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**FISCAL YEAR 2006
CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM
OPERATIONAL MEMO #14**

TO: Child and Adult Care Food Program Institutions

FROM: Mary Ann Chartrand, Director
Grants Coordination and School Support

DATE: February 7, 2006

SUBJECT: Mealtime Memo for Child Care

Enclosed are three issues of the *Mealtime Memo for Child Care*. The titles are, "Budgeting Basics," "Proper Food Preparation Techniques," and "Celebrating Diversity, Nurturing Respect."

Developed by the National Food Service Management Institute, these publications reinforce the importance of the Food Guide Pyramid and emphasize that physical activity will help children grow healthy. Subsequent issues of the *Mealtime Memo for Child Care* will be provided when published.

If you have any questions regarding this publication you may contact the Child and Adult Care Food Program staff at (517) 373-7391.

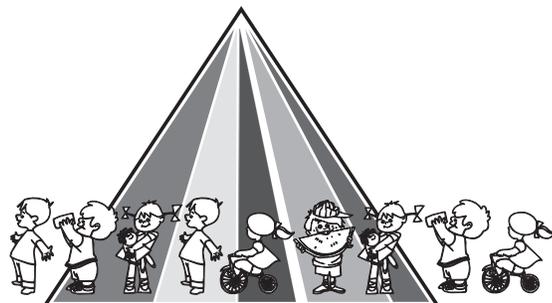
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Mealtime Memo

FOR CHILD CARE



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Budgeting Basics

A well planned budget will help assure you always have adequate resources to provide healthful meals that meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) requirements to the children in your care. A budget can help you make the most of the resources you have.

Aspects of a Budget

A budget is a plan for spending. When you plan your budget, it is important to:

- Write your budget down.
- Plan your budget for a specific period of time.
- State the budget in financial terms.
- Identify all revenues and expenses.

To develop a budget it helps to understand:

- the budgeting process
- your state budgeting requirements
- the benefits of a budget
- the factors that impact the budget
- how to budget an item
- how to check and adjust the budget

Why should I prepare a budget in the first place?

A budget is important to the success of your childcare foodservice program. It identifies:

- Money that is available to cover the cost of foodservices. This is your revenue, such as CACFP reimbursement, cash-in-lieu of commodities, or grants.
- How much you will be spending. These are your expenditures.

Think of the budget as a financial tool that can help you:

- Set future goals.
- Evaluate activities.
- Estimate how much can be expected from CACFP reimbursements and other revenue sources.



- Establish how funds need to be spent.
- Measure results.
- Identify problem areas that need attention.

What factors impact the budget?

There are several items to consider as you plan your budget.

Past Trends

- Similarity or differences in meals served over the past two or three years
- Changes in number of special functions/catering over the past year
- Increases or decreases in daycare enrollment
- New houses or apartment units, or a business moving to or leaving the area
- Changes in income levels that impact reimbursement rates

Federal and State Subsidies and Grants

- Increases or decreases in federal reimbursement rates
- Changes in state support or any grants that you may have
- Likely dollar value of USDA-donated commodities

Operational and Program Changes

- Any new federal program rules that might increase costs
- Any plans you have that will lower labor costs
- New grant funds available for your foodservice

Increased or Decreased Program Expenses

- Increases or decreases in the price of food, supplies, or services
- Any staff raises that are planned
- Increased or additional benefits such as health insurance



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How do I budget for items?

Some items such as food items should be based on need. Labor, insurance, contracts, and other items can be adjusted to provide for price changes.

Where do I start with my budget?

If the budget is going to be a useful tool it is important to:

- Create a realistic budget.
- Review the budget with the foodservice staff before it is finalized.
- Establish that the budget will be used to evaluate the food program.

The following steps are necessary during the planning process:

1. Establish long-term goals.

- Set goals for what should occur in the program over the next three to five years.

