The BASICS of Family Style Meal Service
Family Style Meal Service

- Provides many opportunities for children’s learning:
  - Self-Help Skills
  - Following Directions
  - Language Development
  - Letter Recognition
  - Social Skills
  - Math Skills
  - Nutrition
Is Foundational to Head Start and CACFP

- **Performance Standard: 1304.23(c)**
  - Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that nutritional services in center-based setting(s) contribute to the development and socialization of enrolled children by providing that:
    - A variety of food is served
    - Food is not used as punishment or reward and that each child is encouraged, but not forced to eat or taste his or her food
    - All toddlers and preschool children and assigned classroom staff, including volunteers, eat together family style and share the same menu to the extent possible.
CACFP Guidelines

- Enough food must be prepared and placed on the table to allow for the full portion size requirement for each child and adult to be served.

- When serving family style, all the foods to meet meal requirements should be on the table at the start of the meal.

- Children should first be offered the full required portion of each food. Children can make choices in selecting foods and the size of the initial servings.
Family Style Meals Teaches Good Eating Habits

- Children may choose to take a small portion of food, knowing that the food will still be available if they would like a second serving.

- Serving themselves gives children time to practice skills like passing, pouring and scooping foods. Taking turns, sharing and politely turning down foods are all part of the table manners children learn.
Family Style Meals Teaches Good Eating Habits

- Seeing new foods and watching others serve themselves encourages children who are often unsure about new foods to be more interested in the meal.

- Children do not see one food as more important than another.
The Components of Family Style Meal Service

- **Preparation**
  - Organizing the Teaching Team
  - Involving Children

- **Transition** – moving into & away from the meal smoothly and quickly

- **Serving and Eating**
  - Children Serving Themselves
  - Teachers encouraging but not forcing children to try new foods
  - Teaching Manners
  - Enjoying Meaningful Conversations

- **Clean-up**
PREPARATION

Organizing the Teaching Team

- Assign Duties
- Plan Activities
  - That can be conducted and managed by 1 staff while the other oversees mealtime set up
  - Over plan…sometimes it takes longer than you thought it would to get set up
- Involve the children with set-up EVERYDAY and at EVERY MEALTIME
  - Children should wash their hands if they are table setters.
  - Intentionally teach children how to set the table properly and how to use and handle utensils and dishware.
TRANSITION

- Create routines for moving into and out of mealtimes and stick to them.
- Staff should have assigned responsibilities for monitoring children during transitions.
- Do NOT sit children at tables until all food is in place.
- Once all is in place to eat, seat children and begin meal service quickly thereafter.
- After the meal send students to a supervised activity that will engage them while others are finishing up.
Serving and Eating

- Serve from left to right. Teach left and right and reinforce it at each meal.
- First teach how to serve and pour by providing non-mealtime activities that provide children with opportunities to practice pouring and serving.
- Teach children how to handle spills. Provide appropriate assistance until children have mastered these skills.
- Set the expectation that all children will serve themselves all food components.
- Help children to learn appropriate portion size.
- Find ways to encourage children to try new foods.
- Teach children how to politely decline a food but be sure to offer the child at least one other opportunity to try the declined item.
SERVING AND EATING

Teachers…

- role model manners and praise children for practicing good etiquette.
- converse with the children during mealtimes.
- Encourage the children to converse with one another.
- Praise children for trying new foods and reinforce portion size.

Provide adequate time for all children to eat.

Begin to transition children to clean-up as most of them have finished the meal.
Clean-up

- Teach children how to scrape their plates and where & how to place their dirty dishes and placemat.
- Make sure your clean up set-up allows for more than 1 child at a time to complete the tasks.
- Monitor the clean-up activities and provide appropriate guidance.
- Have an engaging activity for children to participate in after the meal.
Childhood Obesity is a growing concern in our country and within our program.
MyPyramid
Eat Right. Exercise. Have Fun.
MyPyramid.gov

Grains
Make half your grains whole

Vegetables
Vary your veggies

Fruits
Focus on fruits

Milk
Get your calcium-rich foods

Meat & Beans
Go lean with protein

Oils
Oils are not a food group, but you need some for good health. Get your oils from fish, nuts, and liquid oils such as corn oil, soybean oil, and canola oil.

Find your balance between food and fun

Fats and sugars — know your limits
ENGAGE PARENTS IN NUTRITION AT YOUR CENTER

- Develop a Parent Menu Committee.
- Invite Parents to come to lunch so they can learn family style meal service too.
- Provide parent nutrition activities at PC Meetings & Home Base Socials.
- Ask parents to come volunteer during meal times and...
- To help with classroom nutrition activities.
Mealtime is a critical learning period for children.

- Take the time to plan, implement, and evaluate your classroom’s Family Style Meal Service:
  - to ensure that children’s learning goals are attained and
  - that the program is operating in compliance with CACFP, Head Start Performance Standards and AZ Childcare Licensure Regulations.
THE SKILLS CHILDREN AND FAMILIES LEARN FROM YOU TODAY COULD MAKE A LIFETIME OF DIFFERENCE.