

Continue your learning

Taking Steps to Healthy Success: Family Style Dining

These resources include additional tools, information, and methods to implement the strategies you learned in this lesson. You may want to save an electronic copy of this handout, with hyperlinks for each resource included, for future reference or to pass on to co-workers or families.

Off-the-shelf curricula and toolkits

[More Than Mud Pies: A Nutrition Curriculum Guide for Preschool Children](#) – The guide is designed to provide staff and children with enjoyable activities that encourage positive ideas about nutrition and food. Contains educational lessons to help children learn about new foods and understand their feelings of hunger and fullness, as well as healthful recipes and strategies to engage families. From the National Food Service Management Institute, The University of Mississippi (2009).

[Family Style Dining Guide: A Mealtime Approach for Early Care and Education Programs](#) – Brings together current information on implementing family style dining, and offers a step-by-step approach in preparing children, adults, families, and ECE programs to participate. Programs that want to start family style dining, as well as those looking to advance their dining practices, may find this guide helpful. From Ohio Child Care Resource & Referral Association and Nemours® (2016).

[EAT Family Style](#) – Offers various resources to help child care providers practice responsive feeding in family-style dining. From University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Videos

[Environments – “Starting Family Style Dining from the Little Brown School” – Part 1 and Part 2](#) – Watch these two short videos to learn guiding principles and tips for starting a successful family style dining program (2012).

- [Part 1, Introduction](#)
- [Part 2, Success tips](#)

[“Teaching Children to Listen to Their Bodies”](#) – Learn more about children’s eating cues and how caregivers can help kids regulate their eating habits. From eXtension: Families, Food and Fitness (2015).

[Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition](#) – The Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition developed several instructional videos for ECE providers and families on how to engage children in active play and teach children about nutrition. See below for links on teaching children about healthy nutrition (2013).

- [“Teaching Nutritional Benefits of Eating Healthy Foods”](#) – This video shares a few examples of how caregivers can teach children about the nutritional benefits of healthy eating.
- [“Teaching Taste, Texture and Color”](#) – This videos shares a few examples of how caregivers can educate children about taste, texture, and color through conversations during mealtimes.
- [“Teaching Portion Size”](#) – This video highlights tips on how to figure out appropriate portion sizes for children based on age, and a three step process for teaching children about portion size during meals.
- [“Putting It All Together”](#) – This video features several different ways an adult can teach children about healthy nutrition during a single meal (e.g., verbal praise, portion sizes, color, and nutritional benefits of healthy food).

more videos and other resources on the next page...

Videos, continued

[“Feeding Young Children in Group Settings”](#) is a collection of videos that can aid providers in serving healthy food to children and practicing family style dining. Videos cover a variety of topics such as child development, food safety, mealtime conversations, introduction of new foods, setting the environment, and special needs. From the University of Idaho.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln – Part of the Learning Child Educational Series

- [“Role Modeling Healthy Eating: Effective Mealtime Strategies”](#) – Learn strategies for how to be a good role model, and how to encourage children to eat healthy: sitting at the table with children while they eat, role modeling manners, supporting motor development by teaching children to serve themselves, and modeling healthy eating habits.
- [“Tips for Dealing with Messes”](#) – This video shows tangible strategies providers can use to prepare children for family style meals to set children up for success: teaching children to pour during playtime, letting children practice using scoops and measuring cups.

Additional learning opportunities from Better Kid Care



On Demand modules:

- Family Child Care: Ethnic Foods Exploration
- Picky Eaters: A Guide to Responsive Feeding
- Snack Time = Learning Time



Research-to-Practice Tip Pages – Check out these quick tips for healthy eating at your program.

- [“Family-style dining”](#)
- [“Picky eaters”](#)
- [“Savory sensory learning”](#)



Vodcast:

- [Family-Style Dining](#)



Tip sheets

Review the tip sheets below to ensure a successful family style dining experience for young children. The tip sheets cover a variety of topics that range from setting the table for success, to creating positive mealtime conversations.

[Exploring infants and toddlers series](#) – “Family Style Dining” – Parents and caregivers can use this tipsheet to help set up family style meals for 0 to 2 year olds. From Capital District Child Care Council.

[“Making the Most of Mealtimes”](#) – Set yourself up for success. Review this tip sheet for making the most of mealtimes. Learn some tips for serving family style meals, encouraging children to eat a variety of healthy foods, and engaging children in pleasant conversation during meals. Familiarize yourself with family style dining by reading more about it. From Child Care Aware.

The National Food Service Management Institute provides several tip sheets explain what family style meal service is and how to do it in your program successfully:

- [“The Basic Guide to Family Style Dining – Part 1”](#)
- [“Planning and Preparing: Family Style Dining – Part 2”](#)
- [“Happy Times with Family Style Meals”](#)
- [“Family Style Meal Service”](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- [“Support Family Style Meals”](#) – Family style meals provide many benefits to both children and child care providers. This resource highlights key strategies and steps to set up your program for success.
- [“Family Style Meals: A New Way to Teach Healthy Eating Habits”](#) – This resource, developed by the United States Department of Agriculture, highlights the benefits of serving family style meals and provides tips.



more resources on the next page...

Tip pages, continued

Setting the table for success

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – [“Helping Children Be Successful at Serving Themselves and Passing”](#) tip page has several tips to make family style meals easier for both children and providers. Review this one-pager, and share with families, for tips to help children serve themselves, pour liquids, pass food, and clean up messes.

Nemours – [“Family Style Mealtime Routine”](#) tip page provides a sample routine, checklist, and activities to support implementing a successful family style meal in your child care program. [Available in Spanish.](#)

Mealtime conversation starters

[“Mealtime Conversation Cards”](#) – Idea cards with examples of positive conversation starters. Use these with children during mealtime. These “flash cards” are suitable for providers and families. From CACFP.

[“Phrases that Help and Hinder”](#) – Meal time can be an educational experience for children, and as the caregiver you play a large role in shaping children’s eating behaviors. Learn more about what to say during mealtimes to encourage healthful eating. From Maine Health Let’s Go!

Teaching children about hunger cues

[Tummy Talks](#) – A short, fun book that helps you teach children about hunger and fullness by listening to their own bodies. From University of Nevada, Cooperative Extension.



Resources for families

Dairy Council of California – [“Be a Healthy Eating Role Model”](#) – Modeling healthy eating supports the development of healthy behaviors in children. Review this document to learn more about how parents can role model for their children.

KidsHealth – [“Strategies for Feeding a Preschooler”](#) – Feeding a preschooler is not always easy, and that is OK! This article provides some tips for encouraging young children to eat healthfully. Check out page 2 of this article from KidsHealth to learn more.

USDA – Nibbles for Health newsletters that ECE staff can share with families to address many of the challenges they face. The two newsletter links provided below highlight the importance of family meals at home.

- [“Enjoying the Family Meal”](#) (Newsletter 7)
- [Family Meals – FAST, Healthful!](#) (Newsletter 19)
- [All newsletters](#)



Family engagement

Nemours – [“Creating a Family-Friendly Climate”](#) – Use this assessment tool to determine if your program is following best practices to welcome families into your program. [Also available in Spanish.](#)

The digital version of this PDF has clickable links to the resources. If you have this PDF in printed form, you can search the terms online to find the resources.



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