2. Develop a budget plan.

- Determine budget categories for revenues and expenditures.
- Decide what reports to use to help create and analyze your budget.
- Decide how much to budget for a particular item or category.

3. Project revenue based on these factors.

- The amount of money available from local, State, and Federal sources.
- Determine how an increase in reimbursement rates will affect your revenue.
- Identify other revenue sources, such as grants, interest, rebates, sale of equipment.



4. Estimate expenditures carefully.

- The heart of planning the budget is estimating expenses for the year. Make every effort to be accurate.
- A worksheet with a breakdown of each expense category may be helpful.

5. Budget for the entire year.

- It is best to break down the year by months, and then add the months to determine a total annual budget.
- Remember, some months have more holidays.
- The time of year will impact food costs.

How can I tell if I am on track with my budget?

You should check your budget against actual monthly expenses. Comparisons of a category may show trends or change. For example, are your enrollment rates as expected? Were actual food costs higher or lower than what you budgeted?

Two averages that are useful for comparisons because they take into account changes in daily participation and the number of child care days are:

- Average monthly food cost per child
- Average daily food cost per month



When should I adjust the budget?

It is important to check and adjust your budget monthly. Do not wait until the end of the year. It is much better to discover a problem early so it can be solved.

Questions to ask:

- Have I checked program costs according to categories (food costs, labor, and equipment)?
- How do my costs in the foodservice operation compare to standards for other programs?
- (In the case of centers) Have I involved the foodservice staff? Do they have an understanding of the importance of cost controls to the success of the operation?

An effective budget can make you a better manager and will help you improve and grow your program.



Sources

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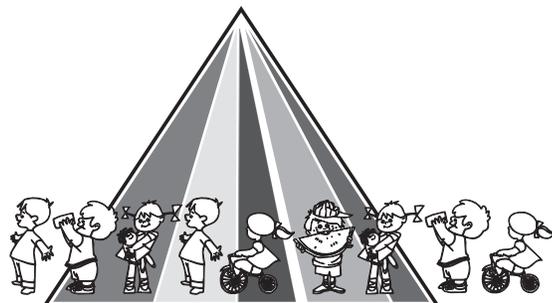
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Proper Food Preparation Techniques



Healthy meals begin with well planned menus and quality ingredients. Proper food preparation is important in achieving appealing meals and good nutrition.

Keep Food Safe, Healthy, and Appealing

Good food handling practices will help you keep food safe, healthy, and appealing.

Properly freeze, thaw, prepare, cook, cool, and serve all foods offered to children.

- Follow food safety rules about storage, temperature controls, hygiene, and sanitation.
- Follow local health department codes.
- Leave room for air to move around stored food in the refrigerator, freezer, and storeroom.
- Cover all food in the refrigerator and freezer.
- Date all foods and use oldest foods first.
- Limit added salt, fat, and sugar in preparation.
- Use herbs, spices, marinades, stocks, and fruit and vegetable juices to add flavor.
- Make shapes, size, color, texture, flavor, and quality of foods appealing to children.

Fruits and Vegetables

Storing

- Cover refrigerated fruits and vegetables.
- Store fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator between 34-36 °F with a humidity between 85-90%.
- Blanch or fully cook fresh fruits and vegetables before freezing.
- Store potatoes, onions, and uncut winter squash in a cool, dry place at 45-50 °F, at room temperature for only 1 week.

Washing

- Use cold running water to wash all fresh fruits and vegetables.

- Scrub firm produce such as apples and potatoes with a brush.
- Do not wash with detergent or soap. This can leave a film.
- Do not soak fresh produce. Important nutrients can be lost in the water.

Pre-Cut/Trimmed Produce

- Purchase amounts that can be used within 5 days for peak quality.
- Store and keep produce in the refrigerator in its original bag. The bags are designed to maintain quality and freshness.
- Use pre-cut produce quickly. Quality will not last long once the package is opened.
- Wash all pre-cleaned, trimmed produce.

