

# What do mealtimes and food mean in early childhood programs?

Food preparation facilities should be available on the premises and nutritional and culturally appropriate food should be provided.

- Quality target 33. Quality targets in services for young children, European Commission Childcare Network, 1996 (the full list of 40 targets have been re-published with permission as a CRRU BRIEFING NOTE).<sup>[1]</sup>

A great deal of food education occurs early in life. Eating is not just about providing necessary energy for daily activities but is a social activity and a socializing process. Along with nutritional and language opportunities, children practice social and other skills, develop table manners, attitudes towards food, self-esteem, independence and learn cultural norms. As described by Ochs and Shohet (2006), mealtimes are "cultural sites for the socialization of persons into competent and appropriate members of society".

This broad approach to mealtime in child care has been referred to as the "family-style meal", "mealtime culture", the "pedagogical meal" etc. These labels suggest a holistic approach and assign importance not only to eating but give the meal value as a social situation with a strong identity and a precise structure. Thus, the "before", the "after" and the actual lunch or meal with the child at the centre are all important. The food too is important from a number of perspectives including nutritional value and cultural content.

In some early childhood centres, participating in cooking, setting the table, serving, discussing, eating and clearing up the shared meal occur in a convivial, comfortable and communal environment and are all parts of the program's learning and social opportunities. In other settings, children's meals come in individual lunchboxes or ready-prepared, are eaten in a chaotic or negative atmosphere or nutritional value may be compromised.

In Canada, many young children participate in child care outside the home. Therefore, children engage in eating practices outside the home so preschool tables are often significant sites for learning. Mealtime is recognized in all provincial/territorial child care regulations but the regulations may or may not require that the child care program provide meals. Most of the emphasis is on nutrition.

The information in this Issue File focuses on Canadian child care food policies and the significance of mealtime practices including those outside the nutritional and language development realm. It is hoped that the information provided will create reflective discussion around evaluation of the policy and practice of mealtimes in child care in Canada.

This ISSUE file has four sections:

- Legislated requirements for food/meals in regulated child care programs<sup>[2]</sup>
- An appetite for life (2006), Issue of Children in Europe on food and meals<sup>[3]</sup>
- Materials available online<sup>[4]</sup>
- Print only materials, abstracts provided<sup>[5]</sup>

Thu, 06/02/2011

Tags:

quality<sup>[6]</sup>

health<sup>[7]</sup>

curricula and pedagogy<sup>[8]</sup>

## Legislated requirements

P/T	Are centres required to provide meals?	Regulations include nutritional standards?	Do regulations include diverse/cultural meal considerations?
NL	Yes	Yes. In accordance with the <i>Canada Food Guide to Health Eating</i>	No
PE	No	Yes. In accordance with the <i>Canada Food Guide to Health Eating</i>	No
NS	Yes	Yes	No
NB	Yes	Yes. In accordance with the <i>Canada Food Guide to Health Eating</i>	No
QC	No	Yes. In accordance with the <i>Canada Food Guide to Health Eating</i>	No
ON	Yes	Yes	No
MB	No	Yes. In accordance with the <i>Canada Food Guide to Health Eating</i>	No
SK	Yes	Yes	No
AB	No	Yes	No
BC	No	Yes. In accordance with the <i>Canada Food Guide to Health Eating</i>	Yes
NT	No	Yes. In accordance with the <i>Canada Food Guide to Health Eating</i>	Yes
NU	No	Yes. In accordance with the <i>Canada Food Guide to Health Eating</i>	Yes
YT	No	Yes. In accordance with the <i>Canada Food Guide to Health Eating and Native Food Guide</i>	Yes

Table. Provincial/territorial food policy considerations

□

## Excerpts from provincial/territorial legislation and regulations

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**Tags:**

quality <sup>[6]</sup>

health <sup>[7]</sup>

legislation and regulation <sup>[21]</sup>

## Newfoundland and Labrador

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the Newfoundland and Labrador government's website.*

**Child Care Services Act. 1998.**

Child Care Services Regulations, 2005, 89/05 <sup>[22]</sup>

S.9 Child care service requirements

9. (1) A child care service

(k) shall provide meals to children in accordance with the requirements of the Canada Food Guide to Healthy Eating;

(l) shall prepare food and ensure food handling and food handling facilities are in accordance with the requirements of the Standards and Guidelines for Health in Child Care Settings Manual approved by the minister;

