

## Serving Family Style Meals

Happy Fall! November brings the beginning of the Holiday Season and lots of family gatherings. Sharing family meals is an important part of the holidays. Laughing together, sharing stories and news with each other makes for memorable meals. This month's training consists of two articles on serving Family Style meals in a day care setting.

If you serve Family Style at your Day Care, good for you! If you don't serve Family Style, consider the benefits outlined in these two articles. While it may seem easier to serve the children yourself, there are lots of reasons to make this change in your Day Care.

Thanksgiving is a good time to reflect on all that we are grateful for. The staff at Southwest Human Development Services would like to say thanks to you, our Providers, for all that you do. The children in your care are fed healthy nutritious meals every day through your efforts. With your love and guidance you are shaping the future for this next generation.

We wish you a happy, healthy and safe Thanksgiving!

The Austin Office: Blake, Brenda, Martin and Liz

The Field Staff: Symony, Julie, Barbara, Wende, Renee, Betsy, Nanette, Laurie, Marjorie, Chelsea, Rachelle, Nancy and Katina.



# Tips for Family Style Dining

## START WITH THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

When purchasing serving dishes, utensils and other place settings, keep in mind that they need to be kid-friendly and sized for little hands to maneuver.



## REMEMBER EACH CHILD'S SKILL LEVEL

when choosing your menu. Finger foods and foods that are easy to navigate with a child-size fork or spoon are easiest to self-serve for younger children.

**HAVE MULTIPLE SETS OF UTENSILS** and serving spoons in case someone drops one on the floor.

**GIVE EACH CHILD A TASK** to help set the table. One child can set the plates, one can place the cups and so on. Children have a sense of pride and belonging when they have a contributing role.

**OFFER A VARIETY OF FAMILIAR FOODS** and don't forget to introduce new foods. Children are more willing to try something new when they serve themselves.



**RESERVE EXTRA SERVINGS** for second helpings or in case the bowl of food gets contaminated.

**PROVIDE A TRASH CAN** for children in which to dispose napkins and uneaten food. Provide a tub for them to place dirty dishes after they scrape them off.

**KEEP CLEANING SUPPLIES NEARBY** Spills will happen. Be patient and use this opportunity as a teaching moment on how to clean-up.



Most importantly, **EAT WITH YOUR CHILDREN**. Children learn from good role models. Sitting with them while everyone eats also allows you to start positive mealtime conversations.

## Why You Should 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 through adulthood.

There are many benefits to serving your meals family style and it is not hard to implement. It may be as easy as putting the minimum serving of food required in serving dishes, placing it on the table and allowing children to serve themselves.

There is a learning curve to this method. However, this approach to mealtime creates a number of healthy habits that are important to the growth and development of children at any age. Children tend to eat more healthy foods if they see their friends try it. They learn skills such as taking turns, sharing and teamwork.

Family style dining opens up opportunities for conversation,

which increases vocabulary, promotes proper use of language and interaction with friends.

There are even more benefits that support healthy growth. Children learn:

- § portion sizes for each food group,
- § to recognize when they are hungry or satisfied,
- § how to identify healthy foods and where they come from, and
- § to improve fine motor skills.

Children are not the only ones who benefit. Providers get a better grasp of food costs, get help with mealtime service and, with less food being wasted, they save money.

There's nothing more exciting for children than being able to say, "I did it all by myself!"

- Jennifer from Mechanicsville, VA

## Family Style Meals:

### A New Way to Teach Healthy Eating Habits

Family style meal service can help achieve two of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) important goals: provide nutritious meals to children and help children develop healthy eating habits. Family style meal service allows site staff and children to eat together, creates a relaxing eating environment, and promotes healthy eating habits and attitudes toward food.

#### What is family style meal service?

When choosing to serve meals family style, all the foods needed to meet the meal pattern requirements are placed in serving plates or bowls on a table and children serve themselves or serve themselves with some help from site staff.

#### The Benefits of Serving Meals Family Style

There are many benefits that children and site staff enjoy when serving meals family style. Some of these include:

-  Children learn and practice social and motor skills such as taking turns, sharing, and passing, pouring and scooping foods;
-  Children may choose to take smaller portions of food and know they can take seconds if they want. The Institute of Medicine recommends serving meals family style because it creates a healthful eating environment that is responsive to children’s hunger and fullness cues;
-  Children are encouraged to try new foods by seeing other children and adults eating the them;
-  Site staff act as good role models for children by sitting at the same table and eating the same meal as the children;
-  Site staff and children can enjoy pleasant conversation with each other; and
-  Creates an intimate, sharing, family-like environment.

