frase que demuestra un saludable sentido de iniciativa

Comportamientos alimentarios

INICIATIVA

- El adulto acepta la decisión del niño de dejar de comer cuando el niño dice "Estoy lleno".
- El adulto alienta al niño a determinar si quiere y cuánto quiere probar de un alimento nuevo.
- El adulto respeta la habilidad del niño de gustar o no gustar de una nueva comida o alimento.
- La comida es presentada a los niños de modo que ellos puedan servirse por sí mismos, decidiendo cuánto poner en sus platos.
- Derramamientos de comidas o bebidas son esperados y tratados como parte de la rutina en lugar de como una crisis.

-
- Utensilios de tamaño apropiado para niños son provistos de modo que el niño pueda desarrollar más fácilmente sus destrezas para alimentarse y servirse solo.

CULPA (Evite estas estrategias)

- El niño es castigado cuando se cansa y usa los utensilios descuidadamente.
- El adulto riñe a los niños por no limpiar sus platos.
- El niño falla en el uso de utensilios que son muy grandes o muy pesados para sus fuerzas, equilibrio, y resistencia.
- El niño es reprendido por derrames.
- El adulto castiga al niño o se muestra desilusionado cuando un niño muestra disgusto o aversión por los alimentos.
- El adulto pone en el plato del niño más de lo que éste puede comer cómodamente.

Edad: Niñez media

Estadio: Industria versus Inferioridad

Los niños desarrollan sentimientos de que ellos pueden hacer cosas, un sentido de "Soy capaz"

Comportamientos Alimentarios

INDUSTRIA

- El niño discierne cuando se siente hambriento y cuando se siente lleno o satisfecho y actúa en base a estas señales indicadoras
- El ambiente es establecido de modo que los niños puedan preparar sus propios refrigerios o comidas simples.
- Los niños escogen menús para sus comidas.
- Los niños hacen sugerencias para probar nuevos alimentos.
- Los niños preparan comidas para compartir con amigos
- Los niños ayudan a establecer horarios para las comidas.

INFERIORIDAD (Evite estas estrategias)

- El plato de los niños es servido de antemano.
- El adulto reprende y degrada los intentos del niño de servirse comida por sí mismo.
- Se requiere que los niños limpien sus platos.
- Se requiere que los niños prueben todos los alimentos servidos durante la comida.

Healthy Weight and Young Children



Janice Fletcher, EdD
University of Idaho



BMI

Body Mass Index

- Height to weight ratio
 - Growth charts



Website for handouts

www.cals.uidaho.edu/feeding



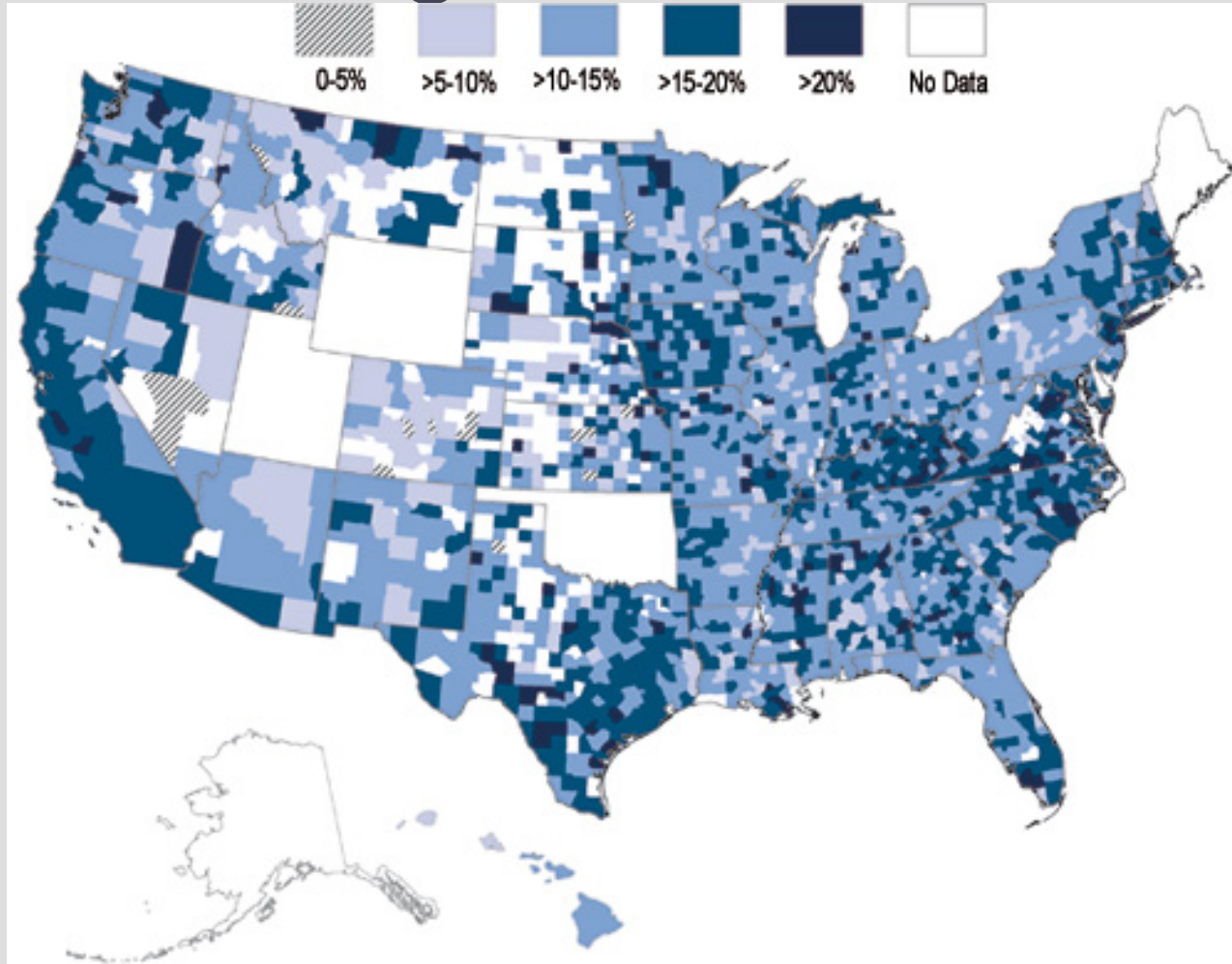
Incidence

17.1% ages 2-19

4.9% of young children

32.2% adults


Incidence of preschool obesity and overweight



From the Center on Disease Control...

One out of seven low-income, 2 to 4 year old children is obese, however the obesity epidemic may be stabilizing

- 12.4 percent in 1998
- 14.5 percent in 2003
- 14.6 percent in 2008



**What results in
healthy weight?**

ENERGY BALANCE

Energy Intake


=

Energy Expenditure



What causes overweight?

Energy imbalance



**The DIFFERENCE in
how much energy is
consumed in
FOOD
and
how much energy is spent in
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Factors

- **Lack of physical activity**
- **Over consumption of calories**
- **Too many sweet foods**
- **Too many fats**

Factors

- **Too many high calorie, low nutrient diets**
- **Limited accessibility to nutrient rich diets**

Factors

- **Television**
- **Computer games**
- **Aggressive marketing of high fat and high sugar foods to young children**

Factors

- **Limited skills for cooking**
- **Limited skills for shopping for food**
- **Convenience foods**
- **Fast foods**



Factors

- **Portion sizes**
- **Lack of family table time**

Factors

- **Working mothers**
- **Barriers to breastfeeding**
- **Overweight parents**
- **Peer acceptance**

Factors


- **Limited availability for shopping for food**
- **Limited access to neighborhoods for walking to schools or playing outdoors**

Factors

- **Decrease in playground time**
- **Lack of space to play**
- **Personal safety issues**
- **Communities that are not designed for walking**
- **Environmental chemicals**

Outcomes of Unhealthy Weight

- **High blood pressure**
- **Diabetes**
- **High cholesterol**
- **Depression**
- **Self-image issues**
- **Sleep problems...apnea**



What is the role of those who work with children in group settings and their families?

**PROTECT
PREVENT
PLAN
ADVOCATE**



**Six principles
for feeding
young children**



Principle 1

**Children need
a variety of
foods**



Principle 2

**Adults should
eat with
children**



Principle 3

**Adults set the
eating
environment**





www.cals.uidaho.edu/feeding

**Building Mealtimes
Relationships and
Environments: An Inventory**



Ellyn Satter

www.ellynsatter.com

“Division of
Responsibility in
Feeding”



Satter's foundation for feeding focuses a child's internal cues

**Paying attention
to hunger and satiety**



Principle 4

**Adults decide
what, when, and
where food is
presented**



Principle 5

**Child decides
how much, or
whether to eat**



Principle 6

**Children should
serve
themselves**

Finding a Developmental Focus for Feeding Young Children



Janice Fletcher

University of Idaho

www.cals.uidaho.edu/feeding

Child Development

- Biting, chewing, and swallowing
- Grasps, finger dexterity and strength
- Language (listening, vocabulary, requesting)
- Executive skills (organizing and planning ahead)
- Making decisions
- Trusting others, taking initiative
- Taking turns
- Self-regulation/co-regulation





Children Cope

***Learning to
calm and
reassure self***



Children Cope

Self control

Self regulation

Children Develop Skills for Eating

➤ **Survival**

➤ **Efficiency**

➤ **Social-Aesthetic**

Physical Development

Direction of development

Cephalocaudal



Physical Development

Direction of development

Proximo-distal





Physical Responses Develop

Homeostasis



Babies



**Extrusion
reflex**

Toddlers



Movement

Toddlers



- **Locomotion**
- **Manipulation**
- **Balance**
 - Axial**
 - Static**
 - Dynamic**

Remember...

