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Nutrition Activities for Preschoolers

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Learning outcomes

At the end of the session, the participants will be able to:

- Discuss appropriate meal service, including family style.
- List ways to integrate developmentally appropriate activities within daily routines and curriculum.
- List safety considerations for young children involved in food-related activities.
Food-related activities, including modeling and family-style meal service, can promote healthy eating habits that last a lifetime!

Breakfast Today

To the tune of:
“Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”

Breakfast, breakfast,
On my way,
Breakfast, breakfast,
Every day.
In the morning to start me right,
Breakfast is such a wonderful sight.
Breakfast, breakfast every day,
I eat breakfast once a day.
Family Style

- Help children to serve themselves and pass food to others.
- Offer appropriate portions at least two times.
- Begin development of table manners.
- Encourage pleasant conversation.

Mealtime set-up song

To the tune of:
“*This is the Way We Wash our Clothes*”

This is the way we set the table, set the table, set the table.
This is the way we set the table, ready for a meal.
This is where we put our plate, put our plate, put our plate.
This is where we put our plate, ready for a meal.
This is where we put our glass, put our glass, put our glass.
This is where we put our glass, ready for a meal.

Other verses: Napkin, Fork, Spoon, Knife
Adults provide. Children decide.

- Adults are responsible for providing nutritious appetizing food in an appropriate setting.
- Children are responsible for how much they eat.
- Serve all foods at one time.

Model healthy eating. Share the same menu.

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Children are encouraged to eat or taste each food.

- Offer each food at least two times during the meal.
- Get the food on the taste buds at least 15 times during the year!
- If you don’t like the food, try it; you might like it! Smile!
Wash hands

- Wash both big and little hands before handling food.
- Wear gloves when handling food.
- Adults or children who are ill or with open sores should not handle food.

Share food, not germs!

- Clean and sanitize eating area before and after each use.
- Supervise children to discourage sharing of food and utensils.
Prevent Choking

Why are young children at risk?

- Do not chew long enough.
- May not have back teeth to grind foods.
- Try to swallow too much food at one time.
- May have difficulty swallowing liquids and solids together.
- Have too much activity during eating.

Chew Chew Slowly

To the tune of: “London Bridge is Falling Down”

Chew your food, take tiny bites,
tiny bites, tiny bites.
Chew your food, take tiny bites,
Chew, Chew SLOWLY.

To the tune of: “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”

Chew, Chew, Chew your food,
Chew it very fine.
SLOWLY, SLOWLY, SLOWLY, SLOWLY,
Take your sweet ol’ time.
Food Safety

- Be aware of dietary restrictions such as food allergy or intolerance, cultural or religious preference, or food preparations.
- Avoid restricted ingredients in all food activities.
- Avoid foods that present choking risk.
Food activities with children

- Supervise all activities.
- Match tasks to children’s capabilities.
- Provide clear simple instructions, and demonstrate.
- Repeat instructions before the child begins a task.
- Incorporate cleanup with each job.

Food activities

- Provide opportunities to explore through the five senses.
- Provide opportunities to try new foods.
- Integrate nutrition with other curriculum domains.

Growing, Growing Strong! Fitness and Nutrition
www.redleafpress.org
Where does food come from?

- **Science**: count seeds, compare seeds, grow seeds

- **Language**: Read stories
  - Growing Vegetable Soup
  - Pancakes, Pancakes!

- **Math**: Count fruit and vegetable models

- **Art**: Sort fruits and veggies by color, shape, size, and feel.
Two-year-olds can...

*Tear, roll, pat, spread, shake, and stir!*

- Cooking activities should allow for taste, touch, sight, and smell.
- Use lots of color and texture.
- Let them explore their own combinations of food.

Three-year-olds can...

*Mix, pour, knead, pound, grate, chop, share, tear, pat, roll, stir, shake, place, and put!*

- Do things for themselves.
- Enjoy lots of movement.
- Use utensils that are not sharp or dangerous.
Two- and three-year-olds can…

- Wash hands
- Shuck corn
- Wash vegetables
- Snap beans
- Wipe table
- Tear lettuce
- Peel bananas
- Place items in trash
- Clear own table setting

Four-year-olds can…

Use recipe cards, sequence, follow directions, measure, weigh, take turns, cut, mix, pour, knead, pound, grate, chop, share, tear, pat, roll, stir, place, and put!

- Have some understanding of time.
- Begin to look at parts and whole.
- Learn about opposites.
- Understand simple graphs.
- Learn about their community and other cultures.
Orange Sipper

- Cut a seedless navel orange in half.
- Place one half in a zipper plastic bag. Remove all air and seal tightly.
- Let child squeeze the orange in the bag to release juice.
- Carefully open one corner of the bag. Insert straw. Drink and enjoy!

Food preparation three- and four-year-olds can...

- Break clean eggs into bowl
- Measure and mix ingredients
- Open packages
- Knead and shape dough
- Pour cereal, milk, and water
- Make sandwiches
- Toss salads
- "Wash" baking utensils
Food preparation five-year-olds can…

- Make muffins using prepared mixes
- Use blenders or hand mixers with close supervision
- Help make pancakes, scrambled eggs, and cereal
- Set and clear the table

Promoting healthy eating in early childhood forms the basis for a lifetime of healthy eating!
References


- Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, Third Edition (CFOC3) www.nrckids.org