



Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

CONTINUING EDUCATION
NUTRITION HOME ASSIGNMENTS

MAKING THE CASE FOR FAMILY STYLE DINING

UPDATED May 2019

Successful completion of this assignment will result in a certificate for 2 hours of continuing education.

Please Note: 4-C CACFP Continuing Education Nutrition Home Assignments are a benefit of participation in the 4-C CACFP. You must be currently enrolled in the 4-C CACFP to receive continuing education credit for these assignments.

4-C, 5 Odana Court, Madison, WI 53719
608.271.5242 1.800.292.2429
foodprog@4-C.org | www.4-C.org

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Making the Case for Family Style Dining

Feeding children while in care can be one of the biggest responsibilities that a provider faces each day. Menu planning, grocery shopping and meeting the CACFP requirements are just some of those responsibilities. However, with the introduction of the new USDA Meal Pattern (10/2017), we've seen many providers take on this challenge and do a very nice job. We also know providers strive to do what's best for the children in their care and use best practices whenever they can in their programs. The 4-C CACFP, believes that serving meals & snacks Family Style incorporates best practices into feeding children while in care.

Along with information on Family Style Dining, we will look at serving sizes and how serving Family Style gives children a *choice* as to what and how much they choose to eat. We in turn have asked providers who are currently serving Family Style Dining to share how they got started, share their challenges, their accomplishments and overall outcomes with the process. Now, let us begin.



Why Should You Serve Family Style?

"Family Style Dining encourages learning and development not only at the table, but away from mealtime as well. Children learn independence, social skills and other important habits that will last them throughout adulthood".

Types of Meal Service – Meals can be served either Pre-portioned or Family Style.

- **"Pre-portioned"** – means that the minimal requirement (or more) of food for each required component is prepared by an adult and given to each child on plate or tray". "All food must be served at the same time, including milk".
- **"Family Style Dining"** – meal service means that the food is placed on each table for each child to help him/herself. Children may then select the foods they want and the amount of each food they want. Providers should offer foods to children at different times during the meal to assure children are offered an opportunity to taste all foods and ensure minimum portions are available for each child. Providers also sit with children during the meal service to model positive meal time behavior, assist with serving food and encourage social development that goes along with feeding and sitting down to enjoy a meal".

The Science behind Family Style Dining

A University of Illinois College of Agriculture, Consumer and Environment Sciences (ACES) studied the feeding practices of two-to-five year olds in 118 child-care centers. They found that given the opportunity children who serve themselves are better able to regulate their intake of food by innately tuning into their own body's cues for hunger and satiety (fullness), than when food was *pre-plated*. The study stated that adults have a tendency to overestimate how much a child wants to eat, instead of serving what is a more appropriate serving for the age of that child.

What are providers who serve Family Style Dining are saying?

- Corrine - Serving Family Style brings children together, each child at their own skill level, allowing the child to develop and master serving themselves. Children can also observe other children and learn from one another. Children are more comfortable trying because it's the amount of food that they choose, until they become more familiar with a particular food. Children discover what they like and have an openness to try food when they portion it out for themselves.
- Emily - I gradually switched to Family Style Dining over time and has been using this approach for almost 10 years. It aligns so completely with my teaching philosophy. She says the question is not whether it's been successful, but why she didn't do it sooner. Emily feels the biggest benefit of serving Family Style is that it teaches children self-competency, autonomy, responsibility, social skills and a sense of community and cooperation.
- Susan –Serving Family Style shows respect for a child's ability to develop their own skills and take responsibility for feeding themselves.
- Debra – The children learn about not taking more than they think they need or think they'll eat. They learn about not wasting food.



How do providers set children up for success when introducing Family Style Dining?