Cooking Methods (See Cooking Methods for Meat/Meat Alternates)

Cook fruits and vegetables just in time to serve. Remember to serve fresh without cooking, too. For highest quality, do not hold cooked vegetables more than 20 minutes.



Blanching

- Blanch vegetables that are served cold.
- Cook food in boiling water for a short period until just tender but still crunchy.
- Drain vegetables and put them in cold water or ice to stop the cooking process.

Boiling and Steaming

- Boil and steam vegetables and grains.
- Cook food in steam from a little boiling water.
- Cook broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage without a lid to keep their bright color.



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Canned and Frozen Vegetables

- Cook canned vegetables to heat through. Canned vegetables are fully cooked during the canning process.
- Cook loosely packed frozen vegetables, such as whole kernel corn without thawing, if desired.
- Thaw frozen vegetables in a solid pack such as spinach and collards until they break apart easily so they will cook evenly.
- Partly thaw frozen broccoli spears so they will cook more evenly.
- Prepare vegetables in small batches to prevent overcooked or broken pieces.



Grains/Bread

- Use long grain rice if you want loose rice.
- Use medium and short grain rice if you want rice to stick together.
- Freeze bread rather than storing it in the refrigerator. Refrigerated bread stales.
- Use an oven thermometer to check the oven temperature. For best results, use the temperature given in the recipe.
- Weigh ingredients when possible. It is more accurate than measuring.

Meat/Meat Alternates

Freezing

- Freeze items you do not plan to use within 2 days (1 day for fish) of purchase.
- Make sure freezer temperature is at 0 °F or below.

Thawing

- Thaw what you need for 1 day only.
- Thaw all foods in the refrigerator. Never thaw foods at room temperature or in warm water.
- Remove original wrapper to shorten thaw time; cover loosely.
- DO NOT refreeze thawed foods.

Cooking Methods

Poaching and Simmering

- Poach and simmer large cuts of meat, chicken breast, and fish and fruits such as apples.
- Cover foods with a liquid such as water, stock, or juice.
- Cook at a low even temperature just below the boiling point.

Braising and Stewing

- Braise and stew less tender cuts of meat.
- Begin by browning the meat on all sides.
- Simmer slowly in a liquid.

Roasting and Baking

- Use for fish and large tender cuts of meat.
- Roast vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, cauliflower, zucchini, and others.
- Bake winter squash, sweet potatoes, grains, and casseroles.
- Cook food uncovered and brush with liquid.



Sautéing and Stir-Frying

- Sauté and stir-fry meat, fish, and vegetables.
- Use small amount of oil.
- Use very high heat for a shorter period of time.

Resources for Food Preparation

- *Child Care Recipes: Food for Health and Fun*. Available at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/childcare_recipes.html
- *Culinary Techniques: Cooking with Flair Online Instruction*. Available at www.nfsmi.org/interactive/culindex.html



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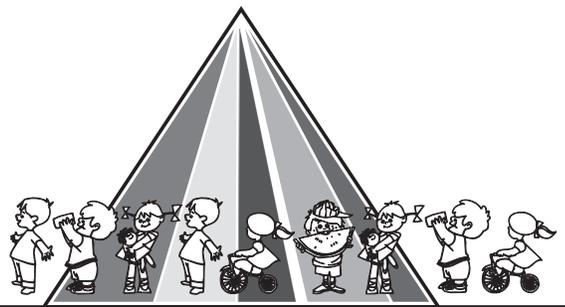
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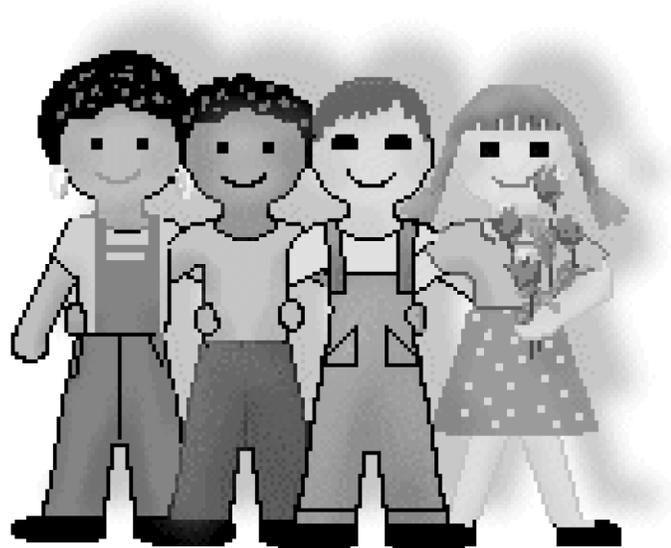
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Celebrating Diversity, Nurturing Respect

