



Creative, Healthy Mealtimes

Katy Levenhagen, RD
Partners in Child Care
Snohomish Health District



SNOHOMISH
HEALTH
DISTRICT



Child Care Feeding Puzzle

- Nutrition
- Food Safety
- Mealtime





Mealtime Safety Issues

Food Safety

- Promote hand washing
- Avoid contamination
- Keep a clean eating environment





Mealtime Safety Issues

- Know the choke foods and avoid them
 - nuts, berries, carrots/celery, grapes,
 - raisins, hotdogs, popcorn, candy
- Know guidelines for minimizing choking
- Establish a policy for food allergies
 - Peanut allergies are on the rise!





Division of labor during meal times

- Caregivers are responsible for providing appropriate foods in a safe and nurturing environment.
- Children are responsible for how much and even whether they eat.





Overview

Creative Healthy Mealtimes

- Adults eat with children
- Adults set the feeding environment
- Children serve themselves
- Children decide how much/what to eat





Adults Eat With Children

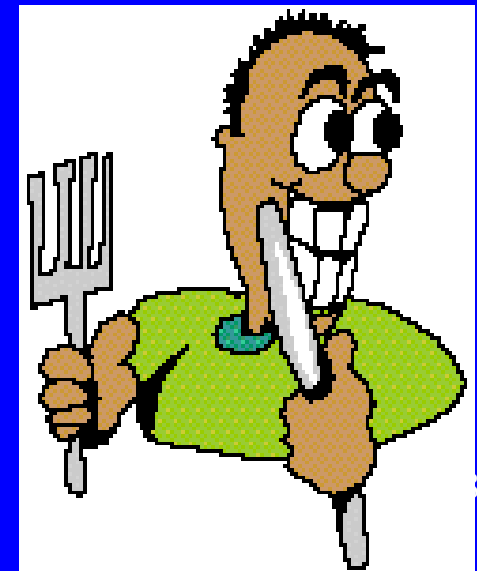
- Safety
 - Prevent disaster
 - Promote: “Yours, Mine, Ours”
- Role modeling
 - Model etiquette
 - Model eating variety and portion size
- Foster skill development
 - Communication
 - Socialization





Adults set the eating environment.

- Determine where children eat
- Regulate when children eat
- Make meal times pleasant (age dependent)
 - Minimize waiting time
 - Maintain standards of behavior
 - Introduce appropriate utensils
 - Provide enough time and space
 - Facilitate conversation





Children **serve** Themselves

- Children pass the food around
- Boosts self esteem
 - Giving feels good!
- Develops motor skills
 - Fine and gross
 - Spatial arrangement
- Improves nutrient intake



"long term benefits" 9



Children Serving Themselves

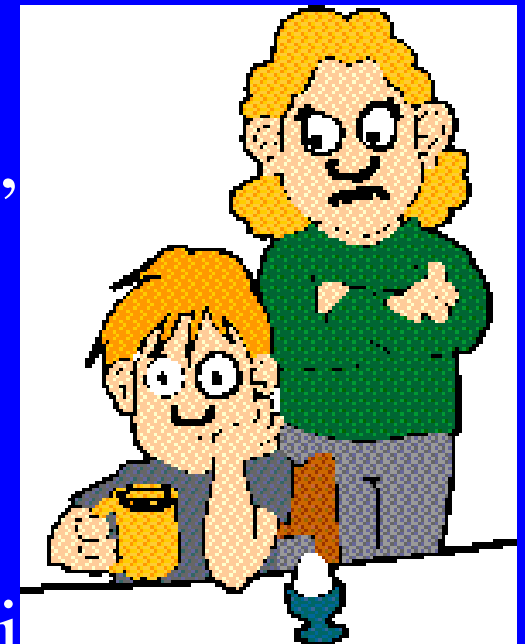
- Practice good hand washing
- Use proper serving utensils to minimize contamination of foods
- Avoid bare hand contact
- Practice prior to real meal service
- Have adult role models





Children choose how much/what to eat.

- Self Regulation
 - Babies do it!
- Stay in touch with “internal cues”
 - Eat when **hungry**
 - Stop when **full**
- Minimize meal time stress
- Contributes to healthy eating habits
 - Obesity and eating disorders are on the rise





Review

Caregivers are responsible for

- Serving healthy, appealing foods
- Meeting nutritional guidelines
- Providing balance and variety in menus





Review

Caregivers are responsible for

- Making mealtimes safe
- Eating with children
- Helping children enjoy eating



Let' Em Help





..And Remember

Children are
responsible for:

- How much food is eaten
- What foods are chosen
- Eating or not eating



Think "long term benefits"