# Module Five: Making Menus

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Goal:** To learn how to develop and read menus based on Delaware CACFP/*Delacare* Rules.

**Objectives:**

- List three things that are important when creating a menu.
- Name three tips for shopping on a budget.
- List two ways to ensure children are receiving the appropriate serving size.

**Handouts**

- Menu Activity

**Additional Materials**

- *First Years* Toolkit – Menu Planning Book
- Measuring cups and spoons (1 per table)

**Preparation**

- Place one measuring cup and/or spoon on each table

## I. Discussion: Part 1 (15 minutes):

### Making Menus (slide 1, title slide):

[Introduce yourself (if you haven't already done so).]

SAY:

- In this session, we will be learning how to create a menu based on the Delaware CACFP/*Delacare* Rules.

ASK:

- *How many people have difficulty making a menu that meets all the Rules and uses foods children like?*

SAY:

- Making a menu can be challenging.
- There are many things to remember when choosing foods that align with the Rules and are acceptable to children who may be picky eaters by nature.
- This session will give you tips and ideas on making a menu based on the Rules and staying within a budget.

### Learning Objectives (slide 2)

SAY:

- By the end of this session, you should be able to:

[READ slide]

## Where to Start (slide 3)

SAY:

- All menus should be developed using a menu planning template either for infants or children. The Delaware Department of Education has these templates online. If your sponsor or center uses a different approved template, you may use those instead.
- This is the blank slate you should use to plan a well balanced menu for children.
- It lists all the meal components needed to qualify for reimbursement and credit.

**TIP**

Emphasize that it's ok if they use another approved template. This one is administered by the DOE and lists all the items they should be serving.

## Menu Planning Tips (slide 4):

SAY:

- Now that we have a starting point, we are going to discuss how to go about choosing items that fit the Rules, are healthy options for children and fit into the meal pattern. Some tips for creating a menu include making sure foods meet the Rules, are varied throughout the week and are cost-effective.
- Certain foods can only be served to children one time every two weeks.

ASK:

- *What foods are these?*

[Answer: processed meats and sweet grains, for snack only]

SAY:

- Other foods can only be served if a certain percentage of calories come from fat.

ASK:

- *Which foods does this apply to?*

[Answer: fried and pre-fried and then baked fruits, vegetables and meats].

- *What percentage of calories from fat are they allowed to have?*

[Answer: 35% or less].

SAY:

- There are also products which are not allowed at all. These are the list of items gone over earlier for infants (juice, fried and pre-fried then baked foods, etc.). Also, cheese foods and cheese products for children.

ASK:

- *How many people have heard of "eat your colors" or "eat the rainbow"?*

SAY:

- This is to promote eating different colored fruits and vegetables which is important because each group of colors contains different vitamins and minerals needed for growth, development, and repair for children and adults alike.
- It's also important to consume a variety of foods from the other food component groups. For example, choose whole grain pitas, tortillas, crackers, brown rice, cereal, etc. from the grains/breads group.

- Changing the time of day a food is served (e.g., at snack versus at lunch) and how a food is served (i.e., changing the way it is cooked and presented on the plate) is important when introducing new foods. For example, if a child tries raw carrots and does not like them try slicing them into coins and baking them to change the look and texture but not the nutrition.
- Remember, it takes children *and* adults anywhere from 5 - 20 tries to decide whether or not they like a food. So you may find that you have to try over and over for a child to decide whether or not they like certain foods. Just trying one bite counts as one try, so encourage at least one bite every time!

## Menu Planning Tips Cont'd (slide 5)

SAY:

- Don't let cost be a barrier to buying healthy foods. Healthy foods are sometimes more expensive, sometimes less expensive, and sometimes the same as unhealthy foods.
- This is why it's important to shop smart.
- Be aware of sale items and look to incorporate those into your menu as well as fruits and vegetables that are in season.
- Plan to use leftovers throughout the week. If serving baked chicken breast on Monday for lunch, serve chicken soup or chicken tacos on Wednesday or Thursday for lunch or make chicken salad and serve a little with crackers for an afternoon snack.
- Try to make healthy substitutions where you can to better align with the recommendations.
- For example, if you are already making homemade macaroni and cheese, try using whole wheat pasta or low-fat cheese for a healthier option.
- In order to keep using the foods kids love, look for ways to modify favorites to make them healthier. For example, you can make your own chicken nuggets by using cereal for the coating on chicken breast and baking them, macaroni and cheese with low-fat cheese and baked potato wedges for children to dip like French fries.

## Menu Planning Tips Cont'd (slide 6)

SAY:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables are generally less expensive when they are in season. Sometimes when bought fresh they can be less expensive than canned and frozen. You can save money by buying fresh when fruits/vegetables are in season and canned and frozen for out of season.
- Use cooking methods such as grilling, broiling, baking, etc., to change the texture and presentation of foods without changing the nutrition.
- Look for recipes that use food in more attractive ways, and kids will be more likely to eat it. Also, use recipes that allow leftovers to be combined to make a new dish.