(m) shall ensure a child sleeps, is fed and offered food appropriate to the child's stage of development and individual capability;

(n) shall, daily, provide to the parent or guardian of a child who is less than 24 months of age a written record of the child's eating, sleeping and elimination patterns;

## Prince Edward Island

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the PEI government's website.*

**Child Care Facilities Act. 1988. Chapter c-5.**

Child Care Facilities Regulations. <sup>[23]</sup>

Part III

Public health

16(2) A facility shall, if it provides a food service for the children, have a sanitary food preparation area and follow practices to the satisfaction of the public health officer. (EC475/87)

Part V

Nutrition

22. (1) The supervisor shall ensure that all meals and snacks that are served meet the nutritional requirements of children in accordance with Canada's Food Guide.

(2) Where meals or snacks are supplied by the facility, menus shall be posted in a prominent location for the information of parents and kept on file for a period of 30 days.

- (3) A child attending for 3 hours or more shall, if present, be provided with
- (a) a mid-morning snack;(b) a mid-afternoon snack;
  - (c) a noontime meal;
  - (d) an early evening meal or breakfast if required. (EC475/87)

# Nova Scotia

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Act and Regulation, please go to the Nova Scotia government's website.*

## **Day Care Act, 1989.**

Day Care Regulations (amended 2011 by N.S. Reg. 155/2011) <sup>[24]</sup>

### Nutrition

25 (1) A licensee must adhere to the food and nutrition standards established by the Minister.

(2) Each meal served to a child who is enrolled in a day care program must

(a) be nutritious; and

(b) provide servings from each of the food groups identified by Health Canada.

(3) Each snack served to a child who is enrolled in a day care program must

(a) be nutritious; and

(b) provide servings from at least 2 of the food groups identified by Health Canada, including at least 1 serving of vegetables or fruit.

(4) Each child enrolled in a full-day program must be provided with a lunch, a morning snack and an afternoon snack.

(5) Each child enrolled in a part-day program and a school-age program must be provided with a snack.

(6) Subject to subsection (7), each child enrolled in a school-age program may bring a lunch from home or be provided with a lunch.

(7) Children who bring their lunch from home must eat apart from children who are provided with a lunch by the program.

(8) For a family home day care program,

(a) each child who is in attendance during a regular meal period must be provided with a meal; and

(b) each child who is in attendance before or after a regular meal period must be provided with a snack.

Menus must be developed and followed

26

(1) A facility director or, in the case of a family home day care program, a care provider, must develop and follow menus.

(2) A menu must be kept on file for 12 months.

(3) A facility director or, for a family home day care program, a care provider, may make a substitution to a menu if

(a) the substitution is of equal nutritional value to the original menu item;

(b) the menu documents the substitution; and

(c) a record of the substitution is kept on file for 12 months.

### Infant feeding requirements

27 (1) Breast milk or formula provided by a parent for an infant must be

(a) labelled to specify the name of infant, the date received, and the contents;

(b) refrigerated at 4.0° C or lower; and

(c) stored in accordance with Provincial guidelines.

(2) Food provided by a parent for an infant must be dated, refrigerated if required, and used or discarded before the expiry date.

(3) An infant who cannot hold a bottle must be held by a staff member during bottle feeding.

(4) An infant must not be fed in a crib or by bottle propping.

# New Brunswick

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the New Brunswick government's website.*

**Family Services Act and Daycare Regulations. 1980.**

**Child Day Facilities Operator Standards. [25] 2010.**

6.0 Health

6.7 Nutrition

Menus

All child day care facilities must prepare meals and snacks in accordance with Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, respecting the four (4) basic food groups and the recommended serving sizes for the age group being served.

Where milk and juice are served, the milk must be undiluted and the juice must be one hundred per cent (100%) pure fruit juice. Water may be served at meals and snacks providing the requirements of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating are met throughout the day.

Drinking water must be available to children at all times either through independent access or requests through staff.

Children's allergy information must be posted in the food preparation area.

All day care centre menus must:

- be prepared four (4) weeks in advance and posted at the beginning of each week in a location that is conspicuous to staff and parents
- be amended or varied to provide for children with special nutritional requirements
- be amended to reflect any changes in the food actually served, as changes occur
- ensure that no additives or fillers are added to stretch or colour food

All community day care homes menus must be provided to parents every two (2) weeks.

