

# YES! MN

## Youth Eating Smarter in Minnesota

Minnesota Department of Education – Child and Adult Care Food  
Program (CACFP)

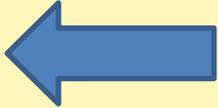
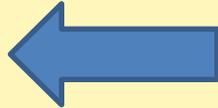
And U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Team Nutrition

# Setting the Stage for Eating Well

## *The Nutrition Environment*



# What influences food consumption for kids?

- Age of child
- Parental behavior
- Genetics
- Environment 
- Exposure to nutrition education 

Source: Smarter Lunchroom Movement – Cornell University

# Healthy Nutrition Environment

- **Teaches children that mealtimes are enjoyable.**
- **Helps form healthy lifelong eating habits.**
- **Reduces risks of overweight and obesity.**

**It's not just what we eat, but  
how we eat it.**

# What Is A Nutrition Environment?

- **Interaction between adults and children while eating.**
- **Style of meal service.**
- **Physical surroundings.**
- **Activities outside of meals.**
  - **Celebrations**
  - **Fundraisers**
  - **Nutrition education**



# Best Practices: Adult – Child Interaction

## Adults:

- **Sit with children.**
- **Eat same food as children.**
- **Model good manners and behaviors.**
- **Encourage children to taste foods.**

# Best Practices Continued

## Adult – Child Interaction

### Adults:

- Express positive facial expressions, body language and verbal cues about the food.
- Provide informal education about food.
- Enjoy pleasant conversation with children.
- Gently encourage children to eat.



# Flexibility Matters

Parenting Style	Child's Obesity Risk
Strict disciplinarian	Highest
Permissive or neglectful	High
Flexible rule-setters	Lowest

*Children need adults to set limits, but gradually allow them to be responsible for their eating*

# Division of responsibility in feeding children



## Adults are responsible for:

- Setting regular times for meals and snacks
- Planning and preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Assuring that the children come to the table at meal and snack times
- Creating a pleasant mealtime environment

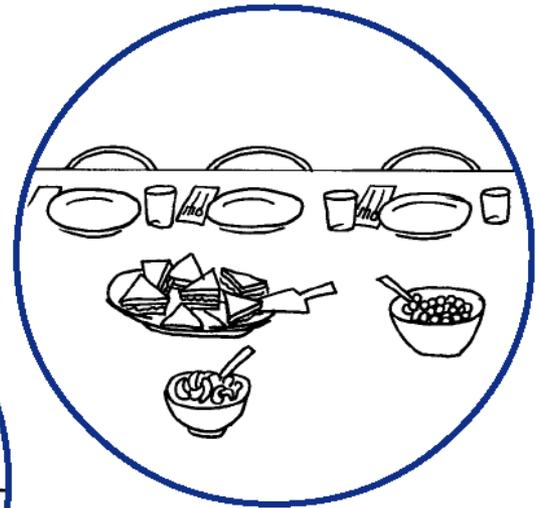
## Children are responsible for:

- Deciding which of the healthy foods offered they want to eat
- Deciding how much food they want to eat



from National Food Service Management Institute

# Adults help children get to the table at mealtime



from National Food Service Management Institute

# Adults create a pleasant mealtime environment



from National Food Service Management Institute

# Children choose from healthy foods offered



from National Food Service Management Institute

# Children choose how much to eat



from National Food Service Management Institute

# Impact of Age on Food Preferences

- **Peak years for picky/fussy eating is between two to six years.**
- **Ages 6 through 30: age-group of people most willing to try new foods.**

Source: Smarter Lunchroom Movement – Cornell University

# Infants

- **Breastfeeding mothers with regular fruit and vegetable consumption have infants more interested in fruits and vegetables.**
- **Complementary foods introduced to infants and the range of foods provided strongly determines food variety throughout life.**

Source: Smarter Lunchroom Movement – Cornell University

# What do you do if....

- **Ethan has eaten all of his macaroni and cheese and asks for more. He hasn't touched anything else on his plate.**
- **Keshawn is a healthy, but slender little girl who often just pokes at her food.**
- **Anthony appears to be overweight. He quickly finishes the generous portions he serves himself, and then wants more.**

# Family Style Meal Service

- **Children serve selves from common platters of food with help from supervising adults.**
- **Must have enough food at table to meet USDA meal pattern requirement.**
- **Children do not have to take full-sized portion.**

# Family Style Meal Service

## Benefits:

- **Children learn social skills.**
- **Children learn and practice serving skills.**
- **Children learn to control the amount of food they want and need.**
- **Children are more comfortable trying new foods.**
- **Children learn responsibility.**
- **Family meals create memories.**

