

Family Style Meals Procedure

Purpose

This document provides information on how to serve family style meals.

Guidance

Meals and snacks in all Early Learning programs must be served family style. Children and classroom staff sit and eat the same foods together. Adults help pass foods from common platters and bowls around the table until everyone has been able to serve themselves each food. Early Head Start staff is expected to begin facilitating family style meals with toddlers. Adults will need to provide hand and verbal assists when children are beginning to use serving utensils and pass foods to others.

Benefits of family style meal service

- Helps maintain standards of behavior
- Respects child's food preferences
- Makes mealtimes pleasant and child centered

Procedure

How to serve family style meals

- Children and staff wash hands.
- Child-sized serving utensils, bowls and plates are used.
- At least one adult sits at each table with children and monitors passing foods around the table.
- Adults honor a division of responsibility during mealtimes. Refer to *Division of Responsibilities* Handout.
- **Children must be offered foods twice for family style meals to be creditable.**
- This procedure will be followed during all field trips and other activities where a CACFP meal is served outside of the classroom.

During family style meals adults model these things:

- using the serving utensils
- trying unfamiliar foods
- taking child-sized portions
- conversing during mealtime

Refer to *Helping Young Children Learn How to Serve Themselves* Handout

Related Documents

Hand Washing Guidance

Serving Foods in the Classroom Procedure

Resources

Helping Young Children Learn How to Serve Themselves and Children's Skills for Serving Self:

http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/feeding/fortrainers/handouts/pdf/SR4_Helping%20children%20learn%20to%20serve%20themselves.pdf

Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility in Feeding:

<https://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/handout-dor-tasks-cap-2016.pdf>