Meals/snacks provided by parent(s)/guardian(s) must:

- be labelled with the child's name, the date, and the type of food
- be properly refrigerated, as required

Infants

Infants under 12 months of age must:

- be fed on demand and in accordance with written instructions from the parent regarding the amount, type and scheduling of feedings
- be held during bottle feeding

Both the propping of bottles, in cribs, playpens or infants seats, and the carrying of bottles by young children are prohibited.

Where there is more than one bottle-fed infant, all bottles must:

- be labelled with the child's name
- only be used for the intended child
- stored with covers on each bottle

Servings

Children who are in attendance at a child day care facility for:

- less than three (3) hours, must be served one (1) snack which must provide one (1) serving each from two (2) or more of the basic four (4) food groups
- at least three but less than six hours (3-6) hours, must be served one (1) snack which must provide one (1) serving each from two (2) or more of the basic four (4) food groups and one (1) meal which must provide one (1) serving from each of the four (4) food groups

- at least six but less than ten hours (6-10) hours, must be served two (2) snacks and one (1) meal which must provide: for each snack, one (1) serving each from two (2) or more of the basic four (4) food groups; and for the meal, one service from each of the four (4) food groups; and in total include at least two (2) servings from the Milk Products food group.

## Quebec

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the Quebec government's website.*

### **Educational Childcare Act. 2006.**

#### **Educational Childcare Regulation.** <sup>[26]</sup>

##### Division III

##### S.2 Service area

33. A permit holder must have service areas in the facility that consist of

(1) a kitchen if the meals are prepared by the staff, or a kitchenette ; the kitchen or kitchenette must be closed or isolated by a door, a dutch door or a half-wall preventing the children from entering the kitchen or kitchenette ;

110. A childcare provider must, when providing meals and snacks to children, ensure that the meals and snacks comply with Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating (Health Canada, Ottawa, 1997) or any subsequent edition of the Guide that may be published by Health Canada. O.C. 582-2006, s. 110.

111. If a child is on a special diet prescribed by a member of the Collège des médecins du Québec, the childcare provider must follow the parent's written instructions for the meals and snacks to be served to that child. O.C. 582-2006, s. 111.

112. A childcare provider other than a home childcare provider must post the weekly menu for consultation by the staff and parents and ensure that the meals and snacks served to the children conform to the menu.  
A home childcare provider must inform parents of the contents of the meals and snacks served to the children. O.C. 582-2006, s. 112.

113. All food prepared on or brought onto the premises must be kept and served by the childcare provider under sanitary conditions at the appropriate temperature. O.C. 582-2006, s. 113.

## Ontario

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the Ontario government's website.*

### **Day Nurseries Act. 1990.**

#### **Regulation 262.Nutrition** <sup>[27]</sup>

39. Every operator shall ensure that,

(a) each infant under one year of age that is in attendance in a day nursery operated by the operator or in a location where private-home day care is provided by the operator is fed in accordance with written instructions from a parent of the child;

(b) where food or drink or both is supplied by a parent of a child in attendance in a day nursery operated by the operator or location where private-home day care is provided by the operator, the container for the food or drink is labelled with the child's name; and

(c) all food or drink is stored, prepared and served so as to retain maximum nutritive value and prevent contamination. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 39.

40. (1) Every operator shall ensure that each child one year of age or over that is in attendance in a day nursery operated by the operator or in a location where private-home day care is provided by the operator is provided with,

(a) subject to section 43, where the child is in attendance at meal time, a meal consisting of at least one serving from milk and milk products, one serving from meat and alternates, one serving from bread and cereals, and two servings from fruits and vegetables within the range set out in Column 2 or 3, as the case may be, of Schedule 1, for each food group set out opposite thereto in Column 1 of Schedule 1, except where otherwise approved by a Director in the case of a child who is 44 months of age or over as of August 31 of the year; and

(b) nutritious between-meal snacks consisting of foods that will promote good dental health at times that will not interfere with a child's appetite for meal time. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 40 (1); O. Reg. 505/06, s. 9.

(2) Where a child referred to in subsection (1) is in attendance for six hours or more, the operator shall ensure that the total food offered to the child over the period of attendance for each food group set out in Column 1 of Schedule 2 is within the range set out opposite thereto in Column 2 of Schedule 2. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 40 (2).

