

FAMILY-STYLE MEALS ARIZONA

Meal and snack times provide unique opportunities to create positive experiences with food. Serving meals and snacks in a family-style setting lays the foundation for a lifetime of happy, healthy eating.



Family-Style Meals in Arizona means the meal service includes at least **1** of the following at lunch and dinner:

Children serve themselves, independently or with the help of a staff member.



Food is served from a container on the table where children are seated.



A staff member sits at the table and eats the meal with children.



Children pass a serving container from individual to individual.



BEST PRACTICE: Include **all 4** aspects of family-style meals at every meal and snack. Empower facilities are expected to have a written family-style meals policy and share it with families.

REGULATION *Requires* **STAFF TO**

Encourage, but never force, children to eat food.

Assist each child who needs assistance with eating.

Teach self-feeding skills and habits of good nutrition.



ESTABLISH THE ENVIRONMENT

BE PRESENT



Turn off all screens (television, videos, phones).
Invite families to observe or participate in meal or snack time.

LET GO



Children choose and serve most or all foods themselves.
Allow children to follow their own hunger and fullness cues.
Provide learning opportunities during accidents and spills.

BEST PRACTICE *Encourages* **STAFF TO**

REGULATION *Requires* FACILITIES TO



MASTER THE MEAL SERVICE



Y

Use **separate containers** for each food or entrée.

Make available at least the minimum **portion** by age.

Make all required **components** available at the same time.

BEST PRACTICE *Encourages* FACILITIES TO

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SIZE



Use serving scoops that match the required portion size.

Use child size utensils and wide-rimmed plates.

Serve drinks in an open cup when children are ready.

INVOLVE THE KIDS



Make pouring easier! Fill pitchers half way.

Let children set and clear the table.

PROVIDE EXTRA



Make second servings available.

Keep extra napkins and utensils available for drops and spills.

Be a **ROLE MODEL**

I establish a calm, predictable mealtime routine and schedule. This includes announcing the menu and washing hands!

I model setting the table, serving myself, passing foods, saying "please" and "thank you" and cleaning up.

I sit and talk with the kids, modeling good social interaction. What is your favorite animal? Rawr!

I try new foods and follow my own hunger and fullness cues.

I don't bribe with food or withhold food. It's not a punishment or reward. Children can leave food on their plate or ask for more!



This document contains shared family-style meal guidance for regulatory requirements and best practices and was developed as a collaboration between the following organizations:



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH SERVICES



QUALITY FIRST
FIRST THINGS FIRST



AZ
HEALTH
ZONE
HEALTHY STARTS HERE

EMPOWER

The above organizations would like to thank the Arizona Early Childhood Education Association for contributing provider feedback.