# Video: Family Style Meals in the Childcare Setting

## Family Style Meals in the Childcare Setting

Video from the Arizona Department of Health Services

(approximately nine minutes)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nj\\_s89ydnBs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nj_s89ydnBs)

# Family Style Meal Service

**“But I only have so much patience. This could be a nightmare!”**



# Tips For Making Family Style Meals Work

- **Prepare before you implement.**
- **Teach expected behavior.**
- **Practice skills in classroom.**
- **Start with just one food item.**
- **Use child friendly serving bowls and utensils.**
- **Have extra food and serving spoons handy.**

# More Tips For Making Family Style Meals Work

- **Expect and be prepared for spills.**
- **Teach children to help clean up spills.**
- **Give each child a job.**



**Remember- it gets easier as children learn!**

# Plating Preferences: Adults versus Children

- **Adults prefer three items and three different colors on their plates.**
- **Children prefer six different colors and the maximum number of items!**
- **Could be two servings of three different items.**
- **Can increase consumption by 68 percent.**



Source: Smarter Lunchroom Movement – Cornell University

# Plating Preferences: Adults versus Children

- **Adults place entrees near the center of their plate.**
- **Children tend to place the entrée to the lower right on round plates.**
  
- ***Both* like some “white” space on their plates.**

Source: Smarter Lunchroom Movement – Cornell University

# The Power of Variety

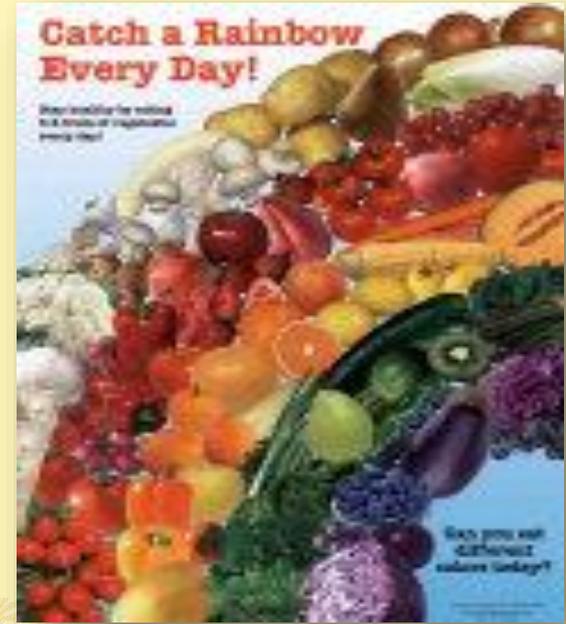
- **77 percent increase in consumption of food with perceived variety.**
- **Can be one menu item that contains a combination of items: fresh fruit mix of strawberries, bananas and blueberries versus just strawberries.**