41. (1) Every operator of a day nursery shall post planned menus for the current and following week in a conspicuous place in each day nursery operated by the operator with any substitutions noted on the posted menus. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 41 (1).
- (2) A menu referred to in subsection (1) shall be retained by the operator for thirty days after the last day for which it is applicable. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s.41 (2).
- (3) Every operator of a private-home day care agency shall ensure that each person in charge of the children in each location where private-home day care is provided by the operator plans menus in consultation with the child's parents, and a private-home day care visitor. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 41 (3).
42. Every operator of a day nursery shall ensure that a list is posted in each cooking and serving area of each day nursery operated by the operator that sets out the names of the children enrolled in the day nursery that have food allergies and their respective allergies. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 42.
43. Every operator shall ensure that where special dietary and feeding arrangements have been made with the operator with respect to a child enrolled in a day nursery operated by the operator or in a location where private-home day care is provided by the operator that the arrangements are carried out in accordance with the written instructions of a parent of the child. R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 262, s. 43.

#### General

- 5 (4) The operator of a day nursery that has a program that runs for six hours or more in a day shall ensure that in addition to the spaces referred to in subsection (2) the day nursery has space designated for each of the following:
1. Eating and resting.
  2. The preparation of food if meals are prepared on the premises

## Manitoba

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the Manitoba government's website.*

### **Community Child Care Standards Act, 2004. Chapter c-158.** **Child Care Regulations 62/86.** <sup>[28]</sup>

#### Part A

#### Nutrition

- 16(1) Every licensee shall ensure that, where infants are cared for in the licensee's child care centre, the infants are
- (a) fed by the same person for at least three-quarters of their feedings at the child care centre;
  - (b) attended while eating or having a bottle; and
  - (c) held while having a bottle unless they are able to hold the bottle themselves.
- 16(3) Where meals or snacks are supplied by the licensee to children in attendance at the licensee's child care centre
- (a) if the child care centre is a full time child care centre or a school age child care centre, the licensee shall ensure that
    - (i) nutritious foods in accordance with Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating issued by the Minister of Health (Canada) are served,
    - (ii) written menus are
      - (A) prepared in advance,
      - (B) posted in a conspicuous location for the information of parents and guardians, and
      - (C) kept on file for a period of one year,
    - (iii) only foods of low choking potential are provided, and
    - (iv) no foods containing known peanut products are served to children under three years of age;
  - (b) if the child care centre is a nursery school, the licensee shall
    - (i) inform parents or guardians of the snacks provided for the children, and
    - (ii) shall comply with subclauses (a)(iii) and (iv).
- 16(4) Every licensee shall ensure that
- (a) if a child is in attendance during a recognized meal period, a meal is served to the child; and
  - (b) if a child is in attendance prior to or after a recognized meal period, a snack is served after approximately three hours of attendance.
- 16(5) Every licensee shall comply with all health regulations and guidelines pertaining to food storage, handling and serving.

# Saskatchewan

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the Saskatchewan government's website.*

## **Child Care Act. 2000.**

Child care regulations. 2001. 23(1) Subject to subsection (3), a licensee of a facility must provide meals and snacks for children attending the facility who are six months of age or older. <sup>[29]</sup>

(2) A licensee of a facility must ensure that:

- (a) subject to subsection (3), the meals and snacks provided meet the nutritional needs of the children attending the facility; and
- (b) the manner in which children are fed is appropriate to their ages and levels of development.

(3) Subject to subsection (4), a licensee of a facility is not required to provide:

- (a) infant formula or baby food; or
- (b) meals and snacks for a child who requires a special diet or whose parent requests a special diet.

(4) A licensee of a teen student support centre or a teen student support family child care home must provide any foods, other than infant formula, required by an infant under the age of six months.

## Food services

24 A licensee of a facility must ensure that adequate and safe procedures are followed in the facility for:

- (a) handling, preparation, serving and storing food; and
- (b) cleansing utensils used for eating and drinking.

# Alberta

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the Alberta government's website.*

## **Social Care Facilities Licensing Act. 2000.**

Child Care Regulation 180/2000. <sup>[30]</sup>

## Part II Facilities and their operation

### Meals and snacks

20. A licence holder must

- (a) provide or require parents to provide meals and snacks to the children, and
- (b) ensure that meals and snacks provided to the children
  - (i) are in accordance with Canada's Food Guide as approved by the Canadian Council on Nutrition or in accordance with other similar guidelines, and
  - (ii) are provided at appropriate times and in sufficient quantities in accordance with the needs of each child.