It's a world of differences

As our world becomes increasingly diverse, we must help children get along with others from different races, groups, and backgrounds.

“Diversity” means “variety,” the wide range of differences between and among individuals and cultures.



Be a positive role model

Children become aware of the attitudes and bias of their family, friends, and caregivers at an early age.

- How comfortable do you feel with people of different races or cultures?
- How about people who have a handicap or disability?
- How comfortable do you feel talking about differences in religious beliefs or child rearing practices?
- What do you know about the cultural backgrounds of the families and children in your care? How could you find out more?

Awareness and knowledge are skills we can use to respect and appreciate diversity.

Children are our best teachers

Children provide wonderful opportunities for discussing diversity because they forthrightly ask a lot of questions.

“Why is that girl’s hair so curly?” “Why does that boy have such dark skin?” “Why is that lady wearing that funny outfit?”

Noticing differences is natural; it only becomes a problem if a negative value is attached to the difference.

You can use the children’s questions and incidents that may happen during the day as an opening to talk about differences and about being fair and kind in their dealings with each other.

How do you teach children about respect?

- Help children feel good about themselves. Children who have poor self-images are more likely to develop prejudices.
- Encourage them to see strengths in themselves and others.
- Talk about “stereotypes” – judgments made about another based on their physical appearance or cultural heritage. Talk about how unfair such judgments are.
- Discuss any hurtful incidents that happen. Let the child find solutions. Encourage the child to think about how the other person might be feeling.
- Make “no teasing and no name-calling” a firm rule. Often young children do not know the meaning of the words that they use, but they do know that certain words will get a reaction from others. Children need to learn that such language can hurt. Putting others down hurts the other’s feelings and does not help the child feel better about himself.



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Provide a culturally diverse environment

One way to celebrate diversity is to literally make it the background for every day activities.

- Use wall-art and posters featuring different racial and cultural groups, sex, and physical abilities. Show people not just in traditional garb but also in everyday clothing.
 - Provide books that show a wide variety of people at work and play. Choose images that show a balance of men and women doing similar jobs, and include people with disabilities.
 - Provide dolls, particularly baby dolls to care for, of different skin and hair colors.
 - Provide dress-ups and items for dramatic play that depict both male and female and a balance of cultures.
 - Provide paints, crayons, and other art materials that can be used to show a wide range of skin tones.
 - Enjoy ethnic celebrations, art, food, and music from different cultures. Play music from many different cultures and let children dance and sing along.
- Make appreciating individual styles and cultural differences part of everyday routine.

Celebrate diversity with the holidays!

Holidays are another way to learn about cultural differences. Different cultures celebrate in different ways. Within cultures, individual families frequently have their own unique traditions as well. Be sensitive to different customs and traditions children may have.

All cultures celebrate with food. Let the children help with planning the food and activities for special celebrations as much as possible. If the children have been actively involved in planning, it increases their excitement and enjoyment and they are more apt to try foods that are new for them.



No big deal

When diversity is celebrated everyday in many different ways, children see differences as “no big deal.”

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USDA Cooperative Extension System's National Network for Child Care Web site at <http://www.nncc.org>

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