

Family Style Meal

Policy/Procedure

Southern Oregon Head Start must implement meal and snack times in ways that support development and learning. Meal and snack 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. SOCFC uses the Family Style Meal standard to meet these requirements when developmentally appropriate. For bottle-fed infants, this must include holding infants during feeding to support socialization. Southern Oregon Head Start must 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 meal schedule is developed in consult with Education, Site Managers and Nutrition staff. The schedule should be finalized with input from the Nutrition Department Manager and will follow the guidelines of the USDA/CACFP meal regulations. The classroom schedule is then submitted to the Nutrition Department and archived for the program year.

3. Meal will be delivered to each classroom on schedule with all meal components, labeled child food substitutions, napkins, serving utensils, plates, cups and age appropriate eating utensils.
4. In order to ensure good appetites and a relaxed mealtime environment, calming transitional activities will be planned before meals.
5. Children should be at the table with hands washed at the start of the meal.
6. Children should help set the tables when possible in order to encourage the transition to the beginning of the meal.
7. The mealtime environment is adapted to meet all children's varying developmental needs and different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Meal Service

1. For EHS, all infants and toddlers are to be fed on demand. Infants are always to be held when being fed with a bottle. No infant/young toddler may ever be left unattended at the table. All required meal component, service ware, seating and service of the meal will be developmentally appropriate and facilitated and modeled actively by staff.
2. For SOHS all required meal components, service ware and napkins are placed on the table at the same time.
3. Food substitutions, special child food accommodations, infant formulas/breastmilk, infant first foods, and any nutrition guidance supports are to be individually identifiable when delivered to the classroom. The item and the child's name is to be verbalized and confirmed by the staff delivering the item and with a staff member participating in meal supervision. There will be clear acknowledgement of the item, the child's name, and where the child will be seated at the table.
4. Adequate amounts of each component will provide a full portion for each child and supervising adult to be served. We will also provide enough food to offer a half portion of each component for each child.
5. Participants serve themselves to the best of their developmental ability from the serving dishes that are on the table.
6. Adults supervising the meal help those children who are not able to serve themselves using hand over hand methods.
7. Children are allowed to make choices selecting foods and the size of the serving. However, they must have access to the full CACFP serving amount.

8. Food will be cut into shapes and sizes that are easy for young children to manage and which will reduce the risk of choking.
9. Separate serving portions will be on each table. The tables, chairs, and eating utensils will be age appropriate.
10. Serving utensils, tongs, etc. are distinct from eating utensils. Eating utensils are suitable in function, size, and shape for use by children.
11. 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.
12. A child may leave the table for a drink of water. The child must remain within sight and sound of a supervising adult. Teacher talk will be used to alert all other staff participating in the meal that the child is up from the table. It is encouraged that the child drink their water at the classroom drinking water station and not return to the table with their drink of water. Water is always served at the Snack meal.
13. All food from family style serving bowls/platters and all food brought to the table shall be discarded after meal service.
14. Children will scrape their plates at the end of the meal, discard liquid into appropriate container and use the trashcan for paper waste.
15. Supervising adults will clean and sanitize tables, chairs, floors and surrounding meal area in the moment (spills) and immediately after mealtime. If an emergent classroom need arises during cleanup, attend to emergent need and then return to immediate cleanup of meal service area.
16. Mealtime food waste and resulting garbage will be removed daily.
17. The point-of-service meal count should be taken at the time of service when participants are seated and all required components are on the table. The count will be taken by the Cook or Cook Assist with support of center staff when necessary. Child count and adult meal count will be recorded manually on the meal count sheet. If a child is not at the table at the start of the meal, but decides to eat after the meal count has already been taken, the child may then be added to the meal count sheet. All staff is responsible to make sure the child meal count is completed accurately at each meal.
18. 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. Child Safety, the 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.