

## Best Practices for Serving Foods to Groups of Children

### Provide space

YOUNG CHILDREN are learning to control their muscles, especially their hand muscles. They need plenty of space to manage food, drink and eating utensils. Make sure there is adequate “personal space” for each of the children as they eat.



### Provide practice with child sized utensils

Fine motor control is a major developmental task of young children. Strength, endurance and control are minimally developed for using eating utensils. Help children increase skills by giving them plenty of practice with spoons, forks, knives and serving utensils. Use child-sized eating utensils and equipment.

### Provide foods that challenge eating skills

Offer foods to spread, cut, break, spear or spoon from a bowl. This variety allows children to gain skills.

**Caution:** expect children to have varying degrees of ability. Children should have lots of time and opportunity to practice these skills before competence is expected.

### Make sure adults eat with children

Adults are role models for using utensils, choosing and eating foods and behaving in acceptable ways at the table. They help shape children’s eating behavior. Adults elaborate and embellish on children’s “food” vocabularies. Adults help

children trust the eating environment by making sure they are safe both physically and psychologically.

### Help children learn about food by assisting them as they participate in preparing it

Children can participate in preparing food. They enjoy eating what

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- ▶ You can sign up for free text messages (3 per week) geared specifically to your baby’s gestational age, or age up to one year. Send a text to 511411 with the word BABY (or BEBE for Spanish messages) to begin receiving information and reminders to improve the health of your baby.
- ▶ In 1971, a typical supermarket carried just less than 8,000 items. Today that figure is more than 50,000.
- ▶ The average American eats roughly 260 pounds of imported food every year. Imports account for close to 15 percent of our diet.
- ▶ The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which oversees roughly 80% of the food supply, inspects only about 1% of the food that enters the United States.

Sources: *Test4Baby.com, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Nutrition Action Newsletter*

### Quotable Quotes

“I don’t like food that’s too carefully arranged; it makes me think that the chef is spending too much time arranging and not enough time cooking. If I wanted a picture I’d buy a painting.”

— Andy Rooney

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- ◆ Recipes

## Best Practices for Serving Foods to Groups of Children

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they prepare. Children gain a sense of autonomy (self-control) as a part of food preparation. This results in children feeling healthy control in their relationships with food and eating.

### Help children listen to their internal controls on how much or whether to eat

Let children eat until they are full or satisfied, rather than setting limits on how much they eat. Sometimes we feed children in groups by using a principle of equality. This translates to the rule that each child gets an equal amount. Such equality is not fair. Fairness in feeding children should be based on letting the children's natural body cues tell them when they are full. What is fair is to trust children will eat as much as they need.



### Trust children to eat as much as they need

Resist forcing children to clean their plates. When people are forced to eat beyond what their brains tell them is enough, they learn to overcome their bodies' hunger and satiety cues. Be careful of subtle forcing, no matter how gentle or kind-hearted.

### Let children serve themselves

Children waste less when they are given an opportunity to choose how much they will have. Let them serve themselves rather than depend on adults, who may heap food on the plates of unwilling children. As children first serve themselves in family style service, they begin to use skills for passing bowls and selecting amounts. Support children as they learn how to pass bowls without accidents and how to choose portion sizes that match how much they can eat.

### Feed children often

Young children need to eat about six times a day. Schedule meals and snacks. The length of time that children may continue to eat should be flexible. Remember that some children, on certain days, take longer to eat than the group. In addition, remember that some foods take longer to eat than others. A ham sandwich takes longer to eat than a half cup of pudding!

### Set the environment so children do not wait too long

Since young children are learning to delay gratification, they have greater difficulty than older children in waiting their turns. They are also working on the social skills of taking turns and sharing as well as learning "table manners." In group settings, where children serve themselves, be alert to how long children must wait to begin serving themselves. Offer enough bowls of food or pitchers of drink so that children have limited waiting periods.

### Present food that is commonly known to children, and relate new foods to those they already know

Prepare foods so they are recognizable to children. Avoid trying to always be "cute" Some recipes for children inappropriately suggest making food into clown sandwiches or vegetable monsters in a misguided effort to attract children's attention. Children want routine and familiarity in their foods.

— Janice Fletcher, Ed.D and Laurel Branen, R.D., Ph.D.  
University of Idaho

## KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

# Guidelines for Storing & Treating Your Emergency Water Supply

**WATER IS ESSENTIAL TO LIFE**, and in our modern society, availability of water is taken for granted. But in disasters, the water flow we all count on may not be there. Plan ahead for emergencies by taking steps now to store water for your family and the children in your care.