- Large motor skills inform and support fine motor skills
- Children need to be balanced so they can focus on using fine motor skills

Toddlers



**Sensori-
motor
(messy)**

Toddlers



**Hand
skills**

Grasps

- Palmar Grasp
- Ulnar Grasp
- Raking Grasp
- Radial Grasp
- Pincer Grasp
- Precision Grasp



Preschoolers

- Strength
- Endurance
- Balance
- Precision



Toddlers



Sensory

- See
- Smell
- Hear
- Taste
- Touch

Emotions Develop



**Internal
cues**

Internal Cues and External Cues

- 1. Trust and mistrust**
- 2. Autonomy and shame and doubt**
- 3. Initiative and guilt**
- 4. Industry and inferiority**

Erik Erikson

Babies



Trust



Toddlers



Autonomy Independence

Toddlers



**Self
regulation**

Preschoolers

Delay Gratification



Preschoolers



Emotional Blends

Preschoolers



**Me and
YOU**



Cognition

Adaptation

Assimilation

Accommodation

Children Hear Everything!

Casual listening

Categories

Attention Span

Distractions



Auditory Development

Children's
marginal listening
is powerful



Caution!

**Be mindful of adult
comments about
food and amounts**

Supporting Children's Self-Regulation at Mealtimes

Janice Fletcher, EdD
University of Idaho



Co-regulation aids Self-regulation

- Know what food to offer
- Know what skills a child is learning and developing



What is Self-Regulation for a Young Child at Mealtimes?

Awareness of internal cues of hunger and fullness

Self-mediated response to food and behaviors for choosing how much to eat, serving self, and eating food



Supportive Strategies



- Support children as they choose amounts (portion sizes, judging amounts)
- Offer safe, developmentally appropriate food
- Offer effective comments that support learning



Strategy

Support children as they
choose amounts and foods



Basic Principle

**Children choose
how much, or
whether they eat**


(Satter, 1987)

Internal Cues


Hungry



Full



Infants know when
they are hungry and
when they are full

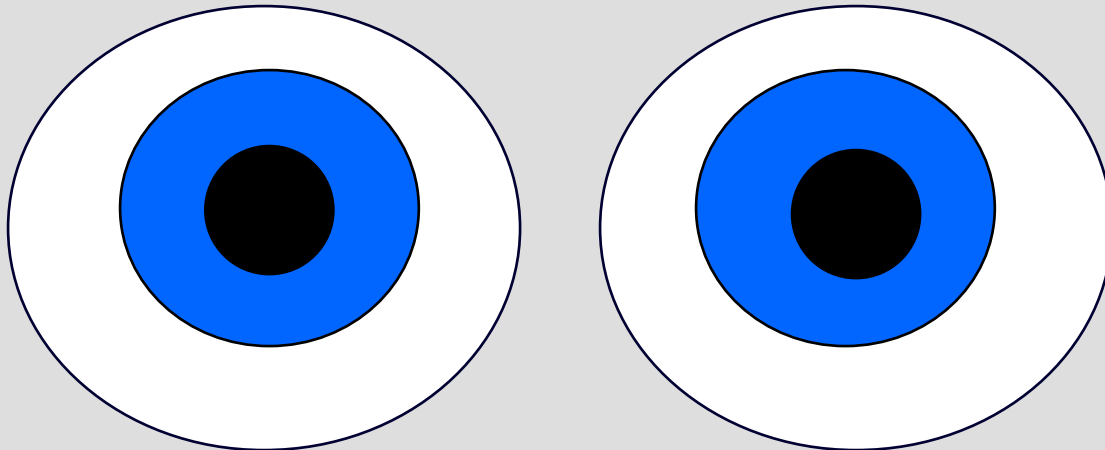


The adult's role is to support a child to maintain those hunger and fullness cues

What about portion sizes?

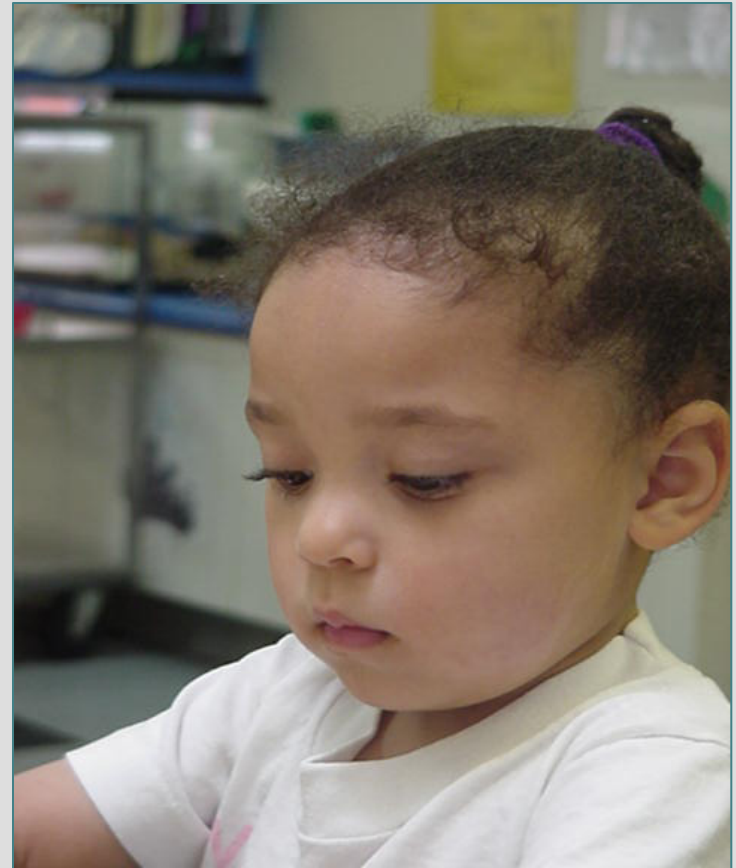


**Adults' eyes are bigger
than children's stomachs!**

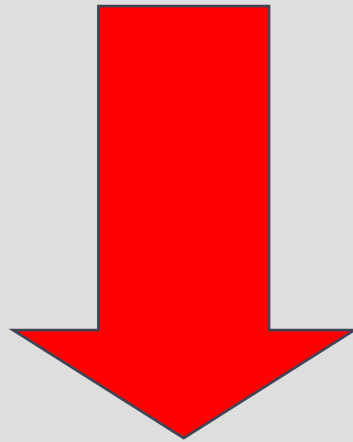


What is most important?

Staying in
touch with
internal cues



Restrained Feeding



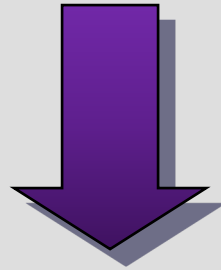
Fears about
Food



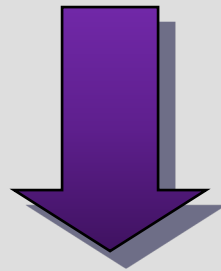
Basic Principle

**Children should
serve themselves**

Serving self



Reinforces internal cues



Self-regulation

Supporting Children's Self-Regulation at Mealtimes: Chewing and Swallowing

Janice Fletcher, EdD
University of Idaho



What is Self-Regulation at Mealtimes?

Self-mediated response to food and accessing developmental characteristics for eating



Co-regulation aids self-regulation

- Know which skills a child is developing
- Know strategies for reinforcing skills



Sensory and motor skills
are required for
successful, competent eating





Strategy

**Offer developmentally
appropriate food**

Bite...chew...swallow



- **Child coordinates jaw, lips, cheeks, tongue**
- **Child assesses sensory aspects of the food and place in mouth**



RESOURCE for LEARNING ABOUT CHEWING AND SWALLOWING

www.new-vis.com

Suzanne Evans Morris

Learning to Bite and Chew



Foods offer
different learning
challenges
for biting,
chewing, and
swallowing



**The goal is to
choose foods that
offer "just right
challenges"**



Size

How big do I open my mouth?



Size

Small pieces require less chewing, but may demand precise movement to place food between teeth



Shape

**Contours of the
food impact the
ease of placing
the food between
the side teeth for
biting**



Resistance

Amount of pressure or force required to bite through food, and chew it into pieces



Sensory input

Type and intensity of taste

(Crunchy, spicy, sour, bitter, and cold are strongest inputs)





Texture Scatter

**Texture scatter is how food
breaks up when a child
bites into food**



Texture Scatter


**Some foods break into pieces that don't bind together easily...
pieces scatter into separate pieces that are not easily rolled into a bolus for swallowing**

Texture Scatter

Easy bolus formation (*animal crackers, graham crackers, saltine crackers, cooked fruit and vegetables*)

Some bolus formation (*goldfish crackers, bread, toast, sandwiches, hamburger on bread*)

Little to no bolus formation (*hamburger, raw carrots, nuts, grapes, apple peelings, marshmallows, hard candy*)



A young child lacks coordination of tongue and cheek and may leave pieces of food scattered randomly on the tongue.

Gagging and choking may result from this type of scatter.

Consistency

- **Food consistency is the texture of food**
- **The easiest foods to eat have a single consistency**

Consistency

Multiple consistency foods require several sensory inputs during biting, and different handling for each texture



Placement for chewing

Food is placed in three teeth locations based on size, shape, resistance

- **Front: central incisor teeth**
- **Mid-Side: canine teeth**
- **Side and back: molar teeth**



Transfer

Amount of chewing needed to move food to the opposite side of the mouth



Children need opportunities to try different types of food to help them develop skills



A word about choking...



Choking!!!

Avoid food that is round and firm, sticky, or cut into large chunks

Food should be no larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter for preschoolers and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch for toddlers

Reduce Choking Risks

- Adults should sit with and eat with children
- Model safe eating
- Serve food that is developmentally appropriate for children to chew and swallow

Reduce Choking Risks

- Encourage small bites
- Encourage chewing completely
- Insist on children sitting

AVOID THESE FOODS

- Nuts
- Seeds
- Whole berries
- Raw carrots and celery
- Firm, hard raisins
- Grapes (unless cut in half or quarters)
- Hot dogs
- Popcorn
- Hard candy
- Chunks of peanut butter
- Large chunks of meat or cheese

Supporting Children's Self-Regulation at Mealtimes: What you say matters!

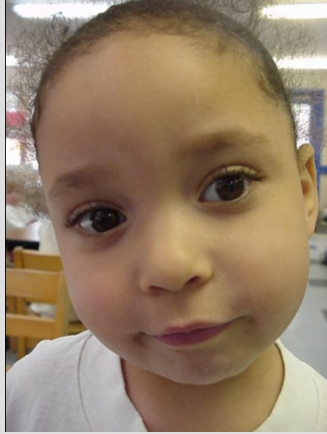
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University of Idaho





Strategy

Offer ***effective*** comments



What you say matters...

