Manager’s Corner

Food Bars

PROJECT COORDINATOR
Theresa Stretch, MS, RDN, CP-FS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Aleshia Hall-Campbell, PhD, MPH

Key Area: 1 Nutrition
Code: 1110 Nutrition Requirements
2019
The Institute of Child Nutrition was authorized by Congress in 1989 and established in 1990 at the University of Mississippi in Oxford and is operated in collaboration with The University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. The Institute operates under a grant agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

PURPOSE
Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION
Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION
Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with the Institute of Child Nutrition at the University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights; Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

© 2019, Institute of Child Nutrition, The University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use with no cost to the participant for the training providing the following credit is included. These materials may not be incorporated into other websites or textbooks and may not be sold.

Suggested Reference Citation:

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by the University of Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The University cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images.

For more information, please contact helpdesk@theicn.org. November 22, 2019
# Table of Contents

- Professional Standards ....................................................................................................... 1
- Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1
- Lesson Overview ...................................................................................................................... 2
- Questions for Staff ............................................................................................................... 2
- Activity: Food Bars ................................................................................................................. 3
- References ............................................................................................................................... 5
Professional Standards

MENU PLANNING – 1100

Employee will be able to effectively and efficiently plan and prepare standardized recipes, cycle menus, and meals, including the use of USDA foods, to meet all Federal school nutrition program requirements, including the proper meal components.

1110 – Nutrition Requirements
Plan menus that meet USDA nutrition requirements for reimbursable meals, including calculating meal components.

Introduction

*Manager’s Corner: Food Bars* is designed to empower managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes. This lesson plan contains:

- Learning objective
- Statement explaining the importance of the topic
- List of materials
- Instructions on how to present the information
- Questions to ask staff
- An activity to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the staff
Lesson Overview

Instructions for lesson:
- Review the lesson objective and background information.
- Review why it is important.
- Ask staff the questions.
- Facilitate the activity outlined.
- Provide time for staff to ask questions.

Objective: Determine best practices when including food bars as a meal service option for reimbursable meals.

Background information: Food bars may lower plate waste by allowing students to take only items they will eat. They are effective at increasing access to and eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, as encouraged by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Salad bars are an example of a food bar and are encouraged by USDA in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

Why it is important: Schools are encouraged to use food bars and salad bars as a way to offer a wider variety of foods. Food and salad bars work well with Offer Versus Serve (OVS) because they offer a lot of variety, which may help students selecting foods they will consume. Food bars allow a variety of choices for students to select a reimbursable meal. Food bars can also help to reduce food cost and plate waste because students have the ability to choose their preferred food items.

Questions for Staff

- What information is important for staff to know when a student selects choices from a food bar?
  Answer: Train staff on the food components/menu items provided on the food bar, the minimum serving size for each of the components, and what constitutes a reimbursable meal. It is also important for staff to implement food safety practices.
Manager’s Corner: Food Bars

- **What are the benefits of including a food bar as a choice for a reimbursable meal?**
  
  **Answer:**
  
  - Students have a variety of choices.
  - Students can select the food they enjoy.
  - Students may try new items since they can select a multitude of choices.
  - It may reduce food cost and plate waste.

- **What makes a food bar appealing to students?**
  
  **Answer:**
  
  - A variety of food items.
  - A well-organized and clean food bar.
  - Foods served at the correct temperature – Hot foods served hot, cold foods served cold.

**Please note:** The answers provided are only examples and are not an inclusive list of possible responses.

### Activity: Food Bars

**Activity materials included in this document:**
No supplemental materials are included in this document.

**Materials provided by the school nutrition operation:**
- Index cards
- Writing utensils

**Activity Instructions:**
- Provide index cards and writing utensils to the staff.
- Ask the staff to identify food bar best practices.
- Allow 5-7 minutes to complete the activity.
- Discuss the responses at the end of the activity.
- Post the index cards in an attractive manner in a common location for staff to see.
Possible Answers:

- Pre-portioning food items is one way that can assist staff in quickly identifying portion sizes.
- Providing appropriate size serving utensils will assist students in taking the correct serving size.
- For self-service items, signs placed on serving line as a visual aid to help students determine the minimum portion.
- Schools also could assign student “food bar ambassadors” to assist younger students in selecting the correct portion sizes from the food bar.
- Chill foods to an internal temperature of 41 °F or below before placing on the salad bar.
- Discard food that may have been contaminated, either unintentionally or intentionally.
- Organize food items in a visually appealing way, alternating colors.

Please note: The answers provided are only examples and are not an inclusive list of possible responses.
References


