

Six Principles for

Feeding Young Children in Group Settings

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

- 1. Adults set the feeding environment**
 - a. Physical environment**
 - b. Emotional environment**
 - c. Auditory environment**
- 2. Children need a variety of foods**
 - a. Work towards variety**
- 3. Adults should sit with and eat with children**
 - a. Model eating foods**
 - b. Provide safety- physical and psychological**
 - c. Teach and model social skills**
- 4. Adults select what is served and how it is served**
 - a. Consider nutrition**
 - b. Consider what children can eat**
 - c. Avoid choking hazards**
- 5. Child chooses how much, if any, to eat**
 - a. Reinforce internal hunger and fullness cues**
- 6. Children should serve themselves**
 - a. Reinforce internal hunger and fullness cues**
 - b. Adults eyes are bigger than children's stomachs**

Seis Principios Para Alimentar A Niños En Situaciones Grupales

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- 1. Los adultos disponen el ambiente para la alimentación**
 - a. Ambiente físico**
 - b. Ambiente emocional**
 - c. Ambiente auditivo**
- 2. Los niños necesitan una variedad de alimentos**
 - a. Trabaje en dirección de variedad**
- 3. Los adultos deberían sentarse y comer con los niños**
 - a. Modele comer alimentos**
 - b. Provea seguridad física y psicológica**
 - c. Enseñe y modele destrezas sociales**
- 4. Los adultos seleccionan lo que se sirve y cómo se sirve**
 - a. Considere nutrición**
 - b. Considere lo que los niños pueden comer.**
 - c. Evite riesgos de atoro.**
- 5. El niño escoge si es que va a comer y cuánto.**
 - a. Refuerce señales internas de hambre y saciedad.**
- 6. Los niños deberían servirse solos**
 - a. Refuerce señales internas de hambre y saciedad**
 - b. Los ojos de los adultos son más grandes que los estómagos de los niños.**

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Laurel Branen, PhD, LD, RD
Janice Fletcher, EdD
University of Idaho

Feeding children in group settings depends on understanding basic nutrition, basic child development, and basic food safety.

- ▶ [Feeding Young Children graphic](#)

Think about nutrition, child development, and food safety, as you consider the following six principles for feeding children in group settings.

Children need a variety of foods

**“Adults decide
what is presented to eat
and how it is presented”**
*(Satter’s Division
of Responsibility in Eating)*

Child decides
how much
and even whether to eat
*(Satter's Division
of Responsibility in Eating)*

Adults set the feeding environment

Children should
serve themselves

**Adults should
sit with children and eat
the same food**