- The aim is competent, successful children
- Be intentional and purposeful about what to say to encourage and reinforce children's skills.

Types of Comments

Neutral comments

Impartial/no particular support offered

Adult says, *“Uh huh. I see that.”*

Types of Comments

Person-centered comments

Focus on characteristics of a child

Adult says, *“You are such a big girl.”*

Types of Comments

Achievement-centered comments

Focus on quality of behaviors of a child

Adult says, *“You are the best veggie eater in the whole family.”*

Types of Comments

Effort-centered comments

Focus on a child's attempts at a behavior

Adult says, "You were brave. You worked hard to get up courage to try those beets even though you had never tasted them before today."

Types of Comments

Process-centered comment

Focus on what the children do as they practice a behavior

Adult says, “You picked up that beet. You smelled it. You tasted it. You took a bite, and then, you chewed it up, and you said you liked it. You are learning to try foods you’ve never tried before.”

Which comment type is most effective?

...older than five years

PROCESS-CENTERED

MOST EFFECTIVE



Which comment type is most effective?

For children under age five...

Process-centered encouragement

Effort centered encouragement

MOST EFFECTIVE



These have little to no effect

Achievement Comments


Person-centered Comments

Neutral Comments





Common Issues




Should I ever take
over the
child's choice of
deciding how much
or whether to eat?

NO...

Adults decide what is presented to eat and how it is presented

- Children are sometimes picky about what they eat.
- Children do not easily take to unfamiliar foods
- Children are finicky, resistant, don't like it, waste it, won't touch it, eat only _____.
- Should I hide _____ in other foods?



Can children
serve themselves at
mealtimes?

Children should serve themselves

- So....can children really serve themselves?
- What must we do to make this happen?
- How old must children be to serve themselves?
- What strategies work?
- Isn't it too messy?
- Won't children waste food?



Children Can Serve Themselves

**A sequence of skills
must be learned**



Children Can Serve Themselves

It will be ragged!

Portion Sizes

What do young children need to know about portion size?



Portion Sizes and Healthy Eating



Three-year-old children pay attention to internal cues

Four-year-old children respond to portion size

Portion sizes and healthy eating



Children should serve themselves

Unfamiliar Foods

**“What’s
the white
stuff?”**



Unfamiliar Foods

- **Children eat what they KNOW**
- **Adapt new categories!**
- **KNOW THE FOOD!**

Unfamiliar Foods

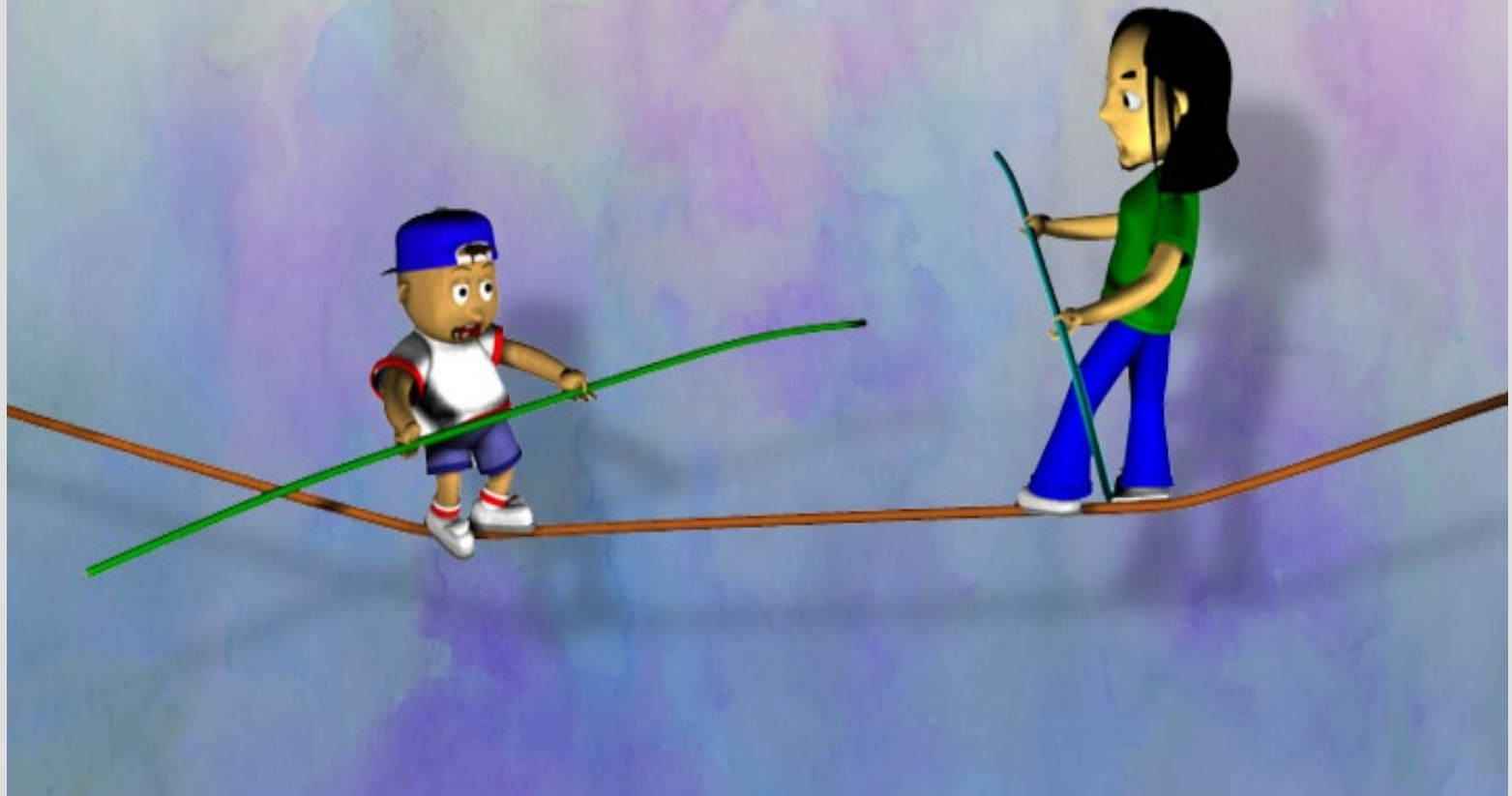


- **Name the food**
- **Describe the sensory characteristics**
- **Relate characteristics of unfamiliar food to those a child already knows**
- **Set the child up for success in handling the food**

What about the “no-thank-you bite”



No Thank You Bite



No Thank You Bite



Trying New Foods



**Allow children
to save face**

Trying New Foods

- **Respect child's opinion**
- **Allow child to spit out food if she doesn't like the food**



Physical Activity

- PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY
- Safety
- Model
- Play along side



Physical Activity

- **Structured**
- **Unstructured**
- **60 minutes a day**
- **Build into the daily routine**
- **Intentional**

Physical Activity

- Large motor
- Small motor
- Balance
- Strength
- Endurance





Physical Activity

LOCOMOTION

**Run, jump,
climb,**

wheel toys

Physical Activity

**Manipulation
Throw, catch,
move objects
that have
weight**



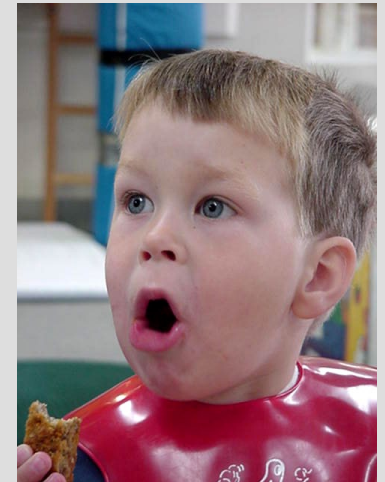
Adult Practices

- **Adult is a co-regulator**
- **Adult is a model**



Adult Practices

- **Adult SLOWS DOWN to match child's pace**
- **Adult accepts children at any weight**



Individual Differences!

Adults have individual ideals, visions, beliefs, and backgrounds, too!



Advocacy

- **Breastfeeding**
- **Child friendly food portion**
- **Serving self**
- **Satiety and hunger cues...self-regulation**
- **Offering options for choices of food**
- **Outdoor play**
- **Planned environments**
- **Planned physical activities**

Advocacy

- Take action
- Inform
- Choose your chicken

Advocate Breastfeeding

- **For at least 6 months**
- **Support with child care policies**

Don't! and Do!



Supporting children's
eating competence

Don'ts for Feeding Young Children







1. Don't reward with food




2. Don't bribe with food



3. Don't make your child
clean her plate




4. Don't preach or nag about nutrition, when you have offered healthy choices




5. Don't make a big deal about weight issues when YOU choose to diet




6. Don't use a one-bite rule



7. Don't restrict a child's choice of amount and type of food, once you have provided healthy choices




8. Don't set up mealtimes where the child eats alone, or without adults present



9. Don't make a child eat everything she orders in a restaurant, "because we are paying for that."

Do's for Feeding Young Children






1. Do eat with your children, with family mealtimes a priority




2. Do offer a variety of food




3. Do offer foods your child likes




4. Do learn how to shop for a variety of foods that are within your budget



5. Do learn to cook a variety
of foods




6. Do give children opportunities
and support to learn how to
serve themselves




7. Do offer unfamiliar foods, giving children opportunities to smell, touch, visually inspect, and take tiny tastes of the food



8. Do offer unfamiliar food and
new foods repeatedly



9. Do help children learn to self-regulate around hunger and fullness



10. Do give children lots of vocabulary to describe food




11. Do offer food about every
two and half hours



Make a vision and it will become reality!

- ✓ **Physical Environment**
- ✓ **Auditory Environment**
- ✓ **Social Environment**
- ✓ **Language Environment**
- ✓ **Emotional Environment**




**Help families know
how to TEACH a
child about eating,
rather than
how to DIRECT a
child's eating**



ASK!

