

2002 **A**gent **T**eaching **G**uide

Making the Most of Your Food Dollar: Feeding Children

Individual and Family Resources Initiative Team
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Introduction

Did you know there are no good or bad foods? You can provide nutritious, economical meals for your children when you plan your meals and snacks carefully. The seven parent newsletters can tell you how to do this.

Target Audiences

- EFNEP parents
- Child care providers
- Parents, grandparents and others who care for children at snack times and mealtimes

Objective

Participants will learn how to choose, prepare and offer nutritious meals and snacks to young children.

Major Teaching Points

- Offer children a variety of healthy foods at snack time and mealtime. (Newsletters 1-7) Introduce concept in Lesson 1.
- Learn basic guidelines for choosing, preparing and serving healthy, economical foods. (Newsletters 1-7)
- Meals and snacks are more economical when small portions are offered and children can have seconds if they want them. (Newsletters 1-7)
- Follow recommended servings in the food groups when you plan meals and snacks each day. (Newsletters 2-6)
- It is possible to make healthy, economical choices in each food group. (Newsletters 2-6)
- Follow simple visual guidelines to remember serving sizes. (Newsletter 7)

Agent Teaching Guide

Teaching the Lesson

1. Review the seven parent newsletters on the web site.
http://www.arfamilies.org/money/spending/feeding_children/default.asp

Handouts – download from above web site.
Use the *printer friendly* pdf versions of each newsletter.
Black-and-white copies of each newsletter are attached.

2. Lessons are best taught in order. Discussion questions are given. The newsletters are listed in order. Each unit can take up to 15-20 minutes.

Newsletter 1: Planning Meals and Snacks

Newsletter 2: Breads, Cereals, Rice, Pasta

Newsletter 3: Fruits and Vegetables

Newsletter 4: Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese

Newsletter 5: Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts

Newsletter 6: Fats, Oils, and Sweets

Newsletter 7: Feeding Children on a Budget

Make the Most of Your Food Dollar Planning Meals and Snacks

Questions and items in bold are for the leader. Items in the newsletter are indented.

Why do children and adults need to eat a variety of foods?

Newsletter Introduction – Read with learners.

Did you know..... There are no “good” foods or “bad” foods?

But, some foods should be eaten more often than others.

Follow the suggestions below and you will avoid waste, eat healthy and stretch your food dollar.

Children need the same variety of foods as older family members, but how much they need changes as they grow.

Why do children and adults need to eat a variety of foods?

Answer: Different foods contain different amounts of vitamins, minerals, fat, fiber, etc. By eating a variety, you are more likely to get the nutrients you need.

What would you tell parents who asked you for advice on how to get your children to eat? Note: Some suggestions are included in the newsletter.

Mealtime Tips for Parents

Offer a variety of healthy foods and let your children decide how much to eat. Their appetites may change from day to day. Offer small portions of food. Let your children ask for seconds if they want them.

- schedule regular time for meals and snacks
- keep mealtime calm and relaxed
- turn off the television at mealtime
- set a good example
- keep healthy snacks like fruit on hand instead of candy, chips, soda and cookies

Teaching Guide for Newsletter 1 – page 2

The Food Guide Pyramid will help you choose the foods your children need to eat every day to grow and stay healthy.

Review why the food guide pyramid is wider at the bottom and peaks at the top.

- There are more servings on the bottom. You have to work to get all of the servings eaten in a day.
- Tip foods are extras. Eat sparingly. There are no recommended number of servings.

**Ask: What foods do you need to eat each day?
Write responses on a flip chart and then help the group fit them into the food guide pyramid. Or illustrate using food models or food pictures.**

Make the Most of Your Food Dollar Feeding Children – Breads, Cereals, Rice, Pasta

Questions and items in bold are for the leader. Items in the newsletter are indented.

Newsletter Introduction:

Did you know..... You need to eat more bread, cereal, rice and noodles than any other kind of food?

Let's Review: Why do you start planning meals with the bread, cereal, rice and noodle group?

You need to eat more bread, cereal, rice and noodles than any other kind of food.