#### How to Serve Meals Family Style

Camps and closed enrolled summer sites have the option of serving meals family style because these settings provide a stable environment. This option is not allowed at open and open restricted SFSP and Seamless Summer Option sites.

Family style meal service offers sponsors flexibility in the initial serving sizes of the food placed on the table. However, sponsors must use this flexibility while following these practices:

1. Enough food must be prepared and placed on each table to allow for the minimum portion size of all required meal components for all children at the table and to accommodate any site staff if they eat with the children.





2. Some amount of each required meal component must be placed on each child's plate and at least the minimum regulatory portion must be offered to the child. This practice may be particularly valuable when children are being introduced to new and unfamiliar foods.
3. When a child does not initially take the full portion size required by regulations, site staff is responsible for actively encouraging the child to take the full portion size during the course of the meal.

## Tips for Serving Meals Family Style

-  Have all the food placed on the table at the beginning of the meal;
-  Think about children's ability to serve themselves. Some children may need more help than others, especially younger children. Seat those children near site staff. Start by letting children serve themselves something easy such as a piece of bread, then gradually increase the number and variety of foods they serve themselves;
-  Expects spills and show children how to handle them;
-  Encourage children to try new foods and praise them when they do;
-  Make positive statements when discussing the food and meal and encourage children to do the same. Avoid using negative or pressuring statements;
-  Provide adequate time for all children to finish eating;
-  Demonstrate good table manners and healthy eating; and
-  Start a conversation with the children at the table.

## Food Safety Considerations

There are a few food safety concerns sponsors should be aware of when serving meals family style. It is important to:

-  Keep food at the proper temperatures;
-  Use appropriate and clean containers and utensils to serve the meal; and
-  Make sure all site staff and children wash their hands.

Sponsors must make sure they know and follow their State or local health requirements for serving meals family style to prevent any possible food safety issues.

## USDA Resources:

### Regulations and Policies

-  **SFSP Regulations: Meal service requirements, 7 CFR 225.16**  
[http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=d87b1089e455f65409bd1dbf463b3686&node=pt7.4.225&rqn=div5#se7.4.225\\_116](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=d87b1089e455f65409bd1dbf463b3686&node=pt7.4.225&rqn=div5#se7.4.225_116)

-  **Meal Service Requirements, SP 13-2015 (v.2), SFSP 05-2015 (v.2), Summer Meal Programs Meal Service Requirements Revised Q&As- Revised, January 12, 2015**



# Family Style Dining

Post Test – November 2018

**Please keep this test and certificate in your files for Licensing.  
You do not need to send it in to our office or the State.**

1. Family Style Dining creates a number of \_\_\_\_\_ that are important to the growth and development of children at any age.
2. Family Style Dining opens up opportunities for conversation which increases \_\_\_\_\_, promotes proper use of language and interaction with friends.
3. When purchasing serving dishes, utensils and other place settings, remember that bigger is better.  
True or False?
4. Children have a sense of \_\_\_\_\_ and belonging when they have a contributing role in a meal service.
5. Children are more willing to try something new when they serve themselves.  
True or False?
6. With Family Style Dining all the foods needed to meet the meal pattern requirements are placed in serving plates or bowls on a table and children serve themselves with no help at all from the adults, EVER.  
True or False?
7. Children learn and practice social and \_\_\_\_\_ such as taking turns, sharing and passing, pouring and scooping foods.
8. Adults can act as good \_\_\_\_\_ for children by sitting at the same table and eating the same meal as the children.
9. Enough food must be prepared and placed on the table to allow for the minimum portion size of all required meal \_\_\_\_\_ for all the children served.
10. Family Style Dining is a great opportunity to demonstrate good table manners and healthy eating.  
True or False?



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THIS CERTIFICATE

for completion of 30 minutes of training in

### **November 2018: Family Style Dining**

A SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL COURSE

(Quiz on reverse side must be completed for certificate to be valid)

This Family Day Care Provider supports the commitment to  
Quality Child Care as demonstrated by completion of this course

Given this date \_\_\_\_\_

Elizabeth Curtis  
Training Coordinator  
Southwest Human Development Services