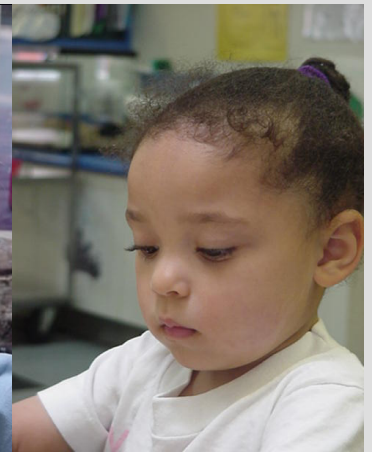
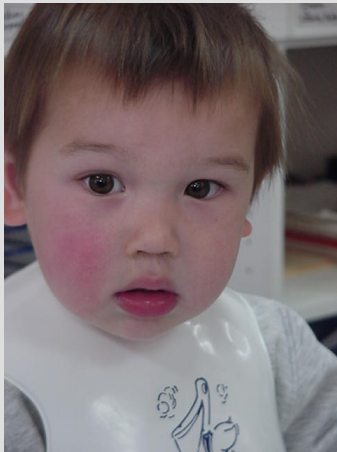
**“What have you
done so far?”**



**Be mindful
of the
impact
of relatives**

Working with staff

- Staff don't want to eat their lunch with the children.
- Eating with children is gross.
- We're too busy at that time of day to do all of this stuff.
- Just get the food into the children, then let's do the real stuff of the day.
- I'm on a diet so I can't eat with the children.



**Thank you for
thinking about
helping young
children maintain
healthy weight**





Interesting Resources for Lunch Boxes for Young Children in Child Care

- Accredited Practicing Dietitians, F. D. C. (2004). Healthy lunch box ideas: save time, money, and effort [Electronic Version]. Retrieved June 25, 2009 from http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/familydaycare/files/links/2_Healthy_Lunch_Box_Ideas.pdf
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- Collier, K. (2006). Lunchbox duty for teachers. *Herald Sun*, Retrieved on June 26, 2009, from http://www.naturalkitchenstrategies.com.au/Herald_Sun_25Apr06.htm
- McClure, R. (2007a). Before you pack your child's lunch, consider these health and practicality issues first. *About.com: Child Care*. Retrieved June 25, 2009, from <http://childcare.about.com/od/generaladvice/bb/packlunch.htm>
- Network, R. C. (2006). Packing a lunch box [Electronic Version]. *Raising Children Network*, from http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/packing_a_lunch_box.html
- Satter, Ellyn (2009) Retrieved June 26, 2009, from <http://www.ellynsatter.com>
- Sweitzer, S., Briley, M., Robert-Gray, C. (2009). Do sack lunches provided by parents meet the nutritional needs of young children who attend child care? *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. January, 2009. 109: 141-144

Lunch Boxes with Young Children in Child Care Settings Teacher and Center Strategies

Janice Fletcher, EdD, Beth Price, Samantha Ramsay, PhD, RD, LD, Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD

When young children eat a meal brought from home, an attentive and intentional teacher at the table is critical to keep children safe and secure. Teachers at the lunch box table support learning about food and eating behaviors as they sit with children. In extreme cases where a teacher is distracted, children may not eat at all if they do not get help opening their food.

Have a serious strategy- rich discussion among staff about what provides the best possible lunch box mealtime. Make a list of ways to have a safe, relaxed, stimulating lunch box environment. Consider routines and schedules, setting the table environment, the food, children's developmental skills and learning, safety and sanitation, staff roles, and working with families. Use the strategies below to jump-start your discussion.

Routines and Schedules

- Develop routines for getting lunch boxes to the table. For example, have a routine so the table is set with plates and utensils before children come to the table. Children can help with this.
- Set lunch boxes out and have them open prior to the children coming to the table.
- Schedule lunch box meals to include time for getting the food out of the packaging, as well as time for eating and interacting.
- Plan schedules and routines that make transitions to and from the mealtime efficient.
- When children come to the table, make certain each has at least one thing to eat or drink as they wait for the other children to get their items opened or heated.
- Help children learn to time their eating, even in the face of a stimulating environment. Use phrases to designate the beginning of the mealtime, the middle of the mealtime, and the end of the mealtime. Talk about getting plates filled with the food from the lunch box, then beginning to eat the food, then how starting to feel full and then, as the mealtime comes to an end, beginning to clear off the table and getting ready to wash hands.
- Have an end-of-mealtime transition plan for closing and returning lunch boxes to children's cubbies.



Setting the Table Environment

- Provide plates, utensils, and napkins for the meal. Provide child-sized utensils that are restaurant grade plastic, or stainless steel. Offer plates that are sturdy so that wet foods do not leak through and heavier foods do not make the plate unstable.
- Have a plan for where to put the lunch boxes while the children eat. For example, have children take all the food out of the boxes and place it on plates, then remove the boxes from the table to a nearby shelf.
- Have child-sized pitchers of water and milk at the table for children to pour into cups provided by the center.
- If microwave ovens are used, be certain they are near the table, so the teacher does not have to go too far to heat foods.
- Roll a table-side cart near the teacher's chair. Put plates, cups, utensils, napkins, paper towels for spills and clean up, and milk or juice pitchers on the cart. Be sure there are extra utensils and equipment on the cart. Include a small clip board and pen with a stack of blank "daily eating sheets" for the teacher to put in each child's lunch box.
- Place a trash can within easy reach of the teacher so trash from accumulated food packaging can be disposed of quickly. This keeps the table environment more organized and appealing, as well as removing possible choking hazards.

Child Development and Learning

- Encourage competence in children as they learn eating skills. Ask children if they want help opening items, rather than automatically opening the food for the child.
- Teach children to ask for help, and to wait their turn for the teacher to help.
- Because children bring their food, there is an inherent interest factor in what each has brought from home. Encourage child-to-child discussions about their food, but teach the words, yours and mine and ours. Because brought-from-home food is not 100% reliable in terms of choking hazards or contamination, make and enforce a routine of no sharing.
- Build food vocabulary among the children taking advantage of the wide variety of different foods the children bring to the table...smooth, silky, crunchy, colors, flavors, crispness, liquid, solid, fruits, vegetables, meat, grains, dairy.
- Help children learn how to open items that commonly come in lunchboxes...juice boxes and sandwich bags are examples. Plan a small group time activity or have a dramatic play center set up for such learning.

- Determine what strategies or rules will be used for supporting children as they make choices of what and whether to eat food from their lunchboxes. If a variety of nutrient-dense foods arrive in a child's lunch box, it is easy to accept that the child will be gaining adequate nutrition at lunch, no matter what they choose from their meal. Prevailing research suggests that adults should decide what is presented to eat and the child decides how much or whether to eat (Satter Division of Responsibility in Feeding, 2009). Working with parents on what is presented in the lunch box is essential.
- The variety of food that children bring and the ways they eat those foods make the typical lunch box table look something akin to a three-ring circus. This interesting lunch scene attracts and distracts children around the table. Have a repertoire of phrases to help children stay on task as they eat and to help them attend to the food they are eating. Examples are, "I see you have applesauce." "Are you enjoying your sandwich?" "Your soup has noodles." "You opened your yogurt and got your spoon ready to eat it." "You ate your potato and then you started on peaches in your fruit cup."

Safety and Sanitation

- Arrange routines for getting started, so the teacher can be at the table with all the children as they sit down and begin eating. Children should never be left alone with the plethora of choking hazards and challenges found in the food and packaging in the lunch box.
- Be certain teachers practice fastidious hand washing and wear plastic gloves to remove food from children's lunch boxes.
- It is common for children's lunch boxes to include foods that are possible choking hazards, such as raisins, raw carrots, grapes, and nuts. Send parents a list of foods that are choking hazards and therefore not acceptable for bringing to the program. Because children will sometimes bring the unsafe foods anyway, it is especially important for teachers to be prepared to know what to do when a child chokes on food. Insist on annual training on CPR and First Aid.
- Do not return partially eaten food, food that has been opened, or food that must be refrigerated or heated to a lunch box. Sometimes child care providers want parents to see the results of a child's mealtime consumption. They may return uneaten food to the lunch box. This practice presents a food safety hazard. Note that it is fairly common for situations to arise where a child may cry, or say, "I'm hungry," on the way home. Parents look in the lunch box for leftover tidbits to quiet and satisfy the child. Parents may even pack the uneaten food in the next day's lunch box. Food that has been partially eaten is contaminated and becomes a growing medium for bacteria. Staff can inform parents about how much their child ate, using putting a simple "daily eating sheet" in the child's lunch box. (See below in the Working with Parents section.)



- Sometime a child has a food allergy that is so severe, that even what seems like minor contact with that food can cause a serious, even deadly reaction. Parents of all of the children must be alerted to the prohibition of the food item from lunch boxes. Careful scrutiny of all the children's lunch boxes for the allergen must be conducted.

Staff Roles

- Make sure teacher-child ratios allow an adult to sit with children at each table.
- Ideally a lunch aide in the room can move around helping children with food packaging and preparation, while an adult sits at the tables with children.
- Staff should eat a bit of food for modeling, but they should not be required to eat their true meal during this time. Lunch box service obligations are so demanding that staff hardly have time to eat. They typically spend a majority of time opening, serving, and keeping children safe with the food from their lunch boxes. Absolute attention to the children and their lunches is essential for safety reasons. A bonus, after safety, is helping children learn to self-regulate, to establish food preferences, to choose amounts to eat, and to learn about being in a group at mealtimes.
- Be mindful of the number of times the teacher has to get up and down from the table. Efficient routines, well-placed mealtime equipment, and appropriate ratios can support the teacher to focus attention on supporting children.

The Food

- Children need a variety of food. Offer suggestions to parents that include foods from different food groups. See "Lunch Box Tips for Parents: What to Pack in Lunch Boxes for Young Children in Childcare." <http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/feeding>
- Write a policy to guide parents as they select food for their children's lunches.
- Always offer water at the table. Offer milk to supplement children's lunch box/sack lunches. This is wise, since studies of lunch box and sack lunch meals for young children show insufficient levels of calcium in the food sent from home (Sweitzer, Briley, and Robert-Gray, 2009).
- Children can independently pour water and milk from child sized pitchers to their cups, increasing their intake of fluids and calcium while also helping develop hand skills.
- Sometimes children have too little food in their lunch box. Be sure to have some non-perishable items (crackers, cereal, pretzels) on hand to supplement their lunches.