### Menus

21 A licence holder must make available to staff and parents, in a form and manner approved by a director, information on the food to be provided by the licence holder.

### Manner of feeding

22 A licence holder must ensure that the manner in which the children are fed is appropriate to their age and level of development.

# British Columbia

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the British Columbia government's website.*

## **Community Care and Assisted Living Act. 2002.**

Division I General care requirements

Nutrition

48 (1) A licensee must

(a) ensure that each child has healthy food and drink according to the Canada's Food Guide, and

(b) promote healthy eating and nutritional habits.

(2) If a child's record includes, or the child has a care plan that includes, instructions respecting food and drink for the child,

(a) the requirements of subsection (1) (a) do not apply to the extent that they are inconsistent with those instructions, and

(b) the licensee must comply with those instructions.

(3) A licensee must ensure that the food and drink given to a child is sufficient in quantity and quality to meet the developmental needs of the child, having regard to

(a) the child's age,

(b) the number of hours the child is under the care of the licensee, and

(c) the child's food preferences and cultural background.

(4) A licensee must ensure that children are not

(a) fed by means of a propped bottle,

(b) forced to consume any food or drink, or

(c) left unsupervised while consuming food or drink.

(5) A licensee must ensure that safe drinking water is available to children.

(6) A licensee must make available to parents information on the food and drink given to children.

(7) A licensee must ensure that food and drink are not used as a form of reward or punishment for children.

Menu planning and food services

69 (1) A licensee must ensure that menu planning takes account of all of the following:

(a) the needs of the persons in care, including their ages, levels of activity, the requirements of any therapeutic diets, and any matters that may affect the ability of persons in care to consume, or safely consume, food and drink;

(b) the food preferences and cultural backgrounds of the persons in care;

(c) seasonal variations in food, and diversity of food texture and colour.

(2) A licensee must ensure that persons in care are provided with snacks in addition to meals, as necessary to meet the needs of the persons in care.

(3) A licensee must ensure that persons in care who are absent from the community care facility will be provided with meals and snacks as necessary to meet the needs of the persons in care.

(4) A licensee must ensure that persons in care are given sufficient time in which to comfortably consume meals and snacks

## Northwest Territories and Nunavut

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the Northwest Territories and Nunavut websites.*

**Child Day Care Act. 1990. Chapter c-3.**

**Child Day Care Standards and Regulations. Nutritional standards** <sup>[32]</sup>

27.

(1) Nutritious food from guidelines provided by a qualified nutritionist must be provided by the operator or by the child's parent or guardian, for each child attending the child day care facility.

(2) The food referred to in this section may include country food, where the operator has obtained a licence to serve country food from the department responsible for renewable resources.

28. A child under 18 months of age must be

(a) attended by an adult while eating; and

(b) given only foods of low choking potential.

29. When a child attending a child day care facility is bottle fed, an adult must hold the bottle at all times during the feeding.

30. There must be no more than

(a) three hours between meals or snacks, for children over 10 years of age; and

(b) 2½ hours between meals or snacks for children 10 years of age and under.

31. (1) Menus must be prepared and posted a week in advance in a conspicuous place in the child day care facility.

(2) Any changes to the menu for a meal must be posted before the meal is served.

32. Every operator shall comply with all health regulations and guidelines pertaining to food storage, handling and serving.

33.

(1) Children in attendance at a child day care facility must have ready access to a pressurized drinking water supply approved by the Health Officer.

(2) Every operator shall maintain disposable or separate drinking cups in a manner acceptable to the Health Officer.

## Yukon

*Note: The following excerpts from the regulations are for reference purposes only. For the most current official version of the Acts and Regulations, please go to the Yukon government's website.*

### **Child Care Act. 1990.**

#### **Child Care Centre Program Regulation 1995/087. Nutritional standards** <sup>[33]</sup>

15.

(1) The operator must, after consulting with the parents or guardians, ensure that there is a sufficient quantity of foods that meet the basic nutritional requirements of the children in attendance; Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating and Native Food Guide must be used in conjunction with established guidelines.

(2) Subsection (1) does not forbid the supplying of food from the child's home.