- Denise – set up the environment for children to help with the setting of the table. During the meal children serve themselves and pass foods to one another. Children clean up their own placemat and put dishes into a tub and one child is responsible for washing the table. Denise plans her meal ahead of time, featuring Family Style vegetarian meals, made from scratch.
- Emily – take the time to find the appropriate serving dishes and utensils, such as tongs young children can operate, bowls small enough to pass, and milk serving containers with lids (such as a syrup pitcher).
- Lisa – I start out by putting food in the center of the table and serve the kids, from there they gradually gain the confidence to serve themselves.
- Emily - teach children how to prep food by peeling bananas, oranges and hardboiled egg or use a small butter knife to spread and slice soft foods like peanut butter and cheese. Prep some of the food at the table - it teaches them children the whole parts of the food, exploring textures and appearance of peels, stems and seeds and counting the slices and talking about how the food was grown.
- Nancy – Allow children to do what they're developmentally able to do, but realize that younger children may need assistance. For example, put milk or dish out food for children age two and under. Also, the older kids can help the younger kids by getting them more servings, and the older kids feel proud of helping.
- Emily - Involve the children in meal planning for the following week. Share information with the children about meal planning during conversations, but planning meals could also involve using photos, felt pieces of foods or store fliers to select foods. She also gardens with the children, so food can come straight from their garden, from the farmer's market or on occasion from a field trip taken together at the grocery store.



How do providers who serve Family-Style Dining overcome opposition that it takes longer to feed, it's messy, food gets wasted and it is too time consuming?

- Emily - it is our job to support children in exploring and mastering their environment and "our first environments" are "our bodies and our home". She says she can do everything faster, neater and better than a small child, but what will they learn if she does? Why waste time telling children they can't and must wait for you when you can

teach them to do for themselves. She'd rather take the time to let a 2-year-old pour milk themselves than deal with a 4-year-old insisting they can't do anything because they have been taught they are incompetent. The time she invests in Family Style dining, she feels enables the children to be fully engaged in learning and refining life skills - all of their senses are stimulated and math, science, and language are at play.

- Rhonda – Family style dining isn't more time consuming, there's actually more flow to the meal. Meals are for learning time. Children get better with spills, with not licking serving spoons, etc. with practice. Food is not wasted because they learn not to take more than they can eat.

Any suggestions for encouraging providers to make “Family Style” a part of their normal routine?

- Robin - Start with small steps, raise expectations over time and remember each child is developing at their own rate and skill level.
- Rhonda – Don't worry about the mess; it gets messy any way you serve meals. Try it, you may like it!
- Emily – Do what you can – do it gradually and see what works for you. Try one thing – experiment, and don't get discourage early. It takes time to establish a new habit or routine. Have fun with it!



Please view at home or go to your library to view the following videos.

Video on Family Style Dining - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rozAmarPSzU>

Where to buy equipment - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_O7xrNf6jk

Website - <http://www.environments.com>

How to start serving Family Style

1. Start by doing “pretend play”. Providers can talk about what goes into putting a meal together. Choosing foods, preparing them, sitting down at the table to eat and clean up. Children can then get a sense of the process that goes into feeding and mealtimes if they can pretend and practice threw play. E.g. – “Filling” a pitcher and “pouring”. “Scooping” using a spoon or ladle.

2. You can use “play” food, so children can decide what foods they want to eat. You can then expand on what foods should be on their plate to teach them what their bodies need to learn and grow. Use pictures, make cut-out collages, sample individual foods to taste and explore new foods.



3. Have children help pick out foods they would like to see on menus and add your own food choices to balance out the meals for optimal nutrition and variety. Have different “theme” days where Breakfast is served at Lunch, for “pajama” day. Have a “Meat-less Monday”, where children chose a type of “bean” or “meat alternate” to serve”. Create a “Make your own Salad bar” day, where children can assemble their own salad. Children can also be involved in the prep of salad items.
4. Make placemats with children so they have their own place setting. They can be laminated and washed with a soapy cloth to reuse.
5. Include children in meal prep by letting them wash, chop and stir the foods needed to prepare a meal or snack.
6. Allow children to set the table, assigning individual tasks to children at their skill level.
7. Meal service – When thinking about environment during mealtime, try to minimize distractions – No TV, play soft music, put flowers on the table, or have a child make a center piece. Start with the right equipment. Make sure to have the correct child-sized utensils – silverware, spoons, plates, pitchers and napkins as they can play a part in making meal time more enjoyable. Have multiple sets of utensils and serving spoons readily available in case a spoon falls to the floor. Children are learning and refining many developmental skills during the meal and need many opportunities to practice building on these skills.
8. Reserve extra servings of food for second helpings or in case the bowl of food gets contaminated.

