TO: Child and Adult Care Food Program Institutions

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

DATE: February 12, 2007

SUBJECT: Mealtime Memo for Child Care

Attached are four issues of the Mealtime Memo for Child Care. The titles are, “Make Mealtimes Happy Times,” “Establishing Healthy Habits Early,” “Healthy Snacks for Kids,” and “Steps to Planning a Nutrition Education Activity.”

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 memorandum, you may contact the Child and Adult Care Food Program staff at (517) 373-7391.

Please keep this memo on file or in a notebook for quick and easy reference.
Mealtime Memo
FOR CHILD CARE

No. 11, 2006

Make Mealtimes Happy Times

Mealtime Environment
Imagine mealtime in a child care center or child care home. What do you see?

Ideally you should see relaxed, happy children and teachers sitting together enjoying both the food and company.

Creating a pleasant mealtime requires planning and a few strategies.

Strategies for Happy Mealtimes
Family style dining is one strategy that helps create a pleasant mealtime. In family style dining, all food is placed in serving bowls on the table and children are encouraged to serve themselves or serve themselves with help from an adult. The adult child care givers or teachers sit at the table with the children. Children and child care givers practice good manners and enjoy talking to each other.

How can you make family style dining relaxed and pleasant?

- Establish regular meal times.
- Establish a regular routine around mealtimes. Use a transition activity such as circle time, story time or music, or letting children help to set the table between active play and a meal.
- Make sure children know what to expect at meal times. When children understand what will happen next and how they are expected to behave, they can relax during the meal. Children also respond well to clear expectations of table behavior. Children learn to share and to be polite to one another at the table.
- Don’t expect young children to eat without an occasional spill. Be prepared and wipe up the spill without a fuss.
- Children should not be rushed through their meal. Careful planning and experience will let you know how much time the children need to eat in a relaxed setting.

Pleasant Conversation
Encourage pleasant conversation focusing on the child’s interests and experiences.

You can also use the time to teach the children about the food being served. You can talk about what kinds of foods are being offered, what color the foods are, how they are prepared, if the children eat these same foods at home, where the foods come from, and related topics.

Don’t focus on which foods a child has chosen or how much a child has eaten. If the meal is about to end, you can ask the children if they have had enough to eat or remind them when the next meal or snack will be offered.

Children can relax when they know they will never be asked to eat something they don’t want or to eat more of a food than they want.
Sugar Cookies B-04*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margarine or butter</td>
<td>¾ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1½ cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh large eggs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanilla</td>
<td>1½ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk 1%</td>
<td>3 Tbsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriched all-purpose flour</td>
<td>3½ cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking powder</td>
<td>1½ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baking soda</td>
<td>¾ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>¾ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground nutmeg (optional)</td>
<td>½ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground cinnamon</td>
<td>½ tsp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cream margarine or butter and sugar in a mixer with paddle attachment for 10 minutes on medium speed. Add eggs, vanilla, and milk. Mix on medium speed for 1 minute until smooth. Scrape down sides of bowl. Mix for 30 seconds on medium speed.

In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, nutmeg (optional), and cinnamon. Gradually add dry ingredients to the creamed mixture. Mix for 1 minute on low speed until blended.

Lightly coat each half-sheet pan (13” x 18” x 1”) with pan release spray or line with parchment paper. Portion with a No. 30 scoop (2 Tbsp) in rows 3 across and 3 down. For 25 servings, use 3 pans (1 pan will have only 7 cookies). Bake until light brown: Conventional oven: 375° F for 12 minutes; Convection oven: 350° F for 16 minutes.

Number of servings: 25
Serving size: 1 cookie

Candy-Cane Cookies

Using the Sugar Cookie recipe above, make a batch of cookie dough. Have the children help by mixing the dry ingredients, adding the flour mixture slowly to the batter while you stir, or helping gather the ingredients listed in the recipe.**

Divide the dough in half; blend ½ teaspoon red food color into one half. Shape 1 teaspoon dough from each half into 4-inch ropes. Roll them back and forth on lightly floured sheets of waxed paper to make them smooth and even. Place one rope of each color side by side, then twist them together. Place on a half-sheet pan (13” x 18” x 1”) lightly coated with pan release spray or lined with parchment paper (see above). Curve top of cookie to form the crook of the candy cane. Bake as directed in the recipe above.

