

SHORT COURSES FOR VACATION CARE WORKERS

Course Number 8: Food and Nutrition

Course Duration 1.5 hours

Aim

This training course will focus on the area of food and nutrition and how to introduce these concepts into your vacation care centre. There will be an emphasis on cooking with the children and preparing basic, healthy snacks without a lot of money or resources.

Learning Outcomes

- Participants will gain an understanding of how to prepare a variety of foods with children using little or no equipment.
- Participants will have the opportunity to discuss recipes and other options for healthy nutritious menus at their centres and safe food handling..
- Participants will be provided with strategies to examine practices within their centres.

Cooking with Kids

Food preparation is an important part of every vacation care centre's life. Your centre will be preparing food for children including cooking activities, preparing morning and afternoon tea and monitoring food that children bring from home. There are many factors that will influence your centre and staff in terms of how food and cooking is dealt with.

Some of these factors include:

- Likes/dislikes
- Religion
- Culture
- Food associations
- Family preferences
- Role models
- Medical, eg special dietary needs
- Time/convenience
- Cost

Food preferences

It is very important that staff are aware of these factors and any others that might influence your food programming. Your enrolment forms should ask specific questions to address these factors.



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Remember that the children are also a wonderful resource in terms of what they like and don't like to eat.

Once you have discovered their medical and cultural needs you can set about introducing new and exciting tastes to the children at the centre. When introducing new foods, remember:

- One new food at a time
- Introduce new food a number of times
- Serve new foods with favourite foods
- Present new food in a different way, eg raw or mixed with other foods
- Create positive associations eg fun name/stories
- Give positive feedback for trying new foods
- Discuss the new foods - colour, texture, where it comes from
- Involve children in food preparation
- Role model trying new foods

Remember to involve your staff in planning new food for the menu. You cannot expect the children to try something new when the staff are turning their noses up at it. Remember children take their lead from you.

Activity 1

- What are some examples of foods from other cultures that are currently provided at your service?
- How were these new foods introduced?
- How can children be encouraged to try new foods?

What to do when setting the program

Think healthy, cheap and easy, but also think about how you can include the children in the process

Choose recipes that are adaptable to suit tastes, allergies and budget as well as cooking equipment, the age of the children and health

Pick recipes that encourage children to eat a variety of foods.

Choose recipes that you are able to include the children with, not too complicated

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating provides information about the amounts and kinds of food that you need each day to get enough nutrients essential for good health and well being. The pie graph depicts a variety of foods as part of our everyday diet.

The five food groups are:

- Bread, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles – provide energy, carbohydrate, protein, B group vitamins and dietary fibre.
- Vegetables, legumes – provide vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, dietary fibre and carbohydrate.
- Fruit – provides vitamins, carbohydrate and dietary fibre.
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese – provide energy, protein, calcium, riboflavin, vitamin B12 and the fat soluble vitamins.
- Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, legumes – provide energy, protein, iron, niacin, vitamin B12 and zinc.

Extra foods – eaten sometimes or in small amounts

Some foods don't fit into the five food groups. They are not essential to provide the nutrients the body needs and some contain too much added fat, salt and sugars. These foods are likely to contribute large amounts of energy. However, they can add to the enjoyment of eating a healthy diet.

Examples include biscuits, cakes, pastries, soft drinks, high fat snack items such as crisps, pies, sausage rolls and other takeaways, lollies and chocolates.

Margarine and oil also fit into this group of foods. Choose unsaturated margarines and oils based on olive, canola, peanut, sunflower, safflower, corn and soya bean oil.

Encourage children to:

- Choose foods from each of the five food groups everyday.
- Choose different varieties of foods from within each of the five food groups from day to day.
- Drink plenty of water.

If you have a limited budget:

Wasted food is expensive, so do not buy large quantities of perishable goods and store carefully

Buy larger sizes of regularly used foods and compare brand prices where possible

Freeze bread but do not refrigerate it (freezing stalls the staling process, refrigeration speeds it up)

Buy fruit and vegetables that are in season, they may be cheaper and fresher

Grate cheese rather than cutting it to make it go further

Try and think of alternative menu items that are more cost effective

If you have limited equipment:

It is possible to cook with a microwave, an electric frying pan, a toaster, bbq or a toasted sandwich maker

Look for no cook recipes. Sandwiches will still provide a good nutritious snack on most days and the presentation fillings can still be varied

Picnic meals are enjoyed by children and are one solution when messy foods are being offered

An electric frying pan is a cost effective piece of equipment when cooking facilities are limited.