**TIP**

If you have internet access, show providers how to get to the toolkit on the DOE website.

## First Years Menu Planning Guide (slide 7)

SAY:

- To make it easier for you to plan a menu in child care, a Menu Planning Guide was created as part of the *First Years Toolkit*.
- To find it online, go to the Delaware Department of Education website on the CACFP page, or Google the title.

- The guide is sectioned by season.
- Each season contains four approved menus based on the Rules.
- In addition to menus, 120 pre-approved recipes are included. There is a recipe index in the front so that you can find the ones you wish to use.
- Each recipe contains a Nutrition Facts label that lists serving sizes needed to fulfill the meal components for a 3- to 5–year-old.
- One serving yields the meal components which have a shaded box. The non-shaded boxes are what would still need to be served to complete the meal or snack, based on the DE CACFP/*Delacare* Rules meal pattern.
- There are also shopping lists that include all the ingredients needed if the menus are followed as they are, including the recipes.

## II. Activity (15 minutes)

### Menu Activity (slide 8)

SAY:

- Now that we've discussed planning a menu to align with the Rules, we're going to do an activity to help you analyze a menu.
- There is a sheet [in your folder, packet, or on your table] that looks like this and is labeled "Menu Activity" with "Module 5 – Activity Sheet" in the right hand corner. [Hold up paper showing menu].
- This is a menu completed for a 3- to 5-year-old preschooler in child care.
- Determine which item(s) on each day do not meet the Rules. Circle these items and write above them how you would change them to meet the Rules. For example, if potato chips were served on Monday, I would circle them and write potato wedges, baked potato, etc.
- For those items that may only be served if they meet certain criteria, place a star next to them.

ASK:

- *Are there any questions?*

[If more clarification is needed, walk through Monday with them. SAY: For example, if we look at Monday, is there anything that doesn't fit the Rules listed here? … Correct, juice is served twice. So, I would circle one of the juice servings, let's say orange juice, and replace it with orange slices. Go through each day. When you find an item that doesn't meet the Rules, fix it like we just did. Are there any questions?]

SAY:

- You may work with your group/table to answer the questions.
- We will discuss the answers in about 10 minutes.

[Give a warning approximately 2 minutes before ending the activity. Say it is ok if they are not finished, but to find a good stopping point and you will be discussing it as a group. After 10 minutes, ask them to stop where they are. If they aren't finished, it's ok. The answers are circled on the "Menu Activity Answer Key." An explanation of why certain foods are not allowed is on "Menu Activity Answer Key." Go over the answers provided on the answer key by asking the group to call out the answer, or call on individuals. Clarify any questions or confusion on the Rules and food items that are and are not allowed.]

**FAQ**

The Rules state no cheese food or cheese product may be served. These are not to be served at all, even if you are not claiming them for reimbursement, because they do not fit into any of the listed meal components.

## III. Discussion: Part 2 (15 minutes)

SAY:

- Now that we have reviewed how to choose items that fit into the meal pattern and how to make a menu, we will discuss how to shop for items on a budget.

### Buying on a Budget (slide 9)

SAY:

- Shopping on a budget can be done with the right tricks.
- The grocery store can be a very overwhelming place, with aisles and aisles of products, weekly specials, new promotions and marketing. There are ways to help you maneuver the grocery store without straying from a strict budget.
- Listed here are some ways to make sure to stick to a budget when shopping for food items.
- Making a list and sticking to it ensures you are not tempted by sales on food and "new food displays." Writing a list can help you buy only the foods you need in the quantities you will use.
- Comparing prices before you go and while you are at the store will help you buy products that meet your needs and budget.
- Use weekly circulars to look for things on sale and coupons. These are also available online for various markets and brands.
- Generic brands are generally less expensive. Children won't know the difference if they never see the packaging. Make sure the generic brands still meet the Rules.
- Things that can be bought in bulk and will last a longer time on the shelf are products like cereal, rice, beans, pasta, etc.
- Look for farmers' markets and local food brands to cut costs on fresh produce.
- Storing foods at the proper temperature will ensure they stay fresh for as long as possible.
- Storing foods properly to avoid freezer burn and reheating them to the correct temperature ensures there is no bacteria growth and food is still safe to enjoy.

### Serving Sizes for Budgeting (slide 10):

SAY:

- Using age-appropriate serving sizes will help avoid excess waste and teach children to identify when they are hungry and full. In being able to identify when they are hungry and full, children will learn how to avoid overeating throughout the lifespan.
- Children should be served the age-appropriate serving size as outlined by the meal pattern. These serving amounts ensure children consume enough nutrients for their age, without receiving excess fat and calories.
- When serving a new food, start with the smallest serving as listed on the meal pattern and introduce it in combination with a familiar food. For example, if serving peas for the first time, serve with carrots or something the children have tried and enjoy. Make sure when looking at the amount to serve, you are using the meal pattern and not the serving size listed on the package.
- The example here is a label for cereal. The serving size on the package is 1 cup which is much larger than the serving for a 3- to 5-year-old as listed on the meal pattern (1/3 cup).