**When cooking with children, always follow a few simple safety rules such as making sure they wash their hands before helping and whenever needed during the activity, finding a different activity for children with colds or runny noses, and only allowing an adult to use knives and electric kitchen appliances such as the oven or mixer.

Sources:
Establishing Healthy Habits Early

Good Habits for Healthy Bodies
To be healthy, children need nutritious foods and regular activity. Nutritious foods are those foods and beverages that provide the nutrients and energy children need for growth and play. Physical activity or play is the work of a child.

Help the children in your care eat healthy foods and be physically active.

Getting Children Off to a Good Start
MyPyramid for Kids shows ways children can eat right and be active. It shows a variety of healthy foods organized by food groups, and encourages activities such as sports, walking, and skating.

Here are some ideas from MyPyramid for Kids.

Eat Right:
• Make half your grains whole. Choose whole-grain foods, such as whole wheat bread, oatmeal, and low fat popcorn.
• Vary your vegetables. Go dark green and orange with your vegetables—eat spinach, broccoli, carrots, and sweet potatoes.
• Focus on fruits. Eat them at meals, and at snack time. Go easy on the fruit juice.
• To build strong bones, get your calcium-rich foods such as low fat milk and other milk products.
• Eat lean or low fat meat, chicken, turkey, and fish. Include dry beans and peas.
• Choose fish, nuts, and liquid oils such as soybean, canola, and olive oil.
• Don’t sugarcoat it. Choose foods and beverages that do not have sugar or sweeteners as one of the first ingredients.

Be Active:
• Set a good example. Be active and get the children to join you.
• Have fun together. Play with the kids or pets. Go for a walk, tumble in the leaves, or play catch.
• Set aside time each day as activity time. Walk, play ball, dance to upbeat music, or play outside. Children need about 60 minutes of physical activity everyday or most days.
• Move it! Instead of sitting in front of the TV, get up and move. Limit TV watching and computer time.
• Keep active games or sporting equipment such as balls, jump rope, and skates on hand for the children.

Let the children play and have fun outdoors. Get them in the activity habit early. By serving healthy foods and encouraging play, you will be getting the children off to a good start.
**Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples I-08***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canned cut sweet potatoes, in light syrup, drained</td>
<td>½ No. 10 can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned unsweetened sliced apples, drained</td>
<td>½ No. 10 can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown sugar, packed</td>
<td>¼ cup 2 Tbsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground cinnamon</td>
<td>½ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground nutmeg (optional)</td>
<td>½ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margarine or butter</td>
<td>2 Tbsp 2 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>¼ cup 2 Tbsp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Place sweet potatoes in 9” x 13” x 2” pan which has been lightly coated with pan release spray. Place apples over sweet potatoes. Combine brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg (optional). Sprinkle sugar mixture over the apples. Dot with margarine or butter. Add water. Bake: Conventional oven: 350°F for 25-30 minutes. Convection oven: 300°F for 15-20 minutes.

Number of servings: 25
Serving size: ¼ cup provides ¼ cup of vegetables and fruit.

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### Menus

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tuesday</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wednesday</strong></td>
<td><strong>Thursday</strong></td>
<td><strong>Friday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sloppy Joe on Whole Wheat Bun – F-12*</td>
<td>Toasted Ham &amp; Cheese Sandwich</td>
<td>Beef-Vegetable Stew – D-16*</td>
<td>Sliced Baked Turkey</td>
<td>Vegetable Chili – D-26*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole Kernel Corn</td>
<td>Orange Half Potato Salad – E-12*</td>
<td>Banana Slices in Strawberry Gelatin Crackers Milk 2%</td>
<td>Green Beans Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples – I-08*</td>
<td>Broccoli Salad – E-11* Cornbread Milk 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melon Cubes Milk 2%</td>
<td>Milk 2%</td>
<td>Milk 2%</td>
<td>Whole Wheat Roll Milk 2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*USDA Recipes for Child Care. Available online at www.nfsmi.org

**Sources:**


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Subscribe to *Mealtime Memo for Child Care* online at www.nfsmi.org and receive the link to download the newsletter via e-mail each month!!