Working with Parents around Food from Home

- Distribute the handout for parents called, “Lunch Box Tips for Parents: Lunch Boxes for Young Children in Child Care Settings” and “Lunch Box Tips for Parents: What to Pack in Lunch Boxes for Young Children in Childcare.” <http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/feeding>
- If lunch boxes routinely include foods that are high in fat, sugar, and sodium, and low in milk items and fruits or vegetables, then parent education becomes essential. Policies from the center about what foods are appropriate offer a teacher or administrator a common tool for helping increase the nutrient value of the lunch box foods in the center.
- Be certain that parents know if the program has equipment for heating and refrigerating foods. This impacts what parents send for the child’s lunch and how it is prepared.
- Have a family-friendly plan to refrigerate lunches. Place a rolling cart or large basket near the door where children arrive. Parents or children can place lunch boxes or sacks on the cart or in the basket. Take the lunches for storage in a refrigerator.
- If the center cannot provide refrigeration for lunches, be certain parents do not pack perishable items, even if they use thermal lunch boxes or ice packs. Researchers have tested temperatures using both of these and have found them to be inadequate for keeping food safe (Sweitzer, Briley, and Robert-Gray, 2009).
- Identify choking hazards for parents and make policies that prohibit these from lunch boxes. Foods that are common choking hazards for young children are raisins, uncooked carrots and hard raw vegetables, grapes, nuts, chunks of peanut butter, chunks of meat, hard candies, lollipops, popcorn, and whole hotdogs or hotdogs cut in rounds. Suggest that parents cut grapes in half, or fourths, chop nuts, thinly spread peanut butter on bread or crackers, chop chunks of food, cut hotdogs lengthwise into quarters.
- Encourage parents to cut items such as sandwiches or pizza into small pieces for ease of eating by the child. Quarter size works for sandwiches, for example. This helps children eat more efficiently and comfortably.
- Encourage parents to package food so that children can have success. Suggest they use wax paper instead of plastic wrap. Plastic wrap sticks together while wax paper does not. Encourage parents to practice the skills for opening items at home, just as you will do at the center. Suggest that parents snip the seals on pre-packaged dry food before putting food in the lunch box. For foods that are highly packaged, suggest emptying the food into a baggie before putting it in the lunch box.
- Talk with parents about portion sizes of foods that are appropriate for their child’s unique needs. Regularly report how much of the lunch the parents prepared is eaten by their child. Avoid sending uneaten food back home in the lunchbox. This practice poses a food safety issue.



Using a Daily Sheet

Use a daily eating sheet for staff to mark what a child ate. Place the report in the child's lunch box right from the table. Keep this sheet simple. Keep a small clipboard on the cart-side table with forms for each child.

If there is an exceptional amount of food eaten or not eaten, then a face to face conversation is necessary and would not be communicated via a daily sheet.

SAMPLE				
Child Care Lunch Box Daily Sheet				
Day _____	Child's Name _____	Staff _____		
FOOD ITEM	AMOUNT EATEN			
	NONE	FOURTH	HALF	ALL
Sandwich/entrée/soup	x _____	x _____	x _____	x _____
Beverage	x _____	x _____	x _____	x _____
Fruit	x _____	x _____	x _____	x _____
Vegetables	x _____	x _____	x _____	x _____
Grains/ breads/ crackers/chips	x _____	x _____	x _____	x _____
Cookies/pudding/jello/cake	x _____	x _____	x _____	x _____
Other _____	x _____	x _____	x _____	x _____



Lunch Box Tips for Parents: Lunch Boxes for Young Children in Childcare

Janice Fletcher, EdD, Beth Price, Samantha Ramsay, PhD, RD, LD, Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD

Sending a lunch box along with your child to a child care program connects you, your child, and the child care staff in an intimate way. Eating is essential to survival.

Supporting children to be healthy and happy around mealtimes is an adult responsibility that is dependent upon both the parent and the staff. Here are suggestions for building a bridge among parents, staff, and the children who eat the food from the lunch box.

- Ask about meal service style. Find out if the program provides beverages or partial meals, utensils, napkins, or plates.
- Ask staff if the program has a refrigerator to store lunch box food that must be maintained at a cool temperature. If yes, find out how to access the refrigerator when you bring your child's lunch box to the program.
- Ask if the program has a way to heat foods that must be cooked. If yes, use microwave-safe containers. Read container packaging to be certain.
- Present items in an easy-to-eat fashion that is friendly to a child's mouth and chewing and swallowing skills. For example, cut sandwiches into four quarters. Slice pizza into small squares. Offer items that do not require slicing or peeling. Remember the teacher has many children to help at the meal. The teacher will also be helping keep children safe and happy, as well as supporting them in getting their food ready to eat.
- Keep serving sizes small. Watch your child eat at home, and then pack about that size portion for lunch. Ask how much your child typically eats at the child care program.
- Pack foods that can make your child feel successful. Think about your child's skills for opening items independently.
- Be considerate to your child's teacher. Pack items that are reasonably easy to open and that do not require a lot of preparation. Use wax paper instead of plastic wrap, for example. Plastic wrap sticks together while wax paper does not. Practice at home with children to open containers. If you buy prepackaged foods, snip the seals before putting them in the lunch box. For foods that are highly packaged, empty the food into an easy to open container before you put the food in the lunch box.
- When food in the lunch box needs to be refrigerated, be sure to follow the center's rules for getting the lunch box in the cooler.
- Check to be certain water for the children to drink is readily available at the table.



- Choose foods that represent good nutrition. Offer meats dairy, fruits, vegetables, and grains. Offer these in the lunchbox, and trust the teacher to help your child learn to eat these foods.
- Be careful of emotional decision making about what goes into the meal. Sometimes parents feel guilty about leaving their children, and try to make up for that guilt by filling a lunch box with treats. Remember...this is the child's nutrition for a large portion of the day. Thoughtfully choose the best food you can for your child.
- Some child care programs encourage staff to return uneaten food in the lunch box. This is a hazard to your child. Though you may be able to see what your child ate, the chance of food borne illness is present in food that has been tasted. Do not re-use the food. Discard the food, and clean the lunch box thoroughly. *Note: Sometimes children are hungry or cranky on the way home from child care. Resist the dangerous temptation to feed the child food from the already used lunch box.*
- You will want to know what your child ate at their child care meal(s). Ask staff if the center might provide you with a daily eating sheet that helps you know how much the child ate.
- Clean your child's lunch box daily. Be sure to use a disinfectant.
- Pack a little extra love in the lunchbox. Send a token of your affection in the lunch box. This can be a little picture you draw on a piece of paper, a simple note, a picture of you printed from the computer, or something you cut out of the news or from a magazine.



Mealtime Application of Erikson's Stages of Development

Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD and Janice Fletcher, EdD

Directions: Read the Erikson handout.

A. Think about these two principles:

- 1) Children decide how much to eat.
- 2) Children should serve themselves.

Write a brief explanation of how these two principles are supported by Erikson's theory.

B. Add at least one strategy under each of the four stages given in the handout.

Infant:

Toddler:

Early Childhood:

Middle Childhood:



RESPONSIVENESS, MEALTIMES, and HEALTHY EATING

Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD, Janice Fletcher, EdD and Amy Kowash

Children develop best when the environment is RESPONSIVE. Mealtimes in group settings are most successful for children when the people, the food, and the setting are responsive. Are you reading children's cues!!!!

STRATEGIES

WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF ADULTS AT THE TABLE?

Children need adults to eat with them. This provides opportunities for modeling. Adults help teach children hygiene and social conventions. When a relaxed, responsive adult is near, children are more likely to feel relaxed and secure. Children need adults to keep them safe, including giving support to hygiene, watching for possible choking hazards, and helping children negotiate conflicts.

USE PARENTS AS VOLUNTEERS AT MEALTIMES

Hold a parent workshop on feeding children. Model best practices by having new volunteers sit with you at one of the children's tables. Be sure to give them things to read about feeding, such as [How to Get Your Kid to Eat, But Not Too Much](#) by Ellyn Satter (Bull Publishers, San Francisco).

TALK, LISTEN, and WATCH

Observe language and be responsive to the child's vocabulary and understanding of the meaning of words. Be aware of the words you use. The words you use casually may be new words to the children.

Learn children's thoughts about food by analyzing the vocabulary they use. Note how they put foods into categories. Listen to what children say. Reply with an intentional response rather than a casual response. Reflect on the cue the child gave you, and then respond.

HOW MUCH???????

Teach children how to determine bite size. Talk with them about serving size and how much they pick up with their eating utensils. Make child size eating utensils available. Choose serving utensils that hold a small serving size. (An ice cream scoop works great for many foods!) Provide plates that are about the size of salad plates. Children need smaller servings than adults do. If you serve the children's plates, ask them to tell you how much to put on the plate.



A WORD ABOUT GAGGING AND CHOKING

When children gag or choke because they have too much in their mouths, tell them to “spit it out!” This is not a time to teach about bite size. This is a time to keep the child safe. After the child recovers from the emotional trauma of choking, talk about bite size, chewing, and swallowing. Later, remind the child about “the time you choked.” Have a gentle conversation with them about how much food to put safely on the eating utensils, and then follow up with modeling and direction at the table.

Be strict about enforcing rules to prevent choking. Some common rules are: sit on your bottom while you eat; finish chewing and swallowing before you leave the table; stay out of other children’s space while they are eating, and do not talk while you are chewing.

“I WANT TO SIT BESIDE YOU WHEN WE EAT, OK?”

Mealtimes are social events. Use community style service where children serve themselves from bowls and pour their drinks from pitchers. Arrange the eating environment so children can serve themselves and share the process of getting food. Even two year old children can serve part of their meals. If self-serving the whole meal is impossible or impractical, make at least some things self-served. At the very least, give the children opportunities to say how much goes on their plates.

KNIFE, FORK, SPOON, or FINGERS!!

Give children knives, forks, and spoons and serving utensils, bowls, and pitchers. The opportunity to use these allows children to exercise muscles, develop skills that are socially valued, and be more efficient in eating. Remember that children’s muscles are under construction! Strength and endurance are not yet established. Choose a time to teach about how to hold and use utensils when children are relaxed and their muscles are not fatigued. Talking about how to use the utensils works best when children are not too hungry and not too tired. Small group times are good for talking about serving yourself and using utensils. Offer knives, forks, and spoons for a small group activity, when the children are not so hungry, and let them practice different ways of using utensils.

