

GRAB AND GO LESSON

Training Development for CACFP Professionals: Part 2

Education and Training

Purpose: This handout provides strategies for designing training content to maximize engagement and retention.

Designing an appropriate and engaging training is beneficial to both the trainer and the participants. Having a specific training plan is important for the trainer to be consistent and ensure that the information being shared is relevant and timely. The participants benefit from a well-designed training that is engaging, mindful, and informative.

Designing the Training – The Opener

The opening of your training prepares your employees for what they will be learning. Quality opening activities help employees focus on the topic at hand. Here are some ideas to include as openers for your training session.

A pre-assessment helps you determine what your learners already know about the topic. Ideally, if you conduct a pre-test before the training takes place, the information can help you plan and tailor the training to meet the specific needs of the employees. If you cannot conduct a pre-test ahead of time, pre-assessments given at the beginning of a training help learners begin to focus on the topic. It allows the participants to think about where they are in their skill and knowledge of the topic.

Ice breakers are an excellent method for helping participants get to know one another while introducing the topic. People tend to feel more comfortable participating if they know who is in the room and what they have in common. Ice breakers help lay the foundation for group participation.

Be sure to choose the most effective ice breaker for both participants and you as the trainer. It should allow you and the participants enough time to get to know one another, but not take too much time from the overall training.

Ground rules help set the tone for learning. A positive training setting is one that provides a safe, relaxed, and fun atmosphere. Ground rules help the class run smoothly and allow all participants to benefit from the course instruction and information.

Ground rules can either be established by the participants or developed ahead of time and posted in the room on posters. The Institute of Child Nutrition has developed a set of ground rules that can be downloaded from the website (www.theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/ground-rules-for-training-mini-posters/).

Designing the Training – The Content

As you design the training content, keep one question in mind—what do you want them to learn? For each one of the learning objectives you developed in the planning phase, think about how you will present the material you want them to learn. For each objective, you will want your training to include:

- An explanation of the topic with supporting visuals, such as a PowerPoint or handout
- An activity that allows participants to apply the material they just learned
- A debriefing of the activity that provides participants a chance to talk about what they learned, challenges or questions they had, etc.
- A summary of the topic and how to apply it to their jobs

Remember that adults learn in a variety of ways. Some individuals are visual learners and benefit more from activities such as reading or watching videos. Others are auditory learners and prefer lectures or other means of audio communications. Some individuals are kinesthetic learners and prefer hands-on applications—such as group activities or practicing using a tool, such as a thermometer. Many of us have multiple preferred learning styles. By using several different techniques throughout your training, you will be able to engage all participants and accommodate different learning styles. Here are some techniques to consider:

- Case discussions
- Demonstrations
- Games
- Group discussions
- Projects
- Skits or plays
- Role-playing
- Skills practice

Designing the Training – The Conclusion

The conclusion of the training should provide a summary of what the participants learned and reflect on how they will use this information on the job. If you included a pre-assessment during your opening, you might want to include a post-assessment at the end of the training. It can be the same as the pre-assessment to measure how much the learners have gained from the training session.

Include an activity at the end of training so that participants have a chance to reflect on what they learned. Independently or in small groups, learners can complete this activity by having them write on a notecard one thing they learned.

Depending upon the training objective, you may also want to have participants do some goal setting or action planning. Questions to ask participants include:

- What did you learn in this training?
- How will you apply this information in your current or future role?
- When will you apply this information?

By carefully thinking about your reasons for training and the needs of your audience, you can design a training that will be relevant and effective. All three parts of the training—the opening, body, and conclusion—help to maximize the knowledge and skills your audience gain from the training.

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References

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2018). *Ground rules for training mini-posters*. <https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/ground-rules-for-training-mini-posters/>

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2019). *Foundations for training excellence: Basics*. <https://theicn.org/training>

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. (2021). *Grab and go lesson: Training development for CACFP professionals: Part 2*. University, MS: Author.

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