

TOP 10 EASY WINS

to improve your service and boost meal appeal for child care



CHILD AND ADULT CARE
FOOD PROGRAM



1

EAT FAMILY STYLE

- Use appropriate-sized cups and utensils for children to serve themselves. Tip, glue a pom pom onto the ends of serving utensils to help children distinguish between serving utensils and personal utensils.
- Role model enthusiastic eating habits by sampling all food components on your plate.



2

CONDUCT TASTE TESTINGS

- Allow for children to sample and vote for new menu items before introducing it into the menu. Children need 8-10 exposures before they accept that item.
- For a fun activity, have children taste fruit water. Add strawberry, cucumber, lemon, orange, or lime to a pitcher of water. See if the children can guess the fruit/vegetable used.



3

CREATE FLAVOR SHAKERS

- Pass around different flavor shakers and allow children to taste spices such as cinnamon/nutmeg/pumpkin spice/ginger on oatmeal or in yogurt, cumin/garlic powder/onion powder/white pepper/paprika/ in beans or over rice.



4

GO ABOVE AND BEYOND MENUS

- Create a rainbow on the wall and have children add the colorful fruits and vegetables to the rainbow as they see it on their plate throughout the week.
- Plan a lesson on creating meals and ask the children to plan a meal from the fruit and vegetable rainbow wall.



5

ENGAGE PARENTS, TEACHERS & STAFF

- Send produce home along with recipes for the families to try together.
- Have parents and child draw a fruit that they eat home and add it to a wall of fruits and vegetables during National CACFP Week in March.



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PURCHASE SEASONAL PRODUCE

- Consider building a garden to help the children understand where fruits and vegetables come from and what it looks like as it grows. There are grants available!
- Consider pairing a yogurt-based dip or ranch dressing with a vegetable in order to give children an opportunity to try new vegetables.
- Consult the Texas Department of Agriculture's Farm Fresh Seasonality Wheel and invite a farmer to bring the produce to the center. Create an activity around the life cycle of the produce item (seed, sprout, fruit, prepare for cooking) and finally have the children taste it in one of their meals.

6



7

MAKE MULTICULTURAL RECIPES

- Encourage new flavors with lessons and taste testing of foods from different cultures. Check out the standardized recipes in the Multicultural Recipes for Child Care Centers, Family Day Homes & Adult Daycare Centers on SquareMeals.org.

COOK

- Include children in the activity of cooking their meal with age-appropriate activities like washing produce, squeezing limes, measuring liquids, family style service.

8



9

HAVE THEMED MEALS

- Continue classroom learning into mealtimes by planning themed meals. Themed meals can be about color or shapes. Have a meal that is all red or all round.

USE FOOD PRESENTATION

- Create a face on the plate using the food components. Show the children and ask if they can copy the face or make their own.

10



For more ideas, visit
[SquareMeals.org/CACFP](https://www.squaremeals.org/CACFP)
and click on "Resources."



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