9. Clean-up. Children as small as 1 year can take their plates to the sink. Provide a trash can for children to dispose of paper napkins and uneaten foods. Have a tub with a cart if possible for children to put their own plates, silverware, and placemat to be washed.
10. Assign a child to wash the table.
11. Creating a routine helps children to know the expectations of mealtime and that they have a role to play as they would in a family setting. Children like to help and have jobs to be included in the mealtime process.

Recognizing Servings and Healthy Portions

One important step to successful Family Style Dining is to be aware of serving sizes and what are healthy, appropriate portions for children. Part of learning about serving sizes and portions is to develop a *visual* awareness. What does a serving look like? The next step is to help children become aware of how much they are eating. Let's define the difference between a serving size and a portion size. A *Serving size* is a standard measured amount of food or drink such as one slice of bread or one cup of milk. A *Portion* size is the amount of food one chooses to eat at a meal or snack. Be aware that *portions* are determined by the eater, where *serving sizes* go according to set guidelines. **Serving sizes* are also designed to measure the *calories* and *nutrients* found in food.

Video on Portion Sizes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bzyKDzEDPg>

Portion sizes can be misleading, so in order to adequately provide the recommended serving, caregivers need to recognize a *standard* serving size and provide the children with an opportunity to eat portions appropriate for their age, gender and activity levels. E.g. we often misjudge grain serving unintentionally, allowing children to fill up on foods from this category, while not eating enough of the other food groups. A child 1-5 years only needs a ½ slice of bread. The standard serving size changes to one slice when the child turns 6 years old. Children 6-18 years only need 1 slice of bread to meet the serving size required at a meal or a snack.



CACFP Child Meal Pattern

Must serve the required components and serving sizes



Breakfast				
Must serve milk, vegetable or fruit, and either a grain or meat/meat alternate				
Food Components and Food Items	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-6	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 <small>(At-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)</small>
Fluid Milk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 year olds: Unflavored whole milk 2-5 year olds: Unflavored 1% or skim 6-18 year olds: Unflavored or flavored 1% or skim 	½ cup (4 oz)	¾ cup (6 oz)	1 cup (8 oz)	1 cup (8 oz)
Vegetables or Fruits <i>(or portions of both)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full-strength juice may only be used to meet the fruit or vegetable requirement at one meal or snack per day 	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Grains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be whole grain-rich, enriched, or fortified At least one serving per day must be whole grain-rich Grain-based desserts are not creditable <i>(Refer to the CACFP Grains Chart)</i> Cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce 				
Bread	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice	1 slice
Bread products such as biscuits, rolls, or muffins <i>Refer to the CACFP Grains Chart for options and serving sizes</i>	½ serving	½ serving	1 serving	1 serving
Cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, rice and/or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Ready-to-eat breakfast cereal (dry, cold)	¼ cup	1/3 cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Meat/Meat Alternates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not required at breakfast, but may be served in place of the entire grain component a maximum of three times per week 				
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz	1 oz
Cheese (natural and process; soft and hard)	½ oz (⅓ cup shredded)	½ oz (⅓ cup shredded)	1 oz (¼ cup shredded)	1 oz (¼ cup shredded)
Cottage cheese, ricotta cheese, cheese spread, cheese food	1 oz (⅓ cup)	1 oz (⅓ cup)	2 oz (½ cup)	2 oz (½ cup)
Large egg	¼ egg	¼ egg	½ egg	½ egg
Cooked dry beans or peas	⅓ cup	⅓ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Yogurt (regular and soy) <i>Must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces</i>	¼ cup (2 oz)	¼ cup (2 oz)	½ cup (4 oz)	½ cup (4 oz)
Peanut butter, soy nut butter or other nut or seed butters	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts or seeds	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz	1 oz
Tofu (commercially prepared) <i>2.2 oz. (1/4 cup) must contain at least 5 grams of protein</i>	⅓ cup (1.1 oz)	⅓ cup (1.1 oz)	¼ cup (2.2 oz)	¼ cup (2.2 oz)
Soy products or alternate protein products <i>Must meet the requirements in Appendix A to Part 226</i>	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz	1 oz