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For more information, contact NFSMI at 800-321-3054 or www.nfsmi.org.
Healthy Snacks for Kids

Healthy snacks are an important part of children’s daily eating habits. Since children have small stomachs, they often can’t eat enough in three meals to get the calories and nutrients they need to grow. The number of snacks you serve depends on how long children are in your care.

Tips in Snack Planning:

1. Use the same principles in planning snacks as you would with meals: balance, moderation, and variety. You can use snack time to teach children from a young age that snacks can be healthy by

   - serving a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
   - choosing foods that are low or moderate in fat.
   - limiting salty food.
   - limiting dessert foods.

2. Time snacks so that two hours pass between each meal or snack. For example, if you serve breakfast at 7:30, you could serve a midmorning snack at 10:00 a.m. and then serve lunch at 12:00 p.m. If you serve breakfast later, you may not have enough time for a midmorning snack. You could give the children a midafternoon snack instead. You can be reimbursed for serving each child one snack per day.

3. Remember that the CACFP Meal Pattern for snacks requires foods from two different components. Plan snack menus that contain foods from at least two of the following groups:

   - Meat or Meat Alternate
   - Vegetable or Fruit or Juice
   - Bread or Bread Alternate
   - Milk

   Be sure to include foods from two different components. For example, carrot sticks and apple juice would not make a reimbursable snack, since both foods come from the same meal component.

4. Serve one beverage (either juice, milk, or water) at snack time. Since children have small stomachs, they may fill up on drinks and eat less food.

5. Satisfy different appetites with a variety of healthy foods.

   - **Sweet:** apple wheels or banana slices
   - **Crispy:** carrot sticks, cucumber strips, toast, or cereal mixed with nuts
   - **Warmth:** tomato soup
   - **Thirst:** vegetable juice or fruit and yogurt shakes
Muffin Squares A-11*

All-purpose flour, enriched 3 ¼ cups
Instant nonfat dry milk ¼ cup 2 Tbsp
Baking powder 2 Tbsp
Sugar ½ cup
Salt 1 tsp
Raisins (optional) ½ cup 2 Tbsp
Eggs, large 2
Water 1 ¼ cup 2 Tbsp
Vegetable oil ¼ cup 2 Tbsp

Combine flour, dry milk, baking powder, sugar, and salt in a mixing bowl. Mix 5 minutes on low speed. Add raisins (optional). In a separate bowl, combine eggs and water. Slowly add to dry ingredients while mixing on low speed. Mix only until dry ingredients are moistened, 15-20 seconds. Scrape down sides of bowl. Slowly add oil while mixing for 40 seconds on low speed. Do not overmix. Batter will be lumpy. Pour batter into a 9”x13”x2” pan which has been lightly coated with pan release spray. Bake until lightly browned. Conventional oven: 425° F for 20 minutes; Convection oven: 350° F for 15 minutes. Cut each pan 5 x 5 (25 pieces).

Number of servings: 25
Serving size: 1 piece provides the equivalent of 1 slice of bread.

Snack Menus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple slices</td>
<td>Lowfat yogurt</td>
<td>Granola bars</td>
<td>Dried apricots</td>
<td>Mini bagel with cream cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter**</td>
<td>Graham crackers</td>
<td>Juice</td>
<td>Muffin Squares – A-11*</td>
<td>Raisins***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td></td>
<td>Milk 2%</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Sunflower butter may be substituted for peanut butter.

