



Mealtime Memo

for Child Care

Goal Setting **P.02**



Recipe of the Month **P.03**

Nutrition Fact **P.03**

References **P.04**

Fruit of the Month **P.04**

Setting Goals for the New Year

Happy New Year! The beginning of each year is a great time for reflection and change, reflecting on the things you did well in the previous year and making a list of the changes you wish to make in the new year. Changes may include incorporating more healthy foods in your diet, increasing physical activity each week, or simply drinking more water throughout the day. As you identify changes you would like to make and set goals for the new year, remember to think about the children in your care. Set goals for promoting health and nutrition in your child care facility.



S.M.A.R.T. Goals

When setting goals for your child care program, consider using the S.M.A.R.T. criteria.

Specific – Goals are clear so that you know exactly what is expected.

Measurable – Goals are specific, providing a concrete way to measure progress.

Achievable – Goals are challenging but still attainable.

Realistic – Goals are doable.

Timely – Goals are timely, providing enough time for each goal to be achieved but not too much time so that goals do not lose momentum.

Check out this example of a S.M.A.R.T. goal: “I will offer three different fruits and/or vegetables to the children over the course of each day.”



Goal Setting



There are several areas you can focus on when making goals for both you and your child care program.

Set goals for being a better role model for the children in your care. Young children often mimic the behaviors of those around them. If they observe you making healthy choices, they are more likely to make the same choices. Commit to sitting and eating meals with the children family-style. Focus on maintaining a positive attitude during mealtimes and when introducing new foods. Commit to participating in physical activities with the children.

Set goals for promoting healthy eating habits. More and more children are overweight and obese, often due to overeating and limited physical activity. However, many habits are learned at an early age. When children learn how to choose healthy foods early, they are more likely to continue choosing healthy foods as adults. Commit to providing healthy foods that look and taste good