That is why these foods are at the bottom or base of the Food Guide Pyramid.

Start with the bread, cereal, rice and noodle group when you plan meals for your family.

How many servings do children need from the grain group?

Name as many different foods as you can think of from this group.

Write on flip chart or board and then categorize as grain, bread, pasta, cereal.

What counts as 1 serving?

1 slice of bread

1/2 cup of cooked cereal, rice or pasta

about 1 cup of dry cereal

Why is the bread, cereal, rice and noodle group good for a food budget?

- Foods from this food group are healthy for your family.
- Foods cost more as you move up the pyramid, and we need to eat fewer servings of foods near the top of the pyramid.

What do these foods contribute to a daily diet?

- Many grain foods do not cost much, and they give you lots of energy, vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- They give you a lot of “bang for the buck” if you choose wisely.

Teaching Guide for Newsletter 2 – page 2

Tips for Choosing Grain Foods on a Budget

**How can you get the most value for your food dollar when you choose grain foods?
What foods from the grain group do you think are a good value? Write list on board or flip chart.
Have learners read labels to share with others about why a particular food is a good value.**

For the best value, choose:

- regular oatmeal
- tortillas
- bread
- rice
- graham crackers
- saltines or soda crackers
- store brand cereals - **show an example**
- macaroni and noodles

How many ways can you buy cereal? List ideas on flip chart and discuss. Be sure to note where these are discussed in the newsletters. For example, cooking not needed, partially cooked (such as Minute Rice), uncooked (such as uncooked oatmeal), bulk, larger boxes, individual serving boxes, and so on. Or illustrate with food boxes or food pictures.

Buy the form that costs less for each serving:

- If the food has already been cooked or cut up, each serving will cost more.
- Cereal you cook costs less per serving than ready-to-eat cereal.

Buy the size that costs less for each serving:

- Foods in small packages usually cost more for each serving.
- Buy large, economy size packages of rice, noodles and cereal and put them in your menu every day.

Buy the kind of package that costs less for each serving:

- Foods in fancy packages usually cost more for each serving.
- The plain kinds of rice, noodles and cereal cost less than packaged and seasoned kinds.
- The packaged kinds usually have added fat and salt too.

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Make the Most of Your Food Dollar Feeding Children – Fruits and Vegetables

Questions and items in bold are for the leader. Items in the newsletter are indented.

How many servings do children need from the fruits and vegetables group?

Ask learner to count how many servings of fruits and vegetables each ate yesterday.

Did you know???

Children need at least 5 servings of vegetables and fruits each day.

Why should we eat fruits and vegetables?

Vegetables and fruits add flavor and color and texture to your meals. They are low in calories and give us vitamins, minerals and fiber.

How can you be certain to get enough fruits and vegetables in your daily diet?

Adding more fruits and vegetables to your diet is easy. After all, fruits and vegetables are the original fast food!

The key is to have a good variety of fruits and vegetables on hand and in plain sight.

Have fruits and vegetables washed and ready to eat for snacks.

Keep a bowl of fresh or sliced fruits or vegetables in the refrigerator.

Serve whole or sliced fruits with breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Use fruits for dessert.

Vegetables add variety to your meals. You can fix them in many ways:

Add more vegetables to soups and stews.

Add vegetables to rice and noodle dishes.

How many fruits and vegetables you ate yesterday would fit in one of the examples we just discussed.

How many different kinds of fruits and vegetables did the group eat yesterday?

Teaching Guide for Newsletter 3 – page 2

Can you give me some tips for choosing vegetables and fruits on a budget? Match the group's answers to the tips given below. Write responses on a flip chart. Discuss the form you are buying, the size or amount and the packaging. Show examples such as serving sizes (food models), can and package sizes.