(3) The operator must ensure that children who are in attendance when the following meals or snacks are served, have

(a) a morning meal, a mid-day meal, or an evening meal that includes at least four food groups as regulated by subsection (1), and

(b) a mid-morning, mid-afternoon, or midevening nutritional snack that includes at least two food groups as regulated by subsection (1).

(4) Subsection (3) does not apply to infants.

(5) The operator must ensure that school-aged children have an after-school snack.

(6) All foods must be prepared, stored, and served under sanitary conditions; foods supplied from the child's home must be stored and served under sanitary conditions; items which are perishable within the time they were prepared and intended to be eaten, must be refrigerated.

(7) During bottle feeding, each child who cannot hold their own bottle must be held; propping a bottle on a pillow or some other thing so the child can feed themselves is not permitted; no child shall be allowed to walk around while drinking from a bottle.

(8) Each infant must be fed according to its needs and schedule.

(9) Menus must be posted and followed.

(10) An adequate supply of drinking water which meets the guidelines for Canadian drinking water quality must be available at all times.

## An appetite for life (2006). Children in Europe

### AN APPETITE FOR LIFE: YOUNG CHILDREN, FOOD AND EATING. CHILDREN IN EUROPE, ISSUE 10, 2006

This issue of Children in Europe is about food services for young children -nurseries, kindergartens, nursery schools and primary schools.

This issue looks at how food is grown, cooked and eaten, and food as a cultural, social, educational and aesthetic experience, as well as a necessity for good health. Given the importance of food in his country, it is appropriate that the guest editor for this issue is Ferruccio Cremaschi, editor of Children in Europe's Italian partner magazine. Ferruccio brings a strong Italian flavour to the issue, with articles from Pistoia, Turin and the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia. But there are also articles from France, Germany, Sweden, England, and the United States, contributions from children in Belgium and Scotland, and menus from services in several countries.- Peter Moss, editor of Children

in Europe

**Ordering information** <sup>[34]</sup>. This issue of *Children in Europe* is available for purchasing in hard copy and in instant digital format.

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**Food for thought** <sup>[35]</sup> -Available for download with permission from *Children in Europe*

- Guest editor Ferruccio Cremaschi asks what meal times mean for children and explains is priorities in planning this issue.

**Overview of food** <sup>[36]</sup> <sup>[36]</sup>-Available for download with permission from *Children in Europe*

- *Children in Europe* presents its findings on the provision of food in children's services across Europe.

**Europe, children and food**

- Ferruccio Cremaschi examines the European Union's policy and legislation surrounding food provision for children.

**Responsible eating**

- Wendell Berry, known as the 'prophet' of rural America, argues that everyone should be involved in the production of food.

**The pleasure of eating**

- Food and eating have social and cultural meaning in the nursery schools of Pistoia in Italy –Donatella Giovannini explains.

**Mealtimes in Flemish nurseries: More than just eating**

- Pedagogical reforms have transformed mealtimes in many Flemish nurseries. Karin Eeckhout describes how this revolution has been achieved.

**Children's enjoyment of eating**

- Francois Leon considers the factors that influence children's food preferences.

**Just a meal – or a lesson in life?**

- Roger Prott looks at how schools and nurseries in Germany's capital city are tackling the country's rising obesity rates.

**Making more of midday meals at school**

- Children and parents are helping nurseries and schools in French-speaking Belgium to make lunchtime healthier, as Cristine Deliens explains.

**Feeding a city's children**

- Turin is a large Italian city which has to feed 50,000 children a day. Giuseppe Dalmasso describes how they achieve this.

**Billy's school meals diary**

- A Scottish primary school pupil shares his thoughts on a week's school meals.

**Eating out**

- Annica Grimlund describes how the outdoors is used as an educational tool in Sweden.

**Jamie's school dinners**

- Linsey Denholm describes the phenomenal success of Jamie Oliver's school dinner campaign in England and the pioneering Scottish initiative, 'Hungry for Success'.

**Focus on... vegetable gardens in schools**

- How school vegetable gardens can be a source of food, education, and fun.