“MY HAND IS DIRTY!”

Make opportunities for children to learn rules about eating and hygiene that are appropriate for “mine,” “yours,” and “ours.” Teach about hygiene when children serve themselves. Help children to use “mine,” “yours,” and “ours,” as they learn how to avoid cross contamination. Washing hands and faces are necessary.

Teach children to thoroughly wash before and after eating. Teachers are models. As teachers and children wash, teachers can describe what children are doing. “You are using warm water and soap. You are washing between your fingers.”

Responsiveness (cont.)

A WORD ABOUT NAPKINS

Even very young children know when their faces are dirty and they know when their hands are messy. They feel it and they see it! Make napkins available. Help children use them when they let you know they feel dirty.

“WHAT IS THIS WHITE STUFF?” AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

Help children learn about food and how food helps them grow and have energy and good health. Have conversations about where foods come from and how certain foods give us more energy, and how other foods help us have strong bones. Talk about which ones help us run faster and which ones help us grow taller. (Be sure you know the difference in which foods affect energy and which affect growth.) If you do not know which foods do what, give general information. For example, say, “Food keeps us healthy,” or “Food helps us grow,” or “Food gives us energy.”

Be a model who tastes foods that are new to children. Your efforts at tasting, and then telling about the food, will give children courage to try the new food. Note that peers are effective models, as well. But be careful not to compare how or what children eat. Eating and coming to understand food is an individual issue.

Remember foods may be new to the children, though they are commonly known in your culture or environment. Give names to foods. Talk about how foods are similar to ones the children already know. Talk about the characteristics of food and help children make simple food categories. “These grapefruit pieces are tangy, just like the orange we had the other day.”

Integrate food activities throughout the day. Include food and food “talk” in dramatic play, stories and books. Introduce new foods in looking and tasting games, where children get to try foods without having to worry that the food is their meal. (Have napkins near in case children really dislike the taste.)

Teach about foods and categories in the food pyramid, but do not expect children to conceptualize the pyramid. Include the words “grains, vegetables and fruits, meats, and dairy products.” Typically, young children do not think in the abstract. Most do not understand the hierarchy of the food pyramid. They can, however, begin to put foods in categories.

Avoid using the terms “good food” and “bad food.” Talk instead about how our bodies *need* grains, fruits and vegetables. Be sure to help children assign names and discover similarities and differences as they learn about food.

CAUTIONS

AVOID FORCING CHILDREN TO EAT

Do not force children to eat. Monitor comments to children about amounts they eat. Subtle forcing is as hurtful as is obvious forcing. Have someone make notes of comments you make at the table with children. Analyze your comments to see what messages you send to children about eating. Be aware of phrases that hinder a child in developing self-regulation.

SERVING SIZE

If you must serve the children's plates, do not serve large portions. Be careful of size of second helpings. Though a child may ask for more, do not assume the child wants an extra big amount or even as much as was in the first serving. Give the child a choice of how much! Offer small size plates for young children.

ACTIVE MOVEMENT

Pay attention to healthy eating habits and active movement. Teach children about how our bodies need food to help us move. Then be sure you model moving with the children. Plan active movement activities and time for active play in your schedule. Plan very active outdoor play, everyday, if possible.

ADULT ROLE

Avoid standing, walking around the tables, or doing multiple tasks while the children eat. Arrange people, the serving bowls, and the children so that mealtime provides the pleasure of sitting down together in a relaxed fashion.

Do not make lunch break time for staff. This is time for adults to respond and support children's attempts at successful eating. Be mindful of children's cues and respond with as much thought as you would use in other parts of the curriculum day. If you must take a break at mealtime, advocate that those who eat with the children follow good practices.

Sensibilidad de respuesta a las necesidades de los niños a la hora de las comidas

Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD, Janice Fletcher EdD, and Amy Kowash

Los niños se desarrollan mejor cuando el ambiente es SENSIBLE. Las horas de las comidas en ambientes grupales son más exitosas para los niños cuando las personas, la comida, y la distribución del ambiente son sensibles a sus necesidades.

ESTRATEGIAS

CUÁL ES EL PAPEL DE LOS ADULTOS EN LA MESA?

Los niños necesitan que los adultos coman con ellos! Esto proporciona oportunidades para modelar comportamientos. Los adultos enseñan a los niños higiene y convenciones sociales. Es más probable que los niños se sientan relajados y seguros cuando un adulto relajado está cerca. Los niños necesitan a los adultos para que los mantengan a salvo, incluyendo el darles apoyo respecto a higiene, posibles riesgos de atoro, y conflictos que los niños negocian.

UTILIZE A LOS PADRES DE FAMILIA COMO VOLUNTARIOS A LAS HORAS DE LAS COMIDAS

Sostenga un taller de entrenamiento para padres de familia acerca de alimentación infantil. Modele las practicas más apropiadas sentando a los voluntarios nuevos junto con Ud. a una de las mesas de los niños. Asegúrese de darles cosas para leer tales como Cómo hacer que su niño coma pero no demasiado de Ellyn Satter (Publicaciones Bull, San Francisco).

HABLE, ESCUCHE y OBSERVE

Observe el lenguaje y sea sensible a las necesidades de vocabulario de los niños y a su comprensión del significado de las palabras. Sea consciente de las palabras que usa. Las palabras que Ud. usa de manera casual peden ser palabras nuevas para los niños.

Entérese de los pensamientos de los niños acerca de alimentos mediante el análisis del vocabulario que ellos usan. Note cómo ponen los alimentos en categorías. Escuche atentamente lo que dicen. Piense cuidadosamente sus respuestas en lugar de responder en forma casual.



Responsiveness (cont.)

CUÁNTO???????

Enseñe a los niños cómo determinar el tamaño de un bocado. Hable con ellos acerca del tamaño de una porción y de cuánto recogen con sus utensilios para servir. Mantenga disponibles cubiertos de tamaño apropiado para niños. Escoja utensilios de servir que contengan porciones pequeñas (Una cuchara para servir helado funciona muy bien!). Los niños necesitan porciones más pequeñas que los adultos. Si Ud. sirve los platos de los niños haga las segundas y terceras porciones más pequeñas que las cantidades iniciales. Si Ud. sirve los platos de los niños pídale a ellos que le digan cuánto poner en su plato.

UNA PALABRA ACERCA DE NAUSEAS Y ATOROS

Si los niños tienen nauseas y se están atorando porque tienen demasiado en su boca, dígalos "Escúpelos!". Este no es el momento para enseñarles acerca del tamaño de un bocado. Este es un momento para mantener al niño a salvo. Después de que el niño se recupere del trauma emocional de atorarse, hable del tamaño de un bocado, masticar, y tragar o pasar el bocado. Haga recordar al niño de pensar acerca de cuánta comida poner en los utensilios de comer de manera segura.

Sea estricto acerca de imponer reglas para prevenir atoros. Algunas reglas comunes son: siéntate mientras comes; termina de masticar y pasar la comida antes de dejar la mesa; mantente fuera del espacio de otros niños mientras ellos están comiendo.

"QUIERO SENTARME A TU LADO CUANDO COMAMOS, ESTÁ BIEN?"

Las horas de las comidas son grandes eventos sociales. Use servicio estilo familiar. Arregle el ambiente alimentario de modo que los niños puedan servirse solos y compartir el proceso de obtener alimentos. Si es imposible o impráctico que se sirvan solos toda la comida, haga que se sirvan solos por lo menos algunas cosas. Como mínimo déle a los niños oportunidades para decir cuánto va en sus platos.

CUCHILLO, TENEDOR, CUCHARA, o DEDOS!!

Déle a los niños cuchillos, tenedores, y cucharas. La oportunidad de usar todos estos tres permite a los niños ejercitar músculos, desarrollar habilidades que son valoradas socialmente, y ser más eficientes en comer. Recuerde que los músculos de los niños están en construcción! Fuerza y resistencia aún no están establecidas. Provea utensilios de servir, jarras, y tazones de tamaño apropiado para niños. Enséñeles acerca de cómo sujetar y usar los utensilios cuando los niños estén relajados y sus músculos no estén fatigados. Hablar de cómo utilizar los cubiertos y utensilios funciona mejor cuando los niños no tienen mucho

Responsiveness (cont.)

hambre y no están muy cansados. Momentos de grupo pequeño son buenos para hablar acerca de servirse solos y utilizar cubiertos y utensilios.

“MI MANO ESTÁ SUCIA!”

Enseñe a los niños acerca de qué es TUYO, MÍO, y NUESTRO. Haga oportunidades para que los niños aprendan las reglas acerca de comer y de higiene que son apropiadas para “tuyo, mío, y nuestro”. Enséñeles acerca de higiene cuando se sirven solos. Ayúdeles a determinar qué es “tuyo, mío, y nuestro” y cómo evitar contaminación cruzada.

Enseñe a los niños a lavarse las manos correcta y completamente antes y después de comer. Las profesoras pueden modelar esto! Asegúrese de describir lo que los niños están haciendo mientras se van lavando las manos. “Estás usando agua tibia. Te estás lavando entre los dedos”.

UNA PALABRA ACERCA DE SERVILLETAS

.Aún los niños más pequeños saben cuando sus caras están sucias y ellos saben cuando sus manos están sucias. Ellos lo sienten y lo ven! Tenga servilletas disponibles. Ayude a los niños a usarlas cuando ellos le dejan saber que se sienten sucios.

“QUÉ ES ESTA COSA BLANCA?”

Ayude a los niños a aprender acerca de los alimentos. Modele probar alimentos que son nuevos para los niños. Recuerde que los alimentos pueden ser nuevos para ellos, a pesar de ser comúnmente conocidos en el ambiente. Nombre los alimentos. Hable acerca de cómo los alimentos son similares. Hable de las características de los alimentos y ayude a los niños a formar categorías de alimentos.