### How much water do I need to store?

- Store 1 to 2 gallons of safe water per person per day.
- Store enough water to last each person at least 3 days. More is better. Consider pets and the possibility that you might have visitors present when disaster strikes.
- For any individuals with chronic health problems, including weakened immune systems, purchase distilled water.

### How long can water be stored?

- Label your stored water with the date it was stored.
- Replace your stored water every six months.
- Specially sealed, airtight pouches of water may be stored up to 5 years (check the label).

### How and where should I store my emergency water supply?

- Store tap water in airtight, clean food-grade plastic containers. (Do not store in glass or used milk containers.)
- Place all containers (tap water, bottled water or pouches) in a cool, dark, easy-to-reach location, secure from animals. (Examples: in the back of closets, under beds and tables, behind a sofa)
- Avoid storing the water in garages or attics where it can get too hot.

### Should I treat my stored water before using it?

Water properly stored is safe to drink. Only treat your stored water if:

- Labels show the water has been stored longer than six months
- The water has an unusual odor



- The container is leaking
- The seal does not appear to be airtight
- You have any concerns about the water's safety

### If my stored water needs to be treated, how do I treat it?

#### • Treatment Option #1

Boil your stored water for at least one minute, let cool, then drink or use to prepare food. Boiling is the preferred treatment method.

#### • Treatment Option #2

Add a ¼ teaspoon or 16 drops of bleach to each gallon of water. Shake or stir, then let stand 30 minutes. A slight chlorine taste and smell is normal. (The bleach in your emergency kit should be replaced every six months.)

### Are there other sources of water I can use in an emergency?

- Water from the water heater, toilet tank, pool or hot tub can be used with soap for washing down surfaces, cleaning tools and washing your body.
- Your stored water is meant to keep you alive; use it only for drinking and food preparation.
- If you run out of stored drinking water, you can use the water from your water heater for drinking after you strain and treat it. To strain it, pour it through a clean cloth or layers of paper towels. Then treat this water following the directions given in the previous answer.

— East Bay Municipal Utility District

## Asparagus and Beef Frittata

Ground beef .....	1 lb	Tabasco sauce .....	few drops
Onion, chopped .....	1	Eggs, beaten .....	8
Asparagus .....	½ lb	Tomatoes, diced .....	2
Salt .....	1 tsp	Parmesan cheese, shredded .....	½ cup
Pepper .....	½ tsp		

1. Cook beef and onions in an ovenproof skillet over medium heat until the beef is no longer pink and onion is tender. Drain off fat.
2. Cut asparagus in 1 inch pieces and add to skillet along with the seasoning, and sauté 5-7 minutes until tender.
3. Pour beaten eggs over beef and asparagus mixture in the skillet. Cover, reduce heat to low and cook until the edges are set and the bottom is lightly browned.
4. Top eggs with tomatoes and sprinkle with cheese. Broil uncovered a few minutes, until cooked through.

Yield: 12 servings

Meets requirement for fruit/vegetable and protein/meat alternate

— Food Max

## Great Grape Smoothie

Grape juice .....	1 cup
Grapes, seedless, frozen .....	2 cups
Yogurt, plain .....	½ cup

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until mixture is smooth and frothy.

Yield: 4 servings

Meets requirement for fruit/vegetable at breakfast or snack only

— Good Housekeeping

## Peanut Butter Banana Burrito

Whole grain tortilla .....	1
Peanut butter .....	2 Tbsp
Banana .....	1

1. Spread tortilla with peanut butter. Place banana on top.
2. Roll up and slice in half.

Yield: 2 servings

Meets requirement for fruit/vegetable and grains/breads

— allyou.com

## Activity Corner

### JUMP THE CREEK

On a driveway, patio or grassy area create a pretend creek for children using sidewalk chalk, painter's tape or jump ropes. Vary the distance between two parallel lines forming a meandering stream.

Explain to the children that they are taking a walk in the woods and may need to cross a creek. They get to decide how far they can jump. Preschoolers may start by jumping over the narrow part of the creek. As they gain confidence and improve their jumping skills, they may jump over the wider part of the creek.

To assist children in learning the fundamentals of jumping, ask the children to bend their knees, swing their arms forward and takeoff and land on two feet, without falling over.

More experienced children may want the challenge of taking off from one-foot and landing on the other.

— Adapted from [pecentral.org](http://pecentral.org)

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**Food Q: What bird is with you at every meal?**  
**Funny A: A swallow!**