***As a food activity, let the children make faces on the bagel with raisins. Remember that raisins can be choking hazards for very young children.

Sources:


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Nutrition education teaches children about foods and how they support good health. It helps children develop healthy eating habits and positive attitudes about foods. Nutrition education activities expose children to a wider variety of foods. Here are six steps to planning a nutrition education activity with children.

Steps to Plan a Nutrition Education Activity:

Step 1: Why
• Think about the lesson you want children to learn.

Step 2: What
• Choose an activity that will help children learn the lesson.
• Use different activities, such as arts and crafts, games, songs, cooking, and role playing.

Step 3: How
Think through the activity.
• Make a list of things you will need.
• Plan what you will do.
• Plan what the children will do.
Planning the activity step by step will keep the children busy rather than having to wait while you prepare the next step.

Step 4: When
• Decide on a time to carry out the activity.
• Use the activity as a transition before mealtime to teach the children something new about food.
• Keep in mind that children will not pay attention well if they are hungry or tired.

Step 5: Do the Activity
• Begin the activity by asking questions to find out what the children already know.
• Explain what they will do.
• Make the activity fun for children and caregivers.

Step 6: Follow-up After the Activity
• Ask questions to find out what children learned to reinforce the lesson.
• Remember to refer to this activity later to reinforce the lesson.
• Present a different activity at a later time to reinforce the same lesson.
• Start the follow-up lesson by talking with the children about what they learned in the original lesson.
• Songs and chants are great ways to reinforce nutrition lessons. Try making up your own song to a familiar tune.

Fun Nutrition Activities with Children

Talk about how potatoes grow. Pass around a whole potato and have the children sing, to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” I’m a potato, brown and round, brown and round, brown and round. I’m a potato, brown and round, growing in the ground.

Allow children to spread pizza sauce on half of an English muffin. Children can make a face on the pizzas with olives (eyes) and green pepper (smile). Provide grated cheese for hair.
**Mealtime Memo for Child Care**

**Tortilla Roll-Up F-07***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monterey Jack cheese, reduced fat, shredded</td>
<td>3 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour tortillas, enriched</td>
<td>12 8-inch (at least 1.8 oz each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken or turkey, cooked, chopped</td>
<td>1 qt 2 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild salsa, chunky</td>
<td>1½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions, fresh</td>
<td>1 Tbsp 2 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR ⅛ tsp dehydrated onions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red bell pepper, fresh, seeded, minced (optional)</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sprinkle 1 oz (½ cup) of shredded cheese on each tortilla. In a bowl, combine chicken or turkey, salsa, onions, and red pepper (optional). Spread 3 ½ oz (½ cup) of chicken or turkey mixture on tortilla. Roll tortilla like a jelly-roll. Place 6 rolled tortillas in each of two pans (9”x13”x2”) which have been lightly coated with pan release spray. Cover with foil. Bake: Conventional oven: 375°F for 15 minutes; Convection oven: 325°F for 15 minutes. Heat to 165°F or higher for at least 15 seconds. Cut each tortilla in half. Hold for hot service at 135°F or higher.

Number of servings: 24
Serving size: 1 roll-up (½ filled tortilla) provides 1⅛ oz of cooked lean meat and the equivalent of one slice of bread.

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**Lunch Menus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crispy baked chicken</td>
<td>Tortilla Roll-Ups - F-07*</td>
<td>Macaroni and cheese with ham – D-20A*</td>
<td>English muffin pizzas</td>
<td>Turkey spaghetti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oven baked potato wedges</td>
<td>Whole kernel corn</td>
<td>Baby carrots</td>
<td>Peas and carrots</td>
<td>Steamed broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach halves</td>
<td>Apple slices</td>
<td>Tropical fruit salad</td>
<td>Pear halves</td>
<td>and cauliflower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole wheat roll</td>
<td>Milk 2%</td>
<td>Whole wheat roll</td>
<td>Milk 2%</td>
<td>Plum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Milk 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Toasted French bread</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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