Integre actividades alimenticias a través del día. Incluya alimentos y “conversación de alimentos” en el juego dramático, historias, y libros. Enseñe acerca de los alimentos y de las categorías de la Pirámide de Alimentos, pero no espere que los niños conceptualicen la pirámide. Incluya las palabras: granos, vegetales, y frutas, carnes, y productos lácteos. Típicamente, los niños pequeños no piensan en abstracto. La mayoría no entiende la jerarquía de la pirámide. Sin embargo, ellos pueden empezar a poner alimentos en categorías. Evite usar los términos “buenos alimentos” y “malos alimentos”. En lugar de eso hable de cómo nuestros cuerpos *necesitan* granos, frutas, y vegetales. Asegúrese de ayudar a los niños a asignar nombres y descubrir similitudes y diferencias en tanto que aprenden acerca de alimentos.



Responsiveness (cont.)

ADVERTENCIAS

EVITE FORZAR A LOS NIÑOS A COMER

No obligue a los niños a comer. Monitoree comentarios hacia los niños acerca de las cantidades que ellos comen. Forzamiento subrepticio es tan dañino como forzamiento obvio. Haga que alguien tome notas de los comentarios que Ud. hace en la mesa con los niños. Analice sus comentarios para ver qué mensajes está Ud. enviando a los niños acerca de comer. Esté consciente de frases que dificultan que un niño desarrolle auto regulación.

TAMAÑO DE LA PORCIÓN

Si Ud. tiene que servir los platos de los niños, no les sirva porciones grandes. Sea cuidadoso acerca del tamaño de las segundas porciones. A pesar de un niño puede pedir más no asuma que el niño quiere una cantidad extra grande o ni siquiera tanto como había en la primera porción. Déle al niño la opción de escoger cuánto desea.

ROL del ADULTO

No haga del almuerzo su hora de descanso. “éste es momento de responder y apoyar los intentos de los niños de ser exitosos en comer. Si Ud. debe tomar un descanso a la hora de la comida, insista que aquellos que comen con los niños sigan buenas prácticas. Evite pararse, caminar alrededor de las mesas, o hacer tareas múltiples mientras los niños comen. Organice las personas, tazones de servir, y los niños de manera que el placer de sentarse juntos esté asegurado.



REVIEW OF FEEDING ENVIRONMENT

Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD, Janice Fletcher, EdD, Marilyn Swanson, PhD

This evaluation can be used to quickly review your feeding environment for young children. Each statement has three choices: Already doing, Making progress, or Not planning to.

- *Already doing* means that you are already practicing this concept.
- *Making progress* means that you have implemented the concept on some level. For example, you've discussed the concept with staff or ordered materials.
- *Not planning to* means that for your program, the concept simply doesn't work or you don't agree with it.

This review will be most helpful if it is filled out cooperatively among staff instead of by an outside reviewer.

Planning

1. **Staff receive training about feeding young children.**
Already doing *Making progress* *Not planning to*
Reason:
2. **All staff have a role in meal planning.**
Already doing *Making progress* *Not planning to*
Reason:
3. **Staff talk with each other about children's eating.**
Already doing *Making progress* *Not planning to*
Reason:
4. **Mealtime plans meet developmental needs of children.**
Already doing *Making progress* *Not planning to*
Reason:
5. **Staff talk with parents about children's eating skills.**
Already doing *Making progress* *Not planning to*
Reason:
6. **Staff learn food customs and patterns of all children in the program.**
Already doing *Making progress* *Not planning to*
Reason:
7. **Budget is adequate to provide food to meet children's hunger needs.**
Already doing *Making progress* *Not planning to*
Reason:



8. **Adequate food is available for children to eat until satisfied.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
9. **Resources about children's eating are available to staff.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
10. **Resources about children's eating are available for parents.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:

Food Safety

1. **Children wash hands before and after eating.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
2. **Children wash hands with warm, running water.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
3. **Adults wash hands often, including before and after mealtimes.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
4. **Foods served are free of common choking hazards.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
5. **Skills are taught for hygienically passing foods.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
6. **Adults respond with corrective measures when children cross-contaminate food.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:

Utensils and equipment

1. **Hand washing facilities are child level and in proximity to tables where children eat.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:

2. **Children sit at child-sized furniture.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
3. **Children have ample space at the table.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
4. **A variety of utensils is available for serving and eating.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
5. **Serving utensils are balanced and sized for ease of use by children.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
6. **Children eat with child-sized utensils.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
7. **Children eat on small plates.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:

Routines

1. **Eating routines are established.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
2. **Food is offered every 2-1/2 hours to 3 hours.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
3. **Children have opportunities to wait, but not too long.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
4. **Adults eat with children (from the same menu).**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
5. **Adults observe children's skill levels and use the least intrusive level of assist.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:

6. **Children serve themselves.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
7. **Children determine how much, if any, they will eat.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
8. **Children are encouraged, but not forced to taste new foods.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
9. **Adults talk with children about the characteristics of foods, especially new foods.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
10. **Adults do not offer rewards, tangible, or intangible, for eating.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:
11. **People talk and smile at mealtimes.**
Already doing Making progress Not planning to
Reason:



Task Analysis for Children Serving Themselves

Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD and Janice Fletcher, EdD

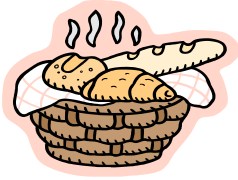
Task	Child's Skills	Equipment Needed	Adult Strategies

Un Análisis De Tareas Niños Sirviéndose Solos



Habilidades Infantiles	Equipo necesario	Estrategias de las profesoras

Janice Fletcher, EdD and Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD



SKILLS FOR SERVING SELF

Janice Fletcher, EdD and Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD

Children learn a variety of skills for serving themselves. Here are some of those skills that you can help children acquire.

Hold and physically pass the bowls or pitchers.

Bowls with rims and pitchers with covers make beginning attempts at this task more forgiving.

Pass the bowls or pitchers so they are successfully received by someone else.

Children need reminders to look at the person who is passing or receiving the bowl or pitcher. Toddlers can start “passing” with the teacher who is already skilled in looking. Toddlers and even young threes need to be reminded to look. They are busy learning the task of holding and at the same time moving the bowl of food or pitcher of milk. They may be unable to simultaneously focus on the third task of watching the other person in the duet of passing.

Judge space for the bowls or pitchers.

Judging size of a bowl or pitcher and how much space it will take is a task best learned through trial and error. Children learn how far from the edge to place a bowl, so it does not become imbalanced and fall.

Efficiently use serving utensils.

Provide utensils that are balanced, fairly lightweight, and have short handles that are small enough for young children’s hands to grasp all the way around. Try lightweight ice cream scoops, small tongs, small ladles, and spoons that have deep bowls.

Direct requests and needs to people using give and take of conversation.

Teachers help by eating with children, modeling conversational give and take, and suggesting words to use when asking for foods.

Wait their turns.

Be sure there are several pitchers or bowls on the table so waiting is not too long. Match the skills the children have for waiting, the number of children at the table, and the number of serving bowls.



Balance serving containers while they serve from them.

This means not dumping the food out of the container as they serve themselves. Consider putting small amounts of food in pitchers and bowls and increasing the amounts as the child gets more skilled. Neither children nor adults enjoy the interruption of spills!

Spoon food from a serving dish without using their fingers to steady food in the bowls.

Provide appropriate child friendly utensils and bowls with rounded sides that offer space to push food with the utensil against the rounded sides of the bowl.

Judge amounts of how much to put on their plates.

The initial novelty of serving self sometimes is reflected in children over serving their plates. This is usually short lived and resolves itself when children routinely serve themselves. To help children learn to judge amounts for pouring and scooping, try offering pouring and scooping activities at the sand or water table. Set out some pitchers and cups and glasses with water for a small group time. These non-food pouring/scooping activities give children practice.

Judge amounts of how much is in the bowl for children at the table.

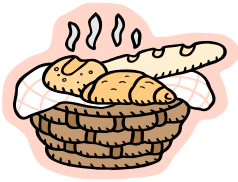
Make sure there is plenty of food for children to get full. Sometimes you may run out of a desired food. With children older than three, it is appropriate to talk about how much is left. Discuss how we can each have a small bit of the remaining food, if we are still hungry. Give the option of eating some or not. Tell the children that you will be sure the food is served again. For younger children, remove the bowl from sight and redirect the child to more plentiful food.

Know the difference in serving utensils and personal eating utensils.

This skill is combined with the skill of delaying eating until they have switched hands from the serving utensils to their own spoon or fork. Make a definite and obvious difference in the size of the utensils they eat with and the size of the serving utensils. Choose forks, knives, and spoons that are child sized. Provide forks that have dull tines, spoons with rounded, blunt ends, and knives with rounded ends.

Keep themselves and others safe from cross contamination.

Hand washing is an obvious skill here. This includes techniques for proper hand washing as well as knowing WHEN to wash. This task includes using napkins instead of licking their hands, using only their own plates and flatware, and keeping their food on their plates.



HABILIDADES PARA SERVIRSE SÓLO

Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD and Janice Fletcher, EdD

Los niños aprenden una variedad de habilidades para servirse solos. Aquí hay algunas de esas habilidades que Ud. puede ayudar a que los niños adquieran.

Sujetar y físicamente pasar los tazones o jarras.

Tazones con bordes y jarras con cubiertas hacen intentos iniciales menos difíciles.

Pasar los tazones o jarras de modo que sean recibidos exitosamente por alguien

Los niños necesitan recordatorios para mirar a la persona a quien están pasando o de quien están recibiendo el tazón o jarra. Los niños menores de dos años pueden empezar a “pasar” con la profesora, quien ya es diestra en mirar. Los niños menores de dos años, e inclusive los niños que recién han cumplido tres años, necesitan que se les recuerde que miren. Ellos están muy ocupados aprendiendo la tarea de sujetar y mover simultáneamente el tazón de comida o la jarra de leche. Puede que ellos no sean capaces de enfocarse al mismo tiempo en la tercera tarea de mirar a la otra persona en el dueto de pasar.

Calcular el espacio para los tazones o jarras.

.Calcular el tamaño de un tazón o jarra y cuánto espacio tomará es una tarea mejor aprendida a través de ensayo y error. Los niños aprenden qué tan lejos del borde colocar el tazón de modo que no termine perdiendo el equilibrio y cayéndose.

Utilizar eficientemente los utensilios de servir.

Proporcione utensilios de servir que sean balanceados, bastante ligeros, y que tengan asas cortas que sean suficientemente pequeñas para que las manitos de los niños pequeños pueden sujetarlas envolviéndolas completamente. Haga la prueba con cucharas de helados ligeras, tenazas pequeñas, cucharones pequeños y cucharas hondas.

