

Mealtime is Learning Time!



Presented by:

Beth Smith, B.S., M.Ed.

Sherry Mayberry, B.A., M.Ed


Gee Whiz™
Education

What Meals Do You Serve?



Breakfast?

Lunch?

Snacks?

Dinner?



Learning through Mealtimes

How do meals & snacks open the door for learning?

- Provide an opportunity for you to ask open-ended questions to stimulate conversations... particularly if you do family-style dining
- Create an environment where children can learn from each other
- Build language and listening skills as children to share thoughts & ideas with others
- Open the door for intentional learning across all developmental areas



10 Developmental Areas



What Skills Are the Children Developing?



Many Different Areas...

One Mealtime

- **Language Development** – Describing flavors/textures of foods...naming them as well!
- **Literacy Development** – Add a “menu” that contains the names of the foods being served so children can see each word in print.
- **Approaches to Learning** – Being willing to try new foods.
- **Logic & Reasoning** – How do I pass the plate so the oranges don’t fall off?
- **Math Knowledge** – Counting the number of crackers taken. Shape of crackers, too.
- **Science Knowledge** – Using senses to describe foods. Talking about how the foods grow.
- **Social Studies Knowledge** – Where do you think I bought these foods?
- **Creative Arts** – Talking about the colors and patterns of the food.
- **Social/Emotional Development** – Passing food from person to person. Engaging in conversations with others. Having self-confidence to share likes & dislikes.
- **Physical Development & Health** – Fine motor skills for picking up food. Conversation about the importance of eating healthy foods. Safety...chew and swallow before talking. 😊



Let's Try That Again!



The Foods You Serve Can Promote Learning



New Vocabulary

Colors

Textures

Shapes

Sorting & Grouping

Counting

Addition & Subtraction

Likes & Dislikes

Flavors

Size

What else?





Pick One!



Getting Ready to Eat Counts, Too



- One-to-One Correspondence (e.g., 1 plate, 1 cup, etc. at each chair)
- Counting...How many people are eating today? How many plates do we need? Cups?
- Fine Motor – Fold napkins, arrange silverware
- Creative Art – Create placemats...include names to reinforce literacy!
- Predicting – Show children food before cooking & have them predict how they believe it will change.

Promoting Diversity at Mealtimes

- Foods served – Is this a food you eat at your house?
- Foods associated with different cultures
- Cultural differences related to mealtimes – tools used when eating and how/when meals are served
- Likes & Dislikes – These make us unique & special!



Social & Emotional Growth During Mealtimes



- Exposure to Manners
- Acceptance of Other's Ideas & Cultural Preferences
- Self-Regulation
- Cooperation
- Personal Decision-Making
- Interacting with Adults & Peers
- Self-Concept & Self-Confidence



Asking Questions to Enhance Conversations

- Which food do you like best? Why do you like that one?
- Which food tastes sweet? Salty? Bitter? Tangy?
- How do you think I prepared the (name of food)?
- If you were going to cook lunch for us, what would you prepare?
- What types of foods do you eat for dinner at your house?
- What is your favorite meal?

Other Ideas?



Learning Continues After Eating

Even after the meal or snack is finished, the learning continues! For instance, when washing brushing teeth after eating, children learn:

- Self-Help Skills
- Responsibility
- Fine Motor Skills
- Good Health Practices



Test What You Know!

Can you address all 10 developmental areas during this mealtime?

- ❑ Language Development
- ❑ Literacy Knowledge
- ❑ Math Knowledge
- ❑ Approaches to Learning
- ❑ Logic & Reasoning
- ❑ Science Knowledge
- ❑ Social Studies Knowledge
- ❑ Social & Emotional Development
- ❑ Creative Arts
- ❑ Physical Development & Health



To learn more about
Gee Whiz Education and our curriculum
for family child care, please visit us at:



www.geewhizeducation.com