CACFP Child Meal Pattern

Must serve the required components and serving sizes



Lunch and Supper				
All five components required for a reimbursable meal				
Food Components and Food Items	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 <small>(At-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)</small>
Fluid Milk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 year olds: Unflavored whole milk • 2-5 year olds: Unflavored 1% or skim • 6-18 year olds: Unflavored or flavored 1% or skim 	½ cup (4 oz)	¾ cup (6 oz)	1 cup (8 oz)	1 cup (8 oz)
Meat/Meat Alternates				
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	1 oz	1½ oz	2 oz	2 oz
Cheese (natural and processed; soft and hard)	1 oz (¼ cup shredded)	1½ oz (¾ cup shredded)	2 oz (½ cup shredded)	2 oz (½ cup shredded)
Cottage cheese, ricotta cheese, cheese spread, cheese food	2 oz (¼ cup)	3 oz (¾ cup)	4 oz (½ cup)	4 oz (½ cup)
Large egg	½ egg	¾ egg	1 egg	1 egg
Cooked dry beans or peas	¼ cup	¾ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter or other nut or seed butters	2 Tbsp	3 Tbsp	4 Tbsp	4 Tbsp
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts or seeds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - May be used to meet no more than ½ the M/MA serving size - Must be combined with another M/MA to meet the full minimum serving size 	½ oz = 50%	¾ oz = 50%	1 oz = 50%	1 oz = 50%
Yogurt (regular and soy) <i>Must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces</i>	½ cup (4 oz)	¾ cup (6 oz)	1 cup (8 oz)	1 cup (8 oz)
Tofu (commercially prepared) <i>2.2 oz. (1/4 cup) must contain at least 5 grams of protein</i>	¼ cup (2.2 oz)	¾ cup (3.3 oz)	½ cup (4.4 oz)	½ cup (4.4 oz)
Soy products or alternate protein products <i>Must meet the requirements in Appendix A to Part 226</i>	1 oz	1½ oz	2 oz	2 oz
Vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May replace fruit, but must offer two different vegetables • Full-strength juice may only be used to meet the fruit or vegetable requirement at one meal or snack per day 	⅛ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Fruits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-strength juice may only be used to meet the fruit or vegetable requirement at one meal or snack per day 	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Grains				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be whole grain-rich, enriched, or fortified • At least one serving per day must be whole grain-rich • Grain-based desserts are not creditable (<i>Refer to the CACFP Grains Chart</i>) • Cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce 				
Bread	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice	1 slice
Bread products, such as biscuits, rolls, or muffins <i>Refer to the CACFP Grains Chart for options and serving sizes</i>	½ serving	½ serving	1 serving	1 serving
Rice, pasta, grains, and/or cooked cereals	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup

Snack				
Must serve 2 of the 5 components. Only 1 of the 2 components may be a beverage.				
Food Components and Food Items	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12	Ages 13-18 <small>(At-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters)</small>
Fluid Milk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 year olds: Unflavored whole milk • 2-5 year olds: Unflavored 1% or skim • 6-18 year olds: Unflavored or flavored 1% or skim 	½ cup (4 oz)	½ cup (4 oz)	1 cup (8 oz)	1 cup (8 oz)
Meat/Meat Alternates				
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz	1 oz
Cheese (natural and processed; soft and hard)	½ oz <small>(⅛ cup shredded)</small>	½ oz <small>(⅛ cup shredded)</small>	1 oz <small>(¼ cup shredded)</small>	1 oz <small>(¼ cup shredded)</small>
Cottage cheese, ricotta cheese, cheese spread, cheese food	1 oz <small>(⅛ cup)</small>	1 oz <small>(⅛ cup)</small>	2 oz <small>(¼ cup)</small>	2 oz <small>(¼ cup)</small>
Large egg	½ egg	½ egg	½ egg	½ egg
Cooked dry beans or peas	⅛ cup	⅛ cup	¼ cup	¼ cup
Peanut butter, soy nut butter or other nut or seed butters	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	2 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts or seeds	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz	1 oz
Yogurt (regular and soy) <small>Must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces</small>	¼ cup (2 oz)	¼ cup (2 oz)	½ cup (4 oz)	½ cup (4 oz)
Tofu (commercially prepared) <small>2.2 oz. (1/4 cup) must contain at least 5 grams of protein</small>	⅛ cup (1.1 oz)	⅛ cup (1.1 oz)	¼ cup (2.2 oz)	¼ cup (2.2 oz)
Soy products or alternate protein products <small>Must meet the requirements in Appendix A to Part 226</small>	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz	1 oz
Vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-strength juice may only be used to meet the fruit or vegetable requirement at one meal or snack per day 	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Fruits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-strength juice may only be used to meet the fruit or vegetable requirement at one meal or snack per day 	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup
Grains				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be whole grain-rich, enriched, or fortified • At least one serving per day must be whole grain-rich • Grain-based desserts are not creditable (Refer to the CACFP Grains Chart) • Cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce 				
Bread	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice	1 slice
Bread products, such as biscuits, rolls, crackers, or muffins <small>Refer to the CACFP Grains Chart for options and serving sizes</small>	½ serving	½ serving	1 serving	1 serving
Cooked breakfast cereal, cereal grain, rice and/or pasta	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Ready-to-eat breakfast cereal (dry, cold)	¼ cup	1/3 cup	¾ cup	¾ cup