Dirigir requerimientos y necesidades a las personas usando el dar y recibir de la conversación

Las profesoras ayudan comiendo con los niños, modelando comportamiento conversacional de dar y recibir, y sugiriendo palabras a usar al pedir los alimentos.

Esperar por sus Turnos

Asegúrese de que hay varias jarras o tazones en la mesa de modo que la espera no sea demasiado larga. Haga coincidir las habilidades que los niños tienen para esperar, el número de niños a la mesa, y el número de tazones de comida para servir.

Balancear los recipientes de servir al mismo tiempo que se sirven de ellos

Esto significa no derramar la comida fuera del recipiente mientras se sirven. Considere poner cantidades pequeñas de comida en jarras y tazones y aumentar las cantidades a medida que el niño se hace más hábil. Nadie disfruta la interrupciones producidas por los derrames, ni los niños ni los adultos!

Usar una cuchara para sacar comida del plato de servir sin usar sus dedos para estabilizar la comida en los tazones.

Proporcione utensilios apropiados, de uso fácil para niños y tazones con bordes redondeados que ofrezcan espacio para empujar alimentos con el utensilio en contra de los lados redondeados del tazón.

Calcular cantidades de cuánto poner en sus platos.

La novedad inicial de servirse sólo a veces se refleja en que los niños se sirvan demasiado en sus platos. Esto es usualmente por un corto plazo y se resuelve sólo cuando los niños se sirven sólo rutinariamente. Para ayudar a los niños a aprender a calcular cantidades para verter y sacar con cuchara, trate de ofrecer actividades de verter y sacar con cuchara en la mesa de agua o la caja de arena. Disponga algunas jarras, tazas y vasos con agua para un momento de pequeño grupo. Estas actividades no relacionadas con comida, de verter y sacar con cuchara proporcionan práctica a los niños.

Calcular cantidades de cuánto hay en el tazón para los niños a la mesa.

Asegúrese de hay bastante comida para que los niños se satisfagan. A veces se le puede acabar un alimento deseado. Con niños mayores de tres años, es apropiado hablar de cuánto queda. Discuta como todos podemos tener cada uno un poquito de lo que queda, si es que todavía tenemos hambre. Déles la opción de comer o no comer. Dígales a los niños que se asegurará que ese alimento sea servido otra vez. Para los niños más pequeños, retire el tazón de su vista y redirija al niño hacia alimentos más abundantes.

Conocer la diferencia entre utensilios de servir y utensilios personales de comer

Esta habilidad se combina con la habilidad de esperar para comer hasta que han movido sus manos de los utensilios de servir a su propio tenedor o cuchara. Haga una diferencia definitiva y obvia en el tamaño de los utensilios con los que comen y el tamaño de los utensilios de servir. Escoja tenedores, cuchillos, y cucharas de tamaño para niños. Proporcione tenedores que tengan dientes romos, cucharas con terminaciones redondeadas y gruesas, y cuchillos con terminaciones redondeadas.

Mantener a sí mismo y a los demás a salvo de contaminación cruzada.

El lavado de manos es una habilidad obvia aquí. Esto incluye técnicas para el correcto lavado de manos así como el saber CUÁNDO lavarse. Esta tarea incluye el uso de servilletas en lugar de lamerse los dedos, el uso de nada más sus propios platos y cubiertos, y el mantener su comida en sus platos.

Teaching Young Children to Serve Themselves in Group Settings

Janice Fletcher, EdD and Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD

Some people call it “family style service.” Others call it “children serving themselves.” We like to call it “community style service.”

What ever you call it, it means that containers of food are put on the table. Then, children pass a common container around the table, each taking some for their plates.

Sometimes a whole meal is available for children to serve themselves. Sometimes, part of a meal is available for self-service. The children may pour their drinks, though other food is pre-served.

Centers and family care providers use a variety of routines around self-serving, depending on the age or skills of the children. For example, they may initially serve small helpings on toddler’s plates, but put out bowls of food for self-service on seconds. This thoughtful approach helps toddlers get through the first few bites without having to wait for others. Waiting is a task that toddlers are learning!

There are so many benefits to children when they serve their own plates. They learn to be social, caring, and self-directed diners in group settings. The risks exist. Establishing routines and patiently helping children build skills for serving self help minimize these risks.

Enseñando A Los Niños Pequeños A Servirse Sólus en Situaciones Grupales

Janice Fletcher, EdD and Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD

Algunas personas lo llaman “servicio estilo familiar”. Otros lo llaman “niños sirviéndose sólus”. Nosotros lo llamamos “servicio estilo comunidad”.

Como sea que Ud. lo llame, esto significa que los recipientes de comida se colocan en la mesa. Luego, los niños pasan un recipiente común alrededor de la mesa, cada uno tomando algo para su plato.

Algunas veces una comida completa está disponible para que los niños se sirvan sólus. Algunas veces solo parte de una comida está disponible para auto servicio. Los niños pueden servirse sus bebidas, aunque otros alimentos son pre-servidos.

Las personas que proveen cuidado para niños en centros y en facilidades familiares usan una variedad de rutinas alrededor de auto servicio, dependiendo de la edad o habilidades de los niños. Por ejemplo, ellos pueden servir inicialmente porciones pequeñas en los platos de los niños menores de dos años, pero poner pocillos de comida para que se aumenten comida ellos sólus. Este cuidadosamente pensado enfoque ayuda a los pequeñitos a obtener los primeros bocados sin tener que esperar por otros. Esperar es una tarea que los niños muy pequeños están aprendiendo!

Hay muchísimos beneficios para los niños cuando ellos se sirven sus propios platos. Ellos aprenden a ser comensales auto dirigidos, sociables, y considerados en ambientes grupales. Los riesgos existen. Estableciendo rutinas y ayudando pacientemente a los niños a servirse sólus se desarrollan destrezas para servirse sólus y se minimizan estos riesgos





Lunch Box Tips for Parents: What to Pack for Young Children in Childcare

Janice Fletcher, EdD, Beth Price, Samantha Ramsay, PhD, RD, LD, Laurel Branen, PhD, RD, LD

Foods in children's lunch boxes can provide the nutrients children need to support their growth and development. Those foods also provide children with enjoyment and pleasure at mealtimes, especially when children are given the opportunity to taste and eat foods they like, while also being exposed to new foods.

Here are suggestions that offer safe foods and optimize nutrients in a child's lunch:

- Never pack foods that are choking hazards. These include:
 - Hard raw vegetables and fruits such as raw carrot sticks or raw celery sticks
 - Whole grapes
 - Nuts and seeds
 - Firm, hard raisins or other dried fruit
 - Hot dogs
 - Large chunks of cheese or meat
 - Hard candy and chewing gum
 - Chunks of peanut butter
 - Marshmallows
- Prevent choking. Chop food into cubes that are no bigger than ½ inch diameter for children over three and ¼ inch for children under three.
- Aim to offer foods from low-fat meat and dairy sources.
- Select whole grain breads, cereals, and crackers.
- Offer fruits and vegetables.
- Carefully select beverages that are high in nutrients. Milk is the preferred beverage for children. Check to see if your child's center offers milk, or at least refrigeration for the lunch box, so that you can send milk for your child. If you send fruit juice in the lunch box, send 100% fruit juice, not juice cocktails or juice punch.
- Children's lunch boxes can include a dessert that is healthy and nutritious. Examples are oatmeal cookies, or pudding that has added (fortified) calcium. Read labels.
- Avoid packing foods that are high risk for causing food borne illness, unless the center has equipment to keep cold foods cold and equipment to reheat foods to appropriate temperatures. Even the best lunch boxes rarely keep foods cold enough to be safe.
- **These foods must be kept cold during storage:** milk, hummus, cheese spreads, dressing or dips, lunch meat, yogurt, eggs, cheese, pasta salad, juice box or reheated leftover meals such as lasagna/spaghetti, cooked vegetables, soup, chili, casseroles, cooked vegetables.
These foods are safe at room temperature: crackers, whole fruits, cereal, bread sticks, unopened fruit cups, scones, muffins, breads.



Foods to Pack in Lunchboxes for Children in Child Care

Samantha Ramsay, Janice Fletcher, Beth Price, Laurel Branen

Select one from each category below

SANDWICH/ENTRÉE/SOUP

Thinly spread peanut butter and jelly sandwich Tuna, turkey, ham, beef, cheese or egg salad sandwich Hummus pita or wrap Chicken noodle or tomato soup Cream cheese sandwich Fish filet sandwiches *Chopped boiled eggs	Chili Lasagna/spaghetti/ravioli Pizza *Chicken pasta salad Tortilla with cheese and refried beans Chicken or turkey wrap Black beans and rice
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GRAIN/BREADS

Graham crackers Fish crackers Scones Muffins Biscuits Cornbread	Cereal English muffins Pita bread *Granola bar Couscous salad Rice
--	---

FRUIT

Whole bananas *Peeled and sliced peaches, apricots, pears, and plum *Strawberry quartered Tangerine, orange, or grapefruit sections *Raspberries Cooked apples	Blueberries *Fruit cups in water or light syrup *Dehydrated fruit *Pineapple chopped into quarter inch cubes Kiwi *Blackberries quartered *Mango and papaya
---	---

VEGETABLE

Cooked green beans *Chopped salad with dressing (spinach, lettuce) *Slivered carrots *Cucumbers chopped in 1/4 inch cubes *Shredded jicama and dip	Potato wedges Sliced tomatoes *Chopped red, yellow, and orange peppers Cooked broccoli Corn *Black and green chopped olives
--	--

MILK/DAIRY

Milk *String cheese or cheese in 1/4 or 1/2 inch cubes	Cottage cheese Yogurt
---	--------------------------

BEVERAGE

Milk Flavored Milk	Water 100% Fruit Juice
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*Be sure to prepare these foods to prevent choking hazards. For children under age three, chop into pieces no bigger than 1/4 inch in diameter. For children under age five, chop into pieces no bigger than 1/2 inch in diameter.



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MILK/DAIRY

Milk *String cheese or cheese in 1/4 or 1/2 inch cubes	Cottage cheese Yogurt
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BEVERAGE

Milk Flavored Milk	Water 100% Fruit Juice
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