



## Menu Planning Tips for Variety

Warm Recipe for Winter:

### Corn Chowder

Ingredients:

Broth, Chicken	2/3 cup
Milk, low fat	2/3 cup
Potatoes, cubed	1/2 lb
Onion, green, chopped	1/4 cup
Corn, frozen	10 oz.
Milk, instant non-fat, dry	4 tsp
Mustard, dry	1/8 tsp
Salt	1/8 tsp
Pepper	dash

Directions:

1. Combine broth, milk, potatoes, and green onion and bring to boil in a large saucepan. Lower heat and simmer until potatoes are tender (about 12 min). Add corn and cook one more minute.
2. Add nonfat dry milk, dry mustard, salt, and pepper and blend. Remove 2 cups of chowder and puree in a food processor or blender.
3. Return pureed mixture to the soup in the large saucepan and reheat until hot. Pour into 8 soup bowls.

Serves 8 preschoolers.



**As** you plan meals for children..... Keep in mind that it is important to obtain nutrients from a variety of foods. Serving a variety of foods is the best way to provide children with adequate calories as well as nutrients and also develop healthy eating habits.

### Main Dishes:

- **Plan a different type of meat alternate for each day in the week.** Use a variety such as eggs, beef, beans, fish, poultry, ham, low-fat cheese, low-fat yogurt, etc.
- **Vary the type of main courses you serve.** For example soup one day, sandwich the next, casserole the third day and salad on another. **Avoid** planning spaghetti every Monday and macaroni n

cheese every Tuesday.

### Vegetables and Fruits:

- Plan to **serve seasonal fruits and vegetables** when they are plentiful, reasonably priced and are at the peak of quality.
- **Include raw and cooked vegetables and/or fruits. The same vegetable can be served in different forms** during the week or month. For example, potatoes can be served mashed, baked, oven fried or in the form of potato salad. This will also introduce variety in texture of foods to children.
- **Limit juices** to one time per day preferably during snacks. Fresh fruit is a better choice. Do not serve juices during lunch or dinner.

- **Include fruits and vegetables rich in Vitamin C everyday and fruits and vegetables rich in Vitamin A at least 3-4 times per week.**
- **Plan to include vegetables and fruits during snacks.** Fruits and vegetables add color to the meal and make it more eye appealing.

### Grains and Breads:

- **Plan to serve a different type of bread/ grain each day.** Breads can be in the form of noodles, rice, pasta products, rolls, sandwich buns, cornbread or biscuits, whole wheat crackers etc.
- **Make at least half your grains whole.** For example, if you have served cereal with milk for breakfast, plan to serve whole wheat bread for lunch or if you have served oat meal for breakfast, white bread can be served during lunch.
- **Limit use of sweet grains/ breads** at breakfast and at snacks. You can do this by including cereals with less sugar and those that have more fiber. Vary between hot cereals (like oatmeal, cream of wheat) and cold cereals. ■



## More Menu Planning Tips...

Here are some more menu planning tips...

**Food preferences:** Consider the regional, cultural and personal food preferences of the children you serve, but don't be afraid to introduce new foods from time to time. Include new foods and encourage children to try them.

**Holidays and Special occasions:** Plan festive meals and snacks for national holidays.

**Climate or Seasons:** Include more hot foods in cold weather, and more cold foods in warm weather. Use foods in season when planning your meals.

**Strive for balance:** Too many mild flavors make a meal bland and too many strong flavored foods make it unacceptable to children.

Avoid too many foods of the same color in the same meal. A meal with turkey, rice, cauliflower and pears and milk would lack color. A better combination would be turkey with green peas, whole wheat bread, oranges and milk.

Balance low fat side dishes to balance a higher fat entrée. For example, with a grilled cheese sandwich or chicken nuggets serve carrot and celery sticks.

Overall, review your menus for variety:

- Color
- Texture
- Flavor
- Temperature
- Preparation methods



Source: Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals- A Menu Planner for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. USDA. FNS. Team Nutrition. pg 51-53 and pg 77-86.

<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/buildingblocks.html>

## Meal Time Range on Web HX

Do you serve a meal to one group of children at an earlier meal time and another group of children at a later meal time for the same meal? To **record** this go to:

**>Record meals> No: of meal servings> Choose 2.**

When you do this, you will notice two meal time servings. Include the earlier meal time under **servicing # 1 time** (for example 7:30 am) and the later meal time under **servicing # 2 time** (for example 8:30 am). You will also notice two attendance columns show up - **Attend 1 and Attend 2**. Under **Attend 1** check the children who came **earlier** than 7:30 am and ate the meal at 7:30 am and under **Attend 2** check the children who came in **after** 7:30 am and ate the meal at 8:30 am.

If you want both your serving times for each meal to be set as default in Minute Menu Web HX please contact your site monitor to set it up for you.

## Program Reminders.....

- ⇒ **Re-enrollment** of children for the year 2010 is upcoming. **Please look out for the notice** that will be mailed out this month requesting an update in enrollment. Please remember to send the forms by the deadline date.
- ⇒ Please continue to include decline forms for non-participating children and for infants when parent provides formula/ food, when enrolling new children.

### Upcoming workshops on Food Program Update!

Wednesday, Jan 13, 2009

6:30-9:00 pm (Spanish)

Thursday, February 11th, 2009

6:30-9:00pm (English)

Currently we are no longer accepting registrations for these workshops.

It is mandatory for those who have registered to attend.

**Juice is not reimbursable** as a fruit / vegetable alternate during **lunch or dinner**. Fresh fruit or vegetable is a better choice.

Juice for **infants** should be introduced only when they are ready to drink it from a cup.