Providers participating in the USDA CACFP should be aware of the Meal Pattern, required servings for Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Snack. Keep a copy of the meal pattern serving requirements handy and at your fingertips for an easy reference. For example, were you aware that the serving sizes for fruit or vegetables at Breakfast for a child 1-2 years is a ¼ cup and child 3-5 years is a ½ cup? However, for Lunch, it's a 1/8 cup for a 1-2-year-old and ¼ cup for a 3-5-year-old. It's important to be aware of the serving size differences, to make sure you have enough food on hand for each child. Providers should also be mindful of the different calorie needs for children of different ages. Children 2-3 years should consume 1000 calories per day, while children 3-5 years old should consume 1200-1400 calories per day. The *American Academy of Pediatrics* also notes that the more active the child, the greater need for more calories to be made available to the child. Always have enough food available to offer as seconds.

Another way to educate children about servings is to teach them about **MyPlate**, where half your plate is fruits and vegetables and the other half is your meat/meat alternate and grain. Children get the concept of portions, and a greater emphasis can be on made on making sure they get enough fruits and vegetables on their plates. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

In Summary - Feeding children is an **art**. Providers use many tools and strategies and have an awareness and exhibit sensitivity towards children to make meal times pleasant and assist children in mastering skills of successful eating/feeding.

Family Style Dining provides an opportunity where all those elements can come together to create a more enriching and meaningful experience for the children and the provider. The CACFP in turn helps support providers to achieve goals that improve the nutritional and developmental outcomes for children in the early years and beyond.

RESOURCES:

CACFP – Family Day Care Homes Monitoring Handbook – Definition of Family Style Dining and Pre-plated Meals - https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/Monitoring_Homes.pdf

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction – CACFP Child Meal Pattern https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/community-nutrition/pdf/gm_12c_meal.pdf

Choose My/Plate - <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Office of Head Start - National Center on Health – Health Services Newsletter – March 2015, Volume 3, Issue 3. - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/health-services-newsletter-201503.pdf>

Science Daily – Research News Journal article – January 14, 2014, Passing Bowls Family-style Teaches Day Care Kids to Respond to Hunger Cues, Fights Obesity – <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/14/0114090816.htm>

NPR Station- Eating and Health: January 21, 2014, - Why Letting Kids Serve Themselves May Be Worth the Mess – <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt2014/01/17>

Texas Child Care Quarterly – Summer 2017 Volume 41, No. 1 – In Support of Family-Style Meals – Kelsey J. Colburn - ChildcareQuarterly.Com

b. Describe below what your family style dining meal/snack was each day.

CONGRATULATIONS - YOU ARE DONE!

Please return the completed answer sheets to the 4-C CACFP office:

MAIL: 5 Odana Ct. Madison, WI 53719

FAX: 608-271-5380

SCAN/EMAIL: foodprog@4-C.org

Thank you for your participation in this Home Assignment
The 4-C CACFP Team!