Tips for Choosing Vegetables and Fruits on a Budget

- Fresh and canned vegetables and fruits can be low in cost.
- Compare prices.
- Find different kinds of fruits and vegetables that fit your budget.
- Buy the form that costs less for each serving.
 - ✓ A whole cabbage costs less than a bag of slaw.
 - ✓ Canned fruits cut in pieces cost less than whole or half fruits.
 - ✓ Fresh vegetables and fruits in season may cost less than canned or frozen.
- Buy the size that costs less for each serving. But buy only as much as you can use or store.
 - ✓ Apples, potatoes, onions and other foods in large bags cost less per pound than single items.
 - ✓ A large can of sliced peaches costs less than the same amount of peaches in smaller cans.
- Buy the kind of package that costs less for each serving.
 - ✓ Foods in fancy packages usually cost more.
 - ✓ Plain frozen peas cost less than frozen peas in sauce.

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Make the Most of Your Food Dollar Feeding Children – Milk, Yogurt and Cheese

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**How many servings do children need from the milk, yogurt and cheese group?
Why do I have to drink milk? Write responses on a flip chart and show examples whenever possible. Also ask the group to give examples.**

Eating foods made with milk, yogurt and cheese is the best way to get calcium.

You don't have to just drink milk to get enough calcium.

You can get all the calcium you need in 2 to 3 servings of these dairy foods.

What counts as 1 serving for foods in the milk, yogurt and cheese group? Use food models, cups and glasses to illustrate serving sizes.

- 1 cup (8 ounces) of milk
- 1 cup (8 ounces) yogurt or pudding
- 1 1/2 to 2 ounces of cheese
 - a piece about the size of an adult's thumb or
 - 2 slices of cheese cut in single slices
- 1 1/2 cups of cottage cheese
- 1 1/2 cups of ice milk

What choices do I have if I want to have dairy foods that are low in fat?

Dairy foods can be high in fat. For healthy choices, choose:

- low fat or skim milk.
- dairy foods made with skim or low-fat milk.

Teaching Guide for Newsletter 4 – page 2

Can you give me some tips for choosing milk, yogurt and cheese on a budget? Look for responses regarding form, size and kind of packaging. Show examples.

Buy the form that costs less for each serving:

- Dry milk costs less than fresh milk.
 - If you don't like it for drinking, try it for cooking.
 - Or, make up dry milk and mix it 1/2 and 1/2 with fresh milk.

Buy the size that costs less for each serving.

- Cheese in large packages costs less for a serving than the same amount in smaller packages.
- A gallon of milk costs less for a serving than milk in quarts or half gallons.
- A gallon of ice milk costs less for a serving than ice milk in small containers.

Buy the kind of package that costs less for each serving.

- Store brand milk, yogurt and cheese cost less for a serving than name brands.
- Cheese in blocks costs less for a serving than wrapped single slices of cheese.

What are my choices if I cannot drink milk or eat foods made with milk or milk products?

Some people have pain and gas when they drink milk or eat foods made with milk or milk products. This problem is called lactose intolerance.

What foods besides dairy foods have calcium?

- canned fish with bones like sardines, mackerel and salmon
- greens like kale, turnip, mustard and collards
- broccoli
- orange juice with calcium added

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Make the Most of Your Food Dollar Feeding Children – Meats, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts

Questions and items in bold are for the leader. Items in the newsletter are indented.

How many servings do children need from the meats, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts group? How can I get all of the meat I need to eat each day without spending most of my food budget?

Meat can be a costly part of your grocery bill.

But, you don't have to spend a lot to get the protein you need.

Many other foods besides meat have protein. That is why they are all in the meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts group in the Food Guide Pyramid.

You can get all of the protein you need in just 2-3 servings from this food group in a day.

What counts as 1 serving from the meats, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts group? Illustrate serving sizes with measuring cups, teaspoons, a playing card, etc.

2 eggs

4 tablespoons of peanut butter

1 cup of cooked dry beans or peas

2-3 ounces of beef, pork, chicken, turkey or fish (about the size of a deck of cards)

Teaching Guide for Newsletter 5 – page 2

You don't have to spend a lot of money on meat.....

Look for specials at the meat counter. Buy only what you can use or store safely.

Can you give me some tips for choosing protein foods on a budget? Discuss the form you are buying, size and packaging. Write responses on flip chart and show examples.

Buy the form that costs less for each serving.

- a whole chicken costs less than a chicken already cut up
- bulk ground beef costs less than ground beef patties

Buy the size that costs less for each serving.

