



Mealtime Assessment for Child Care Centers

Instructions: Examine the serving and dining spaces where children eat meals. Indicate whether each statement is true by checking the box. Only check the box if it is true on that day and you observe it happening. Some items may not apply. Total your score and write the number at the bottom. The unchecked boxes are areas for you to consider implementing in the future. Complete the assessment again in 6-12 months to see if your score improves!

Menu Planning	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Brightly colored fruits and vegetables are served at each meal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fresh fruit is served daily
<input type="checkbox"/>	Available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names
<input type="checkbox"/>	All vegetables names are included in the published monthly child care menu
<input type="checkbox"/>	Menus are posted and available for all parents and staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	Menus include culturally relevant meals and snacks
Mealtime Atmosphere	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Serving utensils are age appropriate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eating utensils are age appropriate
<input type="checkbox"/>	The center has implemented family-style meal service and children are allowed to serve themselves (with adult supervision)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children's artwork is displayed in the dining areas
<input type="checkbox"/>	The dining space is used for other learning activities beyond meal service (i.e. nutrition education activities, child care activities, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	All lights in the dining areas are currently functional and on
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clutter is removed from service and dining areas promptly (i.e. empty boxes, pans, lost & found, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trash on floors, in, or near garbage cans is removed in a timely manner
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cleaning supplies are not visible during meal service
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parents are encouraged to experience the child care mealtime environment (to observe, volunteer, or participate)
Child Involvement	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children are involved with mealtime set-up and clean-up routine
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children provide ideas for creative and descriptive names for menu items
<input type="checkbox"/>	Older children are involved in modeling healthful eating behaviors to younger children
<input type="checkbox"/>	Feedback from children is used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas

Staff Involvement & Support	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Special celebrations involve non-food treats or healthy foods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children have enough time to eat without being rushed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff members eat with children at the table
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff members model healthful eating behaviors
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff members refrain from consuming unhealthy food and beverages in front of children
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff encourage children to try new foods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff have pleasant conversations with children during mealtime
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff members refrain from praising children when they clean their plates
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff members avoid bribery when encouraging children to try foods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staff members announce the menu in daily routine
<input type="checkbox"/>	Food (healthy or unhealthy) is never used as a reward for good behavior
<input type="checkbox"/>	Food is never withheld for punishment
<input type="checkbox"/>	The child care center participates in Farm to Child Care (sourcing local food)
<input type="checkbox"/>	The child care center utilizes USDA Team Nutrition resources
Signage & Communication	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Posters displaying healthful foods are visible within all dining areas
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dining space is branded to reflect the child care center or children's interests (i.e. named for a character, mascot or local hero)
<input type="checkbox"/>	All promotional signs and posters are rotated, updated or changed at least quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/>	All creative and descriptive menu names are rotated, updated or changed at least quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/>	Daily information is provided to parents about what their children ate
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parents are given literature/activities to promote new foods at home at least two times per year

Score (out of 40) _____ Date Conducted _____