

## FAMILY STYLE MEAL SERVICE

### What does family style mean?

This is a type of meal service that allows children and adults to serve themselves from communal platters of food with assistance from supervising adults, if needed. This type of meal service allows children and adults to be introduced to new foods, new tastes, and new menus, while developing a positive attitude toward food, sharing in group eating situations, and developing good mealtime habits.

Additional benefits for children:

- They can eat based on their hunger and fullness cues, which is important
- Helps develop independence
- Helps build self-esteem and confidence

### What are important components of family style meals?

- All food for the meal is placed in serving bowls on the table
- All beverages are served in containers
- Enough food should be placed on the table to allow for the full portion size for each person to be served
- Children are **encouraged** to try each food
- Children may take second helpings of food if desired

ROLES/JOB/ACTIONS	
Adults	Child
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place all foods on the table before children are ready to sit down and eat</li> <li>• Make sure children are offered each menu item</li> <li>• Help children with serving as needed</li> <li>• <b>Sit at the table and eat with the children</b></li> <li>• Do not force children to eat any food or to eat any more food than they want</li> <li>• Offer food again, later in the meal to those kids who did not want any or took only a small portion</li> <li>• Allow 2<sup>nd</sup> servings after everyone has been served.</li> <li>• Make mealtime a happy time with lots of positive comments</li> <li>• Help kids learn to try new foods, talk about foods, practice good table manners, and handle food safely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request smaller portions or decline any of the food items</li> <li>• Decide later in the meal to try foods that they declined earlier</li> <li>• Request second helpings of any food that is available after all kids have had their first serving</li> </ul>

## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Talk about family style meals as a team – think about things to expect and any possible training or planning that may need to happen
- Talk about the kids that bring their own lunch or have a combo – how to incorporate that into a family meal style.
- Talk to the kids about the changes that they will see in snacks and lunch – and any guidelines (not taking too large of a serving, but that they can have more after everyone has had at least some)
- Think about having kids practice some of the skills – pouring water into cups, passing empty serving dishes, scooping things from larger bowls to smaller bowls or plates.
- Be a good role model
- Eat the same foods as the kids
- Sit and eat with them at snack and lunch
- Be enthusiastic and positive when you try different foods. Use lots of descriptive words that kids can have the opportunity to learn and question.
- Use words to describe how full or hungry you feel throughout the meal.
- When possible – talk about different aspects of the foods you are eating
  - How the food helps our bodies
  - Different types of food that are on the table
  - Where food comes from, how it grows, what time of year or what season it grows
  - Color, shape, size, and temp of the foods on the table.
- Encourage the serving skills and communication that you see at the table
- Teach kids how to use serving utensils and how to pass foods without putting hand in bowls

### **SETTING UP A GOOD ROUTINE THAT WORKS FOR YOUR TEAM CAN REALLY HELP WITH SUCCESS**

Handwashing

Cleaning tables before the meal

Setting the table (great if you can work it out so that kids can help)

Talk about what is on the menu for that meal

Discussing how to manage any spills/dropped utensils (having extra supplies near the tables?)

Cleaning up (individual utensils/plates, etc., as well as cleaning the tables) after the meal.