

GRAB AND GO LESSON

FAQs for Choosing Small Equipment for Child Care

Procurement | Equipment Purchasing

Purpose: This handout addresses common questions for choosing small equipment for child care settings.

Choosing the correct kitchen tools is important for meal preparation. Kitchen tools include both large and small equipment. There are various types of smallware, such as knives, pots, pans, and storage containers.

Small Equipment Benefits

When child care employees use proper measuring utensils for preparation and serving, it helps to control food costs and ensure that required portion sizes are served during mealtimes. Using the wrong tools may affect food quality (how food tastes), employee efficiency (job performance), and food costs (serving too much increases costs). Selecting the right equipment can help you to use the best tool for each task.

There are many items categorized as small equipment, also known as smallware. Smallware includes knives, pots and pans, and storage containers. The most common small equipment can be grouped into four categories: hand tools, thermometers, pots and pans, and measuring tools.

Determining Demand for Small Equipment

To determine the demand for small equipment, you must first review the needs of the facility. Here are some factors to focus on:

- Start with the menus, examining the frequency of each food item.
- Review the meal preparation styles noted on standardized recipes.
- Consider the ages of the children served, serving sizes, equipment costs, and safety and durability of the equipment.
- Measure the total counter and storage space for storing small equipment.

After reviewing each factor, determine if purchasing small equipment will assist your facility in providing higher quality meals.

Purchasing Small Equipment

Sources to purchase small equipment will vary by the geographic location of the facility. The internet is an invaluable resource for information; however, it is important to buy from a reputable dealer. Often equipment can be purchased from the following locations:

- E-dealers are companies that sell equipment through the internet. Online shopping is a quick way to compare prices and types of equipment.
- Local equipment vendors and dealers sell both small and large equipment.
- Equipment showroom dealers have equipment on-site to view and test.
- Wholesale stores sell some commercial-grade equipment.
- Hotel/restaurant suppliers generally have a variety of small equipment.

Directors should determine small equipment needs and compare prices before making purchases. Equipment purchases should meet state and local health and safety codes. As a participant in CACFP, contact your State agency or sponsoring organization for additional guidance.

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Need additional resources?

For additional information, contact your State agency. You may also refer to the following ICN resources:

- *Basics at a Glance* poster
- *Kitchen Essentials for Child Care* poster

References

- Institute of Child Nutrition. (2018). *Equipment purchasing and facility design for school nutrition programs*. University, MS: Author. www.theicn.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=273
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- Katsigris, C. & Thomas, C. (2014). *Design and equipment for restaurants and foodservice: A management view, (4th ed.)* "Chapter 18- Small ware for kitchens". Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

This project was funded using U.S. Department of Agriculture grant funds. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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Suggested Reference Citation:

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2020). *Grab and go lesson: FAQs for choosing small equipment for child care*. University, MS: Author.

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