

Manager's Corner

Create a Positive Customer Experience

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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.

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Professional Standards

Communication and Marketing Training - 4100

Employee will be able to develop plans that include involvement with school and community members, empower school nutrition leaders, and address excellent customer service.

4130 - Empower school nutrition staff to provide excellent customer service.

Introduction

Manager's Corner: Create a Positive Customer Experience is designed for managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes. *Manager's Corner: Create a Positive Customer Experience* provides a method for empowering managers to train their staff. This lesson plan contains the following:

- learning objective,
- statement explaining the importance of the topic,
- list of materials,
- instructions on how to present the information,
- questions to ask staff, and
- an activity to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the staff.

Lesson Overview—Questions

Objective: Describe ways that the school nutrition staff can create a positive cafeteria experience.

Why it is important: As cafeteria staff, it is important to remember that the main priority is serving the children. If the cafeteria staff are pleasant and serve the children with positive attitudes, the children are more likely to enjoy school meals. The school nutrition program has many internal and external customers. Another way to think of customers is as stakeholders: people or organizations with an interest in your program. These include students, teachers, administrators, parents, and others in the community who are interested in the well-being of children. The student is the primary customer, while the other stakeholders are considered secondary customers. The main focus of school nutrition is to meet the dietary needs of each student customer during the school day.

What does a student customer expect? Today's children eat out more often than those in previous generations. Changes to the National School Lunch Act have helped schools gain control over the outside influences of marketing and advertising to children and adolescents in the school setting. Students expect the food, atmosphere, staff, and service line to be similar to what they experience when eating out in a commercial restaurant. They have grown to expect quick service, receive value for their money, and be greeted by a pleasant server. They want to see food that is attractive, convenient, and fresh. In other words, students expect the same dining experience you expect to receive. For customers to be satisfied, school nutrition programs must provide outstanding customer service.

Materials included in this document:

- Customer Experience Activity
- Customer Experience Activity Answer Key

Instruction:

Ask the staff to answer the questions included in this training. Facilitate the activity.

Questions for the staff:

- **Why is customer service important in a cafeteria?**
Answer: When people receive good customer service, they are more likely to enjoy the meal or the product. At home and in the classroom children are told what to do and are usually not given many options. The cafeteria should be a

positive atmosphere for children and they should receive the same customer service that they would at a restaurant. If the atmosphere is positive, it can cause children to enjoy eating at school.

- **Why is it important that school nutrition staff have a good relationship with the students?**

Answer: Children do not think of cafeteria staff as their teachers; and they have more freedom in the cafeteria than they do in the classroom. It is the teacher's job to reprimand the students and tell them what they can and cannot do; but cafeteria staff should build good relationships with the students so that they feel special. When cafeteria staff interact with students it can brighten their day and make them feel like someone at the school cares.

- **What does a student customer expect?** Today's children eat out more often than those in previous generations. Changes to the National School Lunch Act have helped schools gain control over the outside influences of marketing and advertising to children and adolescents in the school setting. Students expect the food, atmosphere, staff, and service line to be similar to what they experience when eating out in a commercial restaurant. They have grown to expect quick service, receive value for their money, and be greeted by a pleasant server. They want to see food that is attractive, convenient, and fresh. In other words, students expect the same dining experience you expect to receive. For customers to be satisfied, school nutrition programs must provide outstanding customer experience.

Activity Instructions:

- Ask staff to complete the **Customer Experience Activity** using the above information. At the conclusion of the activity, review the **Customer Experience Activity Answer Key**.

Customer Experience Activity

Instructions: Write your response to the questions in the space provide below and have an open dialogue with your manager and other staff.

What can the school nutrition staff do to create a positive cafeteria experience?

What are some ways to improve customer satisfaction?

Customer Experience Activity Answer Key

Instructions: Write your response to the questions in the space provide below and have an open dialogue with your manager and other staff.

ANSWER:

What can the school nutrition staff do to create a positive cafeteria experience?

- Wear fun shirts or outfits on special occasions
- Add fun decorations to the cafeteria
- Smile and greet the children, interact with students

What are some ways to improve customer service?

- Smile at the students
- Asking them “how may I help you”, “what would you like”, “how are you today”
- Saying “you’re welcome” or “my pleasure”
- Having patience when a child spills something and cleaning it up with a smile

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