- a 2-pound bag of dry beans costs less than 4 half pound bags
- family size packages of meat cost less for a serving than smaller packages

Buy the kind of package that costs less for each serving.

- plain chicken parts cost less for a serving than already breaded parts
- plain dry beans cost less for a serving than soup mix or canned beans

Most meat is so expensive. And some of my family would rather not eat meat. What protein foods can I buy and serve my family?

Foods that give you protein but cost less than meat are:

- dry beans and peas in a bag or canned
- canned tuna in water
- store brand peanut butter
- eggs

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Make the Most of Your Food Dollar Feeding Children – Fats, Oil and Sweets

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How many servings are required from the fats, oil and sweets located at the tip of the Food Guide Pyramid?

Not a set number!

How often should you eat these foods?

Eat these foods only once in a while.

Why is eating FEWER foods from the tip of the Food Guide Pyramid good for your budget and your health? If you have fat exhibit, you can show how much fat a certain amount of grams looks like. You can also read labels to determine the amount of fat in certain foods.

Foods in the tip of the Pyramid are high in fat and sugar. These are foods like mayonnaise, butter, margarine, regular salad dressing, sour cream, candy bars and soda.

High fat and high sugar foods give you energy but not many vitamins and minerals.

Eating too much fat can make you overweight and cause serious health problems later. Choosing fewer foods from the tip of the Food Guide Pyramid is an easy way to cut back on fat.

Teaching Guide for Newsletter 6 – page 2

Why is eating FEWER foods from the tip of the Food Guide Pyramid good for your budget?

They can be costly.

Snack foods like snack cakes, chips, candy bars and soda cost a lot. Save money and help your kids learn healthy eating habits by eating fewer foods from the tip of the Pyramid.

Most low-fat or fat-free foods these days taste like the regular kinds. Many low-fat or fat-free foods cost about the same as the regular kind.

- ✓ Look for store brands to save money.
- ✓ Try low-fat or fat-free salad dressings and mayonnaise.
- ✓ Try not to add much fat to foods when you cook them.

How can I get my children to eat less of these foods?

Offer:

- ✓ fruit instead of candy.
- ✓ pretzels or popcorn instead of chips.
- ✓ graham crackers or vanilla wafers instead of snack cakes.
- ✓ peanut butter or cheese with crackers instead of snack cakes.
- ✓ milk and 100% fruit juice instead of soda, punch or Koolaid.

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Make the Most of Your Food Dollar Feeding Children – Feeding Children on a Budget

Questions and items in bold are for the leader. Items in the newsletter are indented.

The Food Guide Pyramid can help you plan healthy meals on a budget.

Look at the bottom of the Pyramid.

✓ These foods cost less.

AND

✓ These are the foods you need the most.

Why are serving sizes important anyway?

By planning meals and buying food for correct serving sizes, you can reduce food waste.

Serve small portions to children and let them ask for seconds. You won't have to throw out the food the child chooses not to eat that meal.

Correct serving sizes help you learn how to eat just enough and not too much.

How do I know what the label means by serving size? I don't have any measuring cups?

How can I tell what a serving size looks like? Show a playing card and place it on a dinner plate. If you have a baseball, show how big that is.

What a serving looks like:

✓ 1/2 cup looks like a small fist.

✓ 1 cup is about the size of a baseball.

✓ 3 ounces of meat, fish or poultry is the size of a deck of cards.

Teaching Guide for Newsletter 7 – page 2

Give some suggestions on how to choose healthy foods from each group and cook them in healthy ways.

- ✓ Choose foods that are high in fiber some of the time.
- ✓ Choose foods that are low in fat, sugar and salt.
- ✓ Take the skin off of chicken and don't eat it.
- ✓ Don't add fat when you cook or fix foods.
Bake, boil, steam or grill instead of frying foods.
- ✓ Choose low fat margarine, mayonnaise, sour cream and salad dressings.
- ✓ Try to eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Remember...

Healthy foods can taste good and don't have to cost a lot of money.

Eating a healthy diet can lower your chances of getting heart disease and cancer.

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