



Family Style Meal

PROCEDURE / APPROACH

Head Start/Early Head Start program must implement snack and meal times in ways that support development and learning. Snack and meal times must be structured and used as learning opportunities that support teaching staff-child interactions and foster communication and conversations that contribute to a child's learning, development, and socialization skills. Programs are encouraged to meet this requirement with family style meals when developmentally appropriate. For bottle-fed infants, this must include holding infants during feeding to support socialization. The Head Start/Early Head Start must also provide sufficient time for children to eat, not use food as reward or punishment, and not force children to finish their food.

HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS:

1302.31 (e) (2)

OAR 414-300-0130

CACFP Policy and Procedure Manual for Center Based Sponsors

Chapter 8 (F) (84)

Family Style Meals

A. Procedure

Preparation

1. The first meal eaten at the center (breakfast or lunch) is served within the first 1/2 hour of arrival. The second meal is served no later than 2.5 hours after the conclusion of the first meal. Snack for duration classrooms is served in a reasonable time after the second meal. The intent of the timing of the snack is so that a sense of hunger may be developed and provide another opportunity for nutritious calories before the child concludes their day.

2. Classroom schedule should be finalized with input from the Nutrition Department and will follow the guidelines of the USDA/CACFP meal regulations. The classroom schedule is submitted to the Nutrition Department and will be archived for the program year.
3. Children should be at the table with hands washed at the start of the meal.
4. Children should help set the tables. Small plates can be used for breakfast and snack. Large plates must be used at lunch.
5. Napkins are for wiping hands and mouths. They are not a substitute for dishes.
6. In order to ensure good appetites and a relaxed mealtime environment, calming transitional activities will be planned before meals.
7. The mealtime environment is adapted to meet all children's varying developmental needs and different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Meal Service

1. All required meal components are placed on the table at the same time.
2. Infants and young toddlers will be fed "on demand."
3. Adequate amounts of each food item are placed on the table to provide at least minimum portions for each participant and supervising adult to be served.
4. Participants may serve themselves from serving dishes or communal bowls that are on the table.
5. Adults supervising the meal help those participants who are not able to serve themselves using hand over hand methods.
6. Participants are allowed to make choices selecting foods and in the size of the serving.
7. Food will be cut into shapes and sizes that are easy for young children to manage and which will reduce the risk of choking.
8. Separate serving portions are used for each table. The tables, chairs, and eating utensils will be age appropriate.
9. Serving utensils, tongs, etc. are distinct from eating utensils. Eating utensils are suitable in function, size, and shape for use by children.
10. A supervising adult seated at each table must actively encourage participants to take the fully required portion of each food component. The supervising adult must offer the food item again later in the meal if participants initially refuse the food or take a very small portion.
11. A child may leave the table for a drink of water with the child always within sight and sound of a supervising adult. However, water is to only be served at the table during scheduled snack.
12. Food from family style serving bowls/platters and all food brought to the table shall be discarded after meal service
13. Children will scrape their plates at the end of the meal, and the resulting garbage will be removed daily. Tables, chairs and surrounding meal area will be cleaned in the moment and directly after meal time.
14. The point-of-service meal count should be taken at the time of service when participants are seated at the table with all required components placed on the table.

15. Table accommodations for eating shall comply with OAR 414-300-013 regarding staff/child ratios.

| Age of Children | Staff:child ratio |
|---|-------------------|
| 6 weeks of age and under 30 months | 1:4 |
| 30 months old to attending kindergarten | 1:10 |

Adult Supervision and Participation

1. Teachers and/or supervisory adult should model appropriate meal time behavior and set good examples by demonstrating a positive attitude toward all food served, modeling healthy eating habits and manners.
2. Children will be fed in an open, relaxed and accepting atmosphere. Teachers will engage children in conversation so mealtimes are pleasant experiences. Topics can vary and are not limited to food and nutrition. Discourage talk about personal food dislikes. Asking open-ended questions, modeling good listening skills, and encouraging turn-taking in conversation are education tools that facilitate an atmosphere of growth and engagement in the child's nutrition.
3. Family style meals encourage decision-making, sharing and communication with others.
4. Family Style meals also develop muscle control and eye-hand coordination.
5. Sight and sound classroom procedures and teacher-talk during mealtime will ensure the safety of each child.
6. Safety: Prevention of and quick response to choking is the first priority of child mealtime.
7. Mealtimes also serve as opportunity to assess health concerns. Teachers/supervisory adults should observe children for eating patterns that may indicate undiagnosed health problems (trouble chewing, gorging, etc.) and report any concerns to the Site Manager and Health Manager.
8. Children should be allowed sufficient time to eat. Those who become restless before the meal is over may be allowed to leave the table. The child should clean up their plates and cups and tidy their eating area before being directed to an appropriate activity. Teachers will follow the education guidelines of sight and sound and shared communication in order to maintain safety of the child.
9. As children leave the table, the children still eating may be consolidated into one table maintaining the proper child/adult ratio.

Restroom Needs During Mealtime

1. On occasion, a child may need to use the restroom during mealtimes. Following Education Policy and Procedures regarding restroom needs, the use of Sight and Sound and Teacher Talk are to be used.
2. If the restroom is located within the classroom and is in sight and sound of the teacher/supervisory adult, a child 3-5 years is permitted to use the restroom without being physically accompanied by an adult. The adult acknowledges the child's need by stating the child's name out loud and informs the other adults seated with children that one child is going to the restroom. Only one child at a time is permitted to use the restroom during meal service.
3. Restrooms located outside of the classroom or out of sight of the meal table require that an adult accompany each child. During meal service when an adult must temporarily leave the table, the other adults at the tables are informed so they can supervise the other children still seated.