Fri, 05/27/2011

**Tags:**

**quality** <sup>[6]</sup>

**health** <sup>[7]</sup>

**curricula and pedagogy** <sup>[8]</sup>

## Materials available online

### Reports, books & analysis

Laying the table. Recommendations for national food and nutrition guidance for early years settings in England. Report of the Advisory Panel on Food and Nutrition in Early Years (link not available)  
School Food Trust, 2010

**Georgie Porgie Pudding and Pie: Exposing the truth about nursery food** <sup>[37]</sup>

Fookes, Catherine

Source: Soil Association, 2008

>> Read more about the Soil Association's **Better Nursery Food Now** <sup>[38]</sup> campaign.

**Positive nutrition experiences for children in child care** <sup>[39]</sup>

Gable, S. (2007). University of Missouri.

**The impact of child care providers' feeding on children's food consumption** <sup>[40]</sup>

Hughes, S., Patrick, H., Power, T. Fisher, J. Anderson, C., and Nicklas, T. (2007). *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*, Vol.28.

**Making food healthy and safe for children, 2nd edition.** <sup>[41]</sup>

Benjamin, S. (2007). National Institute for Child Care Health Consultants.

- See chapter 6: Promoting pleasant meals and snacks and Chapter 7: Helping children and families learn about food

**Preschool program guidance: Planning for meal and snack times in preschool programs** <sup>[42]</sup>

(2006). State of New Jersey Department of Education.

**Mealtime memos for child care** <sup>[43]</sup>

Source: National Food Service Management Institute, University of Mississippi.

This newsletter series offers information for child care providers and focuses on good nutrition for young children. Topics include cooking, education, nutrition and role modeling. The following selection are of particular interest:

- Get going green, 2010 (Link is no longer available)
- Feeding young children in group settings, 2010 (Link is no longer available)
- Helping children develop healthy eating habits, 2009 (Link is no longer available)
- Make mealtimes happy times, 2006 (Link is no longer available)
- Family-style dining in child care, 2006 (Link is no longer available)
- Happy mealtimes for healthy kids, 2004 (Link is no longer available)
- Chatting with children at mealtimes, 2003 (Link is no longer available)
- Adults influence what children eat, 2002 (Link is no longer available)

**Influential factors of caregiver behavior at mealtime: A study of 24 child-care programs** <sup>[44]</sup>

Nahikian-Nelms, M. (1997). *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, Vol. 97(5).

## News articles

**Daycare caterer passes off meals from discount stores as organic, kosher, halal** <sup>[45]</sup>

Brazao, Dale

Source: Toronto Star, May 2011

**New regulations to allow for healthy eating choices at child care facilities** <sup>[46]</sup>

Malloy, Jason

Source: Truro Daily News, 28 April 2011

**Call for nursery menu guidelines to promote healthy lifestyles** <sup>[47]</sup>

Meikle, James

Source: The Guardian, 4 March 2011

**Province brings Ontario produce to daycare centres** <sup>[48]</sup>

Ardizzi, Andrew

Source: Inside Toronto, 9 February 2011

**Frozen fish, canned potatoes on menu at city daycares** <sup>[49]</sup>

Roberts, Rob

Source: National Post, 15 May 2008

**Healthy diet for children belongs on daycare menu** <sup>[50]</sup>

Spector, Karen and Bloch, Gary

Source: Toronto Star, 9 Jan 2008

## Organizations

Better Daycare Food Network

A coalition of Toronto parents who would like to improve the quality of food in municipally child care centres.

## Print only materials (abstracts provided)

### **Food for future citizens: School meal culture in Sweden**

Gullberg, E. (2006). *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, Vol. 9(3).

Every child in Sweden between years 1 and 10, has the right to eat a free school lunch every weekday. These lunches are cooked and served by professional staff in suitable, well equipped dining halls. Ever since schooling has existed in Sweden authorities in charge of the education system have organized school meals. Until the 1930s only children who revealed an obvious need received school meals. Every family had to apply and every single case was carefully investigated. Discussions on "the modern school lunch" started during the 1930s, when the Swedish compulsory school transformed from an education platform into an arena for social reforms. Social engineers considered the school to be an efficient means of changing, improving and fostering a strong and successful nation with healthy citizens. This article's aim is to reveal and analyze the roots of, and the welfare concept of, the Swedish school meal.

### **Autonomy at mealtime: Building healthy food preferences and eating behaviours in young children**

Mogharreban, C. and Nahikian-Nelms, M. (2006). *Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 24(1).

