Solano Family & Children's Services, Child and Adult Care Food Program

Volume 22 Issue 11 November 2022

Nutrition Nuggets

National Smarter Mealtimes for Child Care Settings

The Smarter Mealtimes in Child Care Settings checklist is a list of simple, no cost or low cost strategies that ensures the eating environment promotes healthy choices. The checklist can be used in half or full day early care and education programs and is geared towards eating environments serving children ages 2 through 5 years of age. The strategies are designed to work for family child care homes, child care centers, and Head Start programs.

- At least two types of fruit are offered daily
- At least two types of vegetables are offered daily
- Sliced or cut fruit is available daily
- Fruit is offered in attractive bowls or baskets
- Fruits and vegetables are offered first and last (in family style)
- Fruits are presented with fun, creative, descriptive names (verbally or labeled)
- Vegetables are presented with fun, creative, descriptive names (verbally or labeled)
- Cut vegetables, when offered, are frequently paired with a low fat dip such as ranch, hummus, or salsa
- Featured entrees are presented with fun, creative, descriptive names (verbally or labeled)
- Taste tests of fruits, vegetables, and entrees are provided at least annually
- Children are provided opportunities to learn about food and gardening (planting a garden, seed planting, farm tours, nutrition education, etc.)
- Popular characters (e.g. Elmo) are used to promote healthy options using labels or stickers
- Staff role models healthful eating behavior (e.g. sits at the table with children and eats the same food
- Staff members announce the menu in daily routine
- Attractive, healthful food signage (posters, stickers, or clings) are displayed in the child care environment.
- A weekly or monthly menu is provided to all families
- Children are involved with the mealtime set-up and clean-up routine
- All lights in the eating area work and are turned on.

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Pumpkin and Bean Soup

1 (15 oz) can of white beans
1 cup of water
1 1/2 cups of apple juice
Salt and pepper to taste
1 1/2 cups chopped onion
1 (15 oz) can of pumpkin
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/8 tsp nutmeg

Blend can of white beans, chopped onion and water until smooth. In a large pot, add pumpkin, apple juice, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt and pepper to taste. Stir, then add the blended bean mix to the pot and cook on low for 15/20 minutes. Makes six one cup servings, providing 1/2 cup vegetable and 3/4 oz equivalent meat alternate.
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Make Every Bite a Meditation

Looking for a non diet and no cost way to create a healthy habit? Mindful eating is a healthy practice that allows you to take each moment in. Mindful eating does not require any specific diets and emphasizes being present with your body with every bite. Our friends at American Heart Association have created a useful infographic to try out mindful eating. Use the infographic as a printout for training, adult education, or a stimulating poster for children. Try out these strategies to begin eating more mindfully:

Step 1- Ponder: Check in with yourself about your hunger before you eat. You may actually be thirsty, bored or stressed.

Step 2- Appraise: Take a moment to take it in. How does it smell? Do you really want it? Is it more than you need?

Step 3- Slow: Slow down so your brain can keep up with your stomach. Put your fork down between bites and focus on the flavor.

Step 4- Savor: Enjoy your food. Take a moment to savor the satisfaction of each bite, the taste, texture, everything!

Step 5- Stop: Stop when you're full. There's no need to join the clean plate club if it means overeating

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