The frying pan can be used for toasted sandwiches, johnny cakes, fried rice, French toast, pancakes and more

Menu Planning

- Planning your menu ensures:
- The menu is nutritionally balanced
- Best food choices are being made
- Food is varied
- Food preparation is organised
- Foods costs are kept to a minimum as exact quantities can be purchased

A handy checklist for preparing meals such as breakfast, morning tea and/or afternoon tea is:

Does your menu for each meal contain at least:

- ✓ A high calcium food such as dairy products?
- ✓ A cereal based food?
- ✓ A fruit or vegetable?
- ✓ In addition, for an excellent menu, have you included a good or moderate source of iron? Foods with iron include eggs, lean meat and leafy green vegetables.
- ✓ Remember to provide a healthy drink – such as milk or juice and always plenty of water. When offering juice to children, remember it must diluted with water to a 50/50 concentration.

Each day try to include at least 2 or 3 different varieties within each of the five food group.

Food Safety

When preparing meals for and with children it is vital that staff at the centre meet appropriate food safety and hygiene practices.

The main causes of food poisoning are germs (bacteria, viruses and parasites). Germs can only be seen under a microscope and can't be seen by the naked eye. Chemicals (eg pesticides, disinfectants) may also cause food poisoning, although this is less common.

For bacteria to multiply, they need:

- Food – particularly raw and cooked chicken, meat, fish, eggs, dairy foods, shellfish, sauces, salad dressing, cooked pasta and rice, cut fruit and vegetables.
- Moisture – all living things need moisture to grow.
- Right temperature – bacteria grow at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C (the danger zone). The ideal temperature for bacterial growth is body temperature (37.5°C) but they also grow well at room temperature (20°C).
- Time – bacteria double in number every ten to thirty minutes. One bacterium that divides every twenty minutes will have produced two million bacteria after seven hours and 4.4 billion after fourteen hours.

Activity 2

What are some of the constraints workers face when preparing and providing food?

What are some of the important factors related to food safety and hygiene?

Food handling checklist for centres:

- ✓ There is access to hot and cold running water
- ✓ A sink is available for washing up
- ✓ There is soap available for hand washing
- ✓ Paper towels are available for hand drying
- ✓ There is sufficient refrigerator space for storing all perishable food
- ✓ The refrigerator contains a thermometer
- ✓ There is adequate seating or floor space for children to sit whilst eating
- ✓ Equipment such as cutting boards are in good condition with no crevices or cracks
- ✓ Staff and children who are sick do not prepare food

- ✓ Staff wash their hands with soap and warm running water before handling food
- ✓ After washing, staff dry their hands completely with a disposable or single use towel
- ✓ Staff wear disposable gloves or use tongs when handling cooked or 'ready to eat' food
- ✓ Staff prevent their hair from falling into food
- ✓ Staff do not smoke in food preparation area
- ✓ Children wash their hands before handling or eating food
- ✓ Children do not share food, plates, cups or utensils
- ✓ Perishable food is kept cold while transporting
- ✓ All perishable food is stored in the refrigerator.
- ✓ Perishable food left at room temperature for longer than 2 hours is thrown out.
- ✓ The interior refrigerator temperature is 5°C or lower.
- ✓ All food in the refrigerator is covered or in sealed containers.
- ✓ Raw food is stored at the bottom of the refrigerator or in a sealed section of the refrigerator.
- ✓ The interior of the freezer is -15°C or lower.
- ✓ Large amounts of food are divided into smaller flat containers before refrigerating or freezing.
- ✓ Non perishable foods are stored in sealed containers in a dry place.
- ✓ Separate equipment is used to prepare raw and cooked foods.
- ✓ Fruit and vegetables are washed well.
- ✓ Meat, fish and poultry are thawed in the refrigerator or the microwave.
- ✓ Thawed food is not refrozen.
- ✓ Food is reheated only once.
- ✓ Food is reheated quickly to at least 75°C.
- ✓ Work areas and equipment are cleaned with warm soapy water then rinsed in hot water.
- ✓ After they are cleaned, all work areas and equipment including chopping boards are sanitised.
- ✓ Equipment is allowed to air dry. Tea towels are not used.
- ✓ Appliances such a refrigerators, ovens and microwaves are cleaned regularly.
- ✓ Floors are swept or vacuumed daily and washed at least once a week.

Activity 3

Using the checklist above, identify what you do at your centre now and where there is room for improvement.

Recommended Resource

Vacation Care Training and Resource Kit available from Network

Useful publications available from Network

see Network's website www.netoosh.org.au

Nutrition Ready to go @ OOSH

Selected Recipe Books