

5 Ways to Prepare for Family Style Meal Service in Child Care

Family style meal service allows children to serve themselves with the assistance of adults.

01

SET A START DATE

- Identify a date to begin serving meals family style.
- Host a staff training.
- Host a parent meeting.

02

BUY EQUIPMENT

- Purchase unbreakable, scratch-resistant, child-size supplies:
- Brightly Colored Plates 7.25 inches
- Serving Bowls 6.75-8.75 inches
- Serving Spoons/Ladles 7-8 inches
- Bowls 2-4 inch diameter
- Spoons 5.125 inches
- Pitchers 13 ounces
- Tongs 4-6 inches
- Cups 8-10 ounces

03

PROVIDE TRAINING

- Include good practices that help children build motor skills for serving themselves.
- Provide opportunities for staff to roll-play serving meals family style.

04

EDUCATE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

- Host a meeting to tell parents about family style meals.
- Send a letter home to let them know about the new meal service.
- Post information via social media, bulletin board, or monthly newsletter.

05

EDUCATE CHILDREN

- Explain that there will be some changes at mealtimes.
- Begin by practicing pouring water into cups, passing empty serving dishes, and scooping dried beans from a large bowl into a smaller one.
- Allow children to serve themselves one item, overtime, to add more items until they can serve themselves the entire meal.