## Ideas for Serving (slide 11)

SAY:

- Using pre-measured scoops or measuring cups to ensure children are being served appropriate amounts takes out the guesswork on whether or not they are receiving enough.
- As you can see by the scoops and cups on your tables, some of the serving sizes do not look very big, but are the starting point for young children. Starting with these amounts will allow them to receive the nutrients they need without overeating and gauge whether they are hungry or full. For example, who has 1/4 cup on their table? Please hold it up for everyone to see. This is one of two servings of fruits/vegetables for a 3- to 5-year-old.
- Allow children to serve themselves using pre-measured utensils like measuring cups or measuring spoons. This teaches them to take only what they need and fosters their independence.
- Allow children to ask for seconds, but encourage them to think about whether or not they are still hungry. Avoid putting more on their plate if they haven't asked for seconds. If they do ask, make sure they are receiving another age-appropriate serving.

## Summary (slide 12):

[READ slide]

ASK:

- *Are there any questions?*

# Menu Activity

This menu is for a child care center serving 3- to 5-year-olds. For each day, circle the menu item(s) that would need to be changed in order to meet the Delaware CACFP/*Delacare* Rules and meal pattern. Place a star next to the items that could only be served under special conditions. Discuss with your table how you would change these items to better meet the Rules.

| WEEK | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BREAKFAST (must serve all 3 components)** | | | | | |
| Milk | 1% or Fat-free Milk | 1% or Fat-free Milk | 1% or Fat-free Milk | 1% or Fat-free Milk | 1% or Fat-free Milk |
| Fruits/Vegetables | Orange Juice | Banana Slices | Cantaloupe | Strawberries | Peaches |
| Grains/Breads | *Kix*® | Donuts | Oatmeal | White Toast | *Cheerios*® |
| **LUNCH (must serve all 5 components)** | | | | | |
| Milk | 1% or Fat-free Milk | 1% or Fat-free Milk | 1% or Fat-free Milk | 1% or Fat-free Milk | 1% or Fat-free Milk |
| Fruits/Vegetables | Carrot Sticks | Honeydew Melon | — | Cauliflower | Apple Slices |
| Fruits/Vegetables | Green Beans | Sweet Potatoes | Pears | Broccoli | Cucumber slices |
| Grains/Breads | Whole Grain Dinner Roll | Whole Grain Hot Dog Roll | Rice | White Bread | *Velveeta*® Macaroni and Cheese |
| Meats/Meat Alternates | Baked Turkey Breast | Hot Dog | Fish Sticks | Bologna | Baked Chicken Breast |
| **SNACK (choose 2 of 4 components)** | | | | | |
| Milk | — | — | — | — | — |
| Fruits/Vegetables | Apple Juice | Blueberries | Watermelon | Cucumbers | Pineapple |
| Grains/Breads | Mini Whole Grain Rice Cakes | — | — | Crackers | — |
| Meats/Meat Alternates | — | Yogurt | String Cheese | — | Cottage Cheese |
| Beverage | Water | Water | Water | Water | Water |

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| Beverage | Water | Water | Water | Water | Water |

# Menu Activity

**Monday:** Two juice servings are listed. The Rule states only one serving of juice per day per child. Change one serving (or both) to fresh, canned or frozen fruit or vegetable options.

**Tuesday:** Donuts cannot be served for breakfast. They are a sweet grain and may only be served one time every two weeks for snack only. Serve waffles, pancakes, cereal, toast, etc. instead.

**Wednesday:** Only one serving of fruit/vegetable served at lunch. Must add another fruit/vegetable to complete the meal pattern. (Any fruit/vegetable not already listed would be fine.)

**Thursday:** No whole grain is provided. Any of the circled options could be changed to a whole grain to align with the Rules. If the crackers had been whole wheat, it is important to note that on the menu (i.e. "whole wheat saltine crackers"). Being as explicit as possible will ensure credit is received where credit is due.

**Friday:** *Velveeta®* is a cheese food and may never be served. Homemade macaroni and cheese using real cheese could be served or simply serve noodles as a side.

***Items:**

- Hot dog and bologna are both processed meats and can only be served one time every two weeks. Replace one or both with eggs, beans, fish, etc., from the meat/meat alternate category.
- Fish sticks may only be served if less than 35% of calories are from fat. The best way to know is to put the brand name or "homemade" in front of these. It is important to write "homemade" in front of any items made from a recipe and provide the recipe when necessary.