

# 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**

**E**ncourage, but never force, children to eat food.

**A**ssist each child who needs assistance with eating.

**T**each 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**

**U**se **separate containers** for each food or entrée.

**M**ake available at least the minimum **portion** by age.

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

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

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:



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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.