
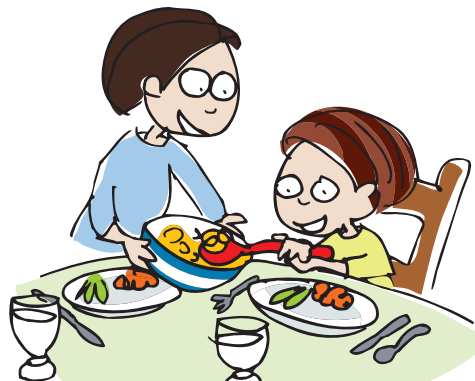


Family Style Meals Mythbusters

Myth	Reality
<p>Family style meals will cost more money and cause more work.</p> 	<p>Meals served family style do not cost any more than meals served preplated. In both cases, enough food must be prepared to provide every child the full portion of each food component served.</p> <p>Family style meals may end up being less work for you because the children will be serving themselves. This lets you and other adults stay at the table and enjoy the meal or snack with the children.</p> <p>You can have the children help you by teaching them how to set the table before the meal and clean up after the meal. They can also be taught how to clean up spills and other messes. Once they have learned how to do this, it will be less work for you and others.</p>
<p>The children in my care are too young for family style meals.</p>	<p>Many providers have reported success with family style meals with children as young as 2 years old.</p> <p>Start slowly by introducing one item served family style at a time during mealtimes and snacks, watching the children closely, and helping them when needed.</p>
<p>Children may serve themselves too much or too little food.</p> 	<p>Children can be guided to follow their hunger and fullness cues and be encouraged to eat accordingly. This is one of the benefits of family style meals: it allows children to control how much they want to eat. Remind the children that they can start with a small amount of food, and take more if they are still hungry.</p> <p>To encourage children to take appropriate portions for their age, use serving utensils that provide the amount needed for one serving. For example, if the meal pattern calls for ½ cup of fruit, and you are offering diced peaches, have children use a ½ cup scoop, ladle, or spoodle to serve the peaches.</p>

more 'family style meals mythbusters' on next page...



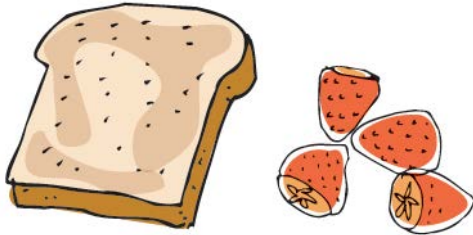
...more 'family style meals mythbusters'

Family Style Meals Mythbusters

Myth

Reality

We won't get our CACFP reimbursement if a child doesn't take the full servings required in the meal patterns. What if a child takes only one or two foods?



For reimbursement in family style meal service, CACFP requires that the full portion of each food component for every child be put on the table and offered to the children. Supervising adults should actively encourage (but not force) children to accept the full portion during the meal. If a child refuses to take one or more food components, he or she should be offered that food again before the meal is finished.

For the meal to be reimbursed, children are not required to take all components. They also do not have to consume the full portion of any components they take.

To encourage children to try foods from each component, use “Phrases That Help” in Supplement C: Encourage Healthful Foods from Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>

Our meals and snacks come pre-portioned from the caterer or vendor, so we can't serve family style.



Ask your caterer or vendor to deliver the food in serving bowls or containers, so that it can still be served family style. If that's not possible, have the children pass around foods that are not preplated, so they can still practice some aspects of family style meals.

Activities

How can I put family style meals into practice in my child care program?

Read through these tips below and check off the ones you would like to try. You can also circle the ones you have tried and had success with.

Practice makes perfect: During playtime, have children practice the motions and skills needed to serve themselves. These may include scooping objects into a bowl, using tongs to move objects from one dish to another, and pouring water. You can use items such as small toys, pretend food, sand, dried beans, or uncooked pasta. What other ideas will you try to help kids build skills for family style meals? _____

Start slowly: Introduce family style meals by starting with finger foods or cold foods during a snack or a meal. These foods may be easier for children to handle. What foods do you plan to start with when introducing family style meals to the children?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Set up, clean up: Show the children how to set the table for a meal and how to clean up afterwards. You can also show them how to clean up spills and other messes that they may make.

Allow plenty of time: Give children enough time to eat so mealtimes and snack times are relaxed, not rushed. Write in the amount of time for each meal:

- Breakfast _____
- Morning snack _____
- Lunch _____
- Afternoon snack _____
- Supper _____

Practice patience and persistence: Accept that meal times can be messy and it may take some time for children to fully develop the skills they need to successfully serve themselves. Keep in mind that this is normal and all part of the learning process. While it may be tempting to give up on family style meals, stick with them and they will soon pay off!

Send the message home: Send a letter to parents and caregivers that gives more information about family style meals. See “Connect with Parents” on the third page of this supplement.

Other ideas:

