

Mealtime Memo

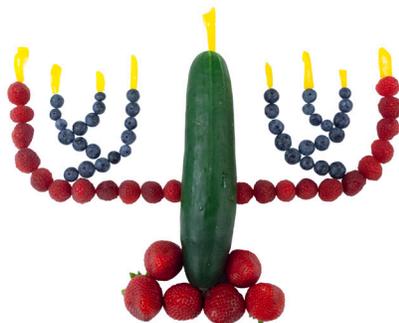
for Child Care

Tis the Season for Fun, Nutritious Eating

The holiday season has arrived! When you think about the variety of food that will be cooked, offered, and eaten at this special time of year, it can be overwhelming. As child care providers, we buy, cook, and bake foods that are acceptable for reimbursement. We can also show children how to have fun making and eating nutritious food all year including the holidays. This Mealtime Memo will provide you with information on how to serve fun and nutritious foods children will love to make and eat.

Foods high in fiber such as fresh fruit, vegetables, salads, whole grains, and beans are good for children's digestive tracts. Fiber also helps children feel full and helps food move through their digestive tract. Not only is protein important, it is a requirement in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Good sources of protein include lean meat, poultry or fish, tofu, cheese, eggs, and cooked dry beans. These foods taste good, satisfy hunger, and help children to feel full.

Incorporate foods that are high in fiber or are good sources of protein into a special meal before the children go home for holiday break. They can have a fun time creating designs with food that represent the holidays. Use your imagination for different shapes, as well as asking the children what kind of shapes they would like to make and eat. Give them the opportunity to use their imagination and create designs using vegetables and fruits. Designs could include a snowman, Christmas tree, Menorah, or many other holiday symbols.



Have Fun

One fun design to make using vegetables and fruits is holiday trees. Make a tree by using broccoli to lay out the shape. Layer the broccoli or make more than one tree to ensure you have the appropriate amount of food for the number of children you serve. Use other colorful fruits and vegetables as ornaments on the tree and whole wheat bread for the stump. Cut the bread into rectangle shapes to use at the bottom of the tree. Use flat platters so the children can see the tree. Always serve at least the minimum amount of vegetables needed for the amount of children in your care. This will ensure you have the correct serving size for each child.

While using your imagination to serve the meal pattern holiday-style, choose and prepare fruits and vegetables your children will enjoy. Make sure not to overcook produce so it will keep its firmness. If possible, try to use the same number of serving dishes on each table that you would normally use.

Children look forward to meals that are fun to make and good to eat. This is a time of year that children love, and they are full of expectation, laughter, joy, and happiness. Children are excited about all the possibilities the holidays bring, including eating good meals.

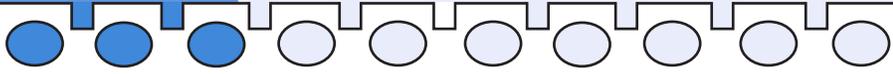
The good thing about this activity is you can have it at any time of the year, on any occasion, or just for fun. Allow them to decide what they want to make and, as the teacher, put all the thoughts together and come up with a plan.

Vegetable and Fruit Tree

1. Use broccoli to lay out the shape of a tree.
2. Choose colorful fruits and vegetables to use as ornaments on the tree.
3. Use whole wheat bread for the stump.



Season's Greetings!



Mealtime Memo

References

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