This article discusses family-style meal service as a means to building autonomy and healthy eating behaviors in young children. The authors discuss the development of food preferences, age-related developmental responses to food, and the importance of socially mediated exposure to food as a way to increased food acceptance. Guidelines for implementing family-style mealtimes in child care settings are outlined.

### **Pre-school staff attitudes toward foods in relation to the pedagogical meal**

Sepp, H., Abrahamsson, L., and Fjellstrom, C. (2006). *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 30(2).

The aim of this study, with the pedagogic meal in focus, was to identify pre-school staff members' attitudes to the role of food and meals as part of daily activities at pre-school. Interviews were carried out at 12 pre-schools and a total of 34 pre-school staff participated. The staff revealed strong opinions as well as ambivalence towards how food and meals should best be integrated into their daily work and pedagogic activities. The pre-school staffs' lack of or insufficient education and knowledge regarding food and nutrition resulted in an ambivalent and uncertain situation with respect to how they should see themselves as teachers in the meal situation. Nevertheless, most of the staff had a clear perception of what it meant to practice a pedagogic meal. It meant helping and encouraging the children to help themselves and serving as an adult model for the children at table, though this pedagogic activity was uncommon. While the staff were satisfied with the pre-schools' role of catering for the children, they expressed concern about or even mistrust towards the children's parents. Despite, or perhaps due to, their inadequate knowledge about food and nutrition and the lack of specific aims for the pedagogic meal, they assumed that the public sector was a better educational institution regarding foods and a better guarantor for children's food habits and dietary intake. As the teachers' identities have changed over the past years they have not yet found a solid ground for determining how food and meals could be integrated into their everyday work as pre-school teachers and childminders.

### **Children's interactions at preschool mealtime. Social aspects.**

Noriko, T. (2000). *Japanese Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 48(2).

The present research examined young children's interactions at preschool mealtime. In Study 1, 4-to 5-year olds were observed at 1 preschool for 1 year 3 months. While eating, the children talked about family, food, and other general topics. Ritualized interactions, that is, interactions that were routine or that followed a set pattern, were identified. In the 4-year-olds' class, interactions that followed set patterns were longer than non-ritualized ones, and more children participated in such interactions than in the non-ritualized ones. However, these results were not observed in the 5-year-olds. Rather, in the 5-year-olds' class, non-ritualized interactions were longer and had more participants than those with an established pattern. In Study 2, observations were made of a class 4-year-olds who had just entered the school. At first, interactions following the set patterns used in that classroom were not found, but they appeared about 1 month later. As in the 4-year-olds' class in Study 1, longer interactions and more participation were found for interactions following set routines than for non-ritualized interactions.

### **Narratives and explanations during mealtime conversations in Norway and the U.S.**

Snow, C. and Aukrust, V. (1998). *Language in Society*, Vol. 27.

Mealtimes reveal culturally specific ways of talking, and constitute opportunities for socialization of children into those ways. In 22 Norwegian families and 22 American families, matched for age and gender of preschool-aged child and for participant constellation, mealtimes were examined for the occurrence and type of narrative and explanatory talk. All indices suggested that the Norwegian families produced more narrative talk - in particular, talk about minor deviations from social scripts - whereas the American families produced more explanatory talk, particularly talk focused on explanations for physical events or for individual behaviors. When Norwegian families gave explanations, they were likely to be focused on social norms and deviations from them, like their narratives. The results are interpreted in relation to the Norwegian cultural values of mitigated collectivism, egalitarianism, homogeneity, and implicit social rules, in contrast to American values of individualism, diversity, and explicit formulation and transmission of civic values.

### **Making mealtime a developmentally appropriate curriculum activity for preschoolers**

Fletcher, J. and Branen, L. (1994). *Day Care and Early Education*, Vol. 21(3).

To foster developmentally appropriate activities at mealtimes, child caregivers should let children serve themselves and eat until they are full; resist forcing children to eat; supply child-sized utensils; offer foods that need to be spread; cut, broken or spooned from a bowl; let children prepare some foods; and be aware of cultural values.

Mon, 05/30/2011

**Tags:**

quality <sup>[6]</sup>

health <sup>[7]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 2 Nov 2020):** <https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/what-do-mealtimes-and-food-mean-early-childhood-programs-0>

**Links**

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- [40] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17435460/>
- [41] <https://studylib.net/doc/8098545/making-food-healthy-and-safe---national-training-institut...>
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