Source: Smarter Lunchroom Movement – Cornell University

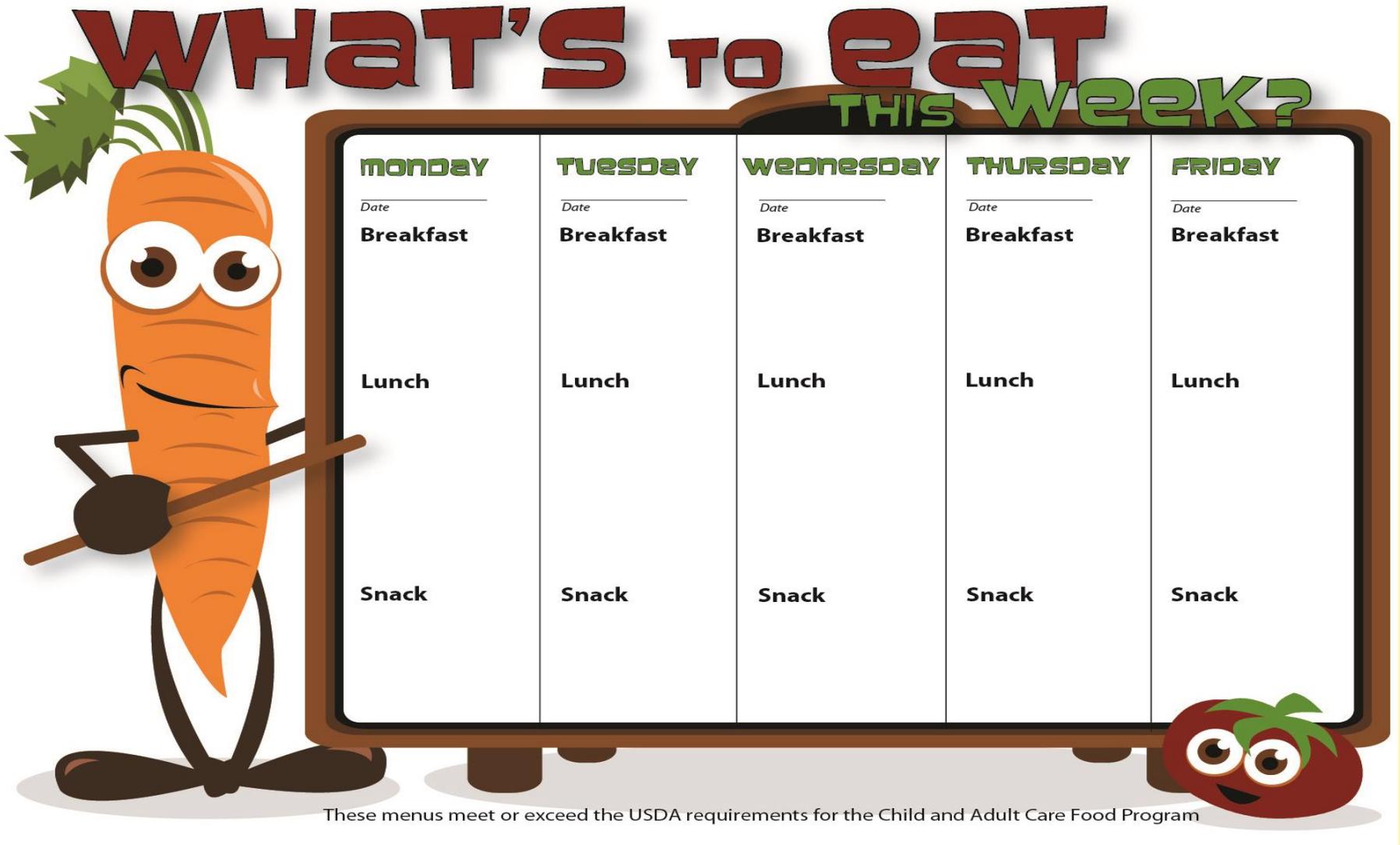
# Physical Surroundings

- Posters or pictures about healthy eating.
- Turn TV off during meal or snack time.
- Vending machines should be out of the meal service area.



# Menu for Parents

## WHAT'S TO EAT THIS WEEK?



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<i>Date</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>Snack</b>	<b>Snack</b>	<b>Snack</b>	<b>Snack</b>	<b>Snack</b>

These menus meet or exceed the USDA requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

# Nutrition Education

## Ways children learn about nutrition:

- **Formal classroom lessons.**
- **Informal mealtime talk.**
- **Exploring food with the senses.**
- **Observing teachers, parents or peers.**

# Nutrition Education Resources

- **Formal classroom lessons**
  - Start with four to five year olds.

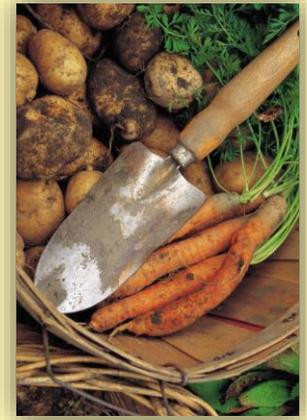


- **USDA resources at**  
<http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>

# Nutrition Education

Meal time talk and exploration can:

- Reinforce the learning of color, flavors, smell, textures.
  - Canned pineapple is tangy.
  - Carrots are crunchy.
  - Broccoli is green.
  - Milk is smooth and white.
- Show that you think these foods are good
  - “Steamed carrots are my favorite orange vegetable.”
  - “I eat carrots to help me see better.”
  - “These sweet strawberries make my mouth happy.”



# Nutrition Education - Involve Peers

**Mealtime talk and exploration:**

**Involve peers....Sam, what is your favorite thing about peas?**



# Nutrition Education-Activity

- **Have children help give menu items “fun and catchy” names:**

**Jumpin’ Green Beans**

**Rainbow Fruit Salad**

**Little Tree Broccoli**

- **Talk about imaginative names and menu items before and/or during mealtime.**

# What Would Batman Eat?

- **Priming is the incidental activation of a knowledge structure.**
- **Can influence a behavioral process, for example...eating!**
- **What would \_\_\_\_\_ eat?**
- **Children only showed this effect for admirable models.**

Source: Smarter Lunchroom Movement – Cornell University



# Food Outside of Meals

- **Healthy parties and celebrations.**
- **Healthy fundraising activities.**



# What's Wrong Here?



# What's Right Here?



# Child Care Mealtime Assessment Forms

- **Mealtime Assessment for Child Care Centers**
- **Worksheet #1 –Mealtime Assessment**

**What change(s) would you like  
to make to improve the  
nutrition environment at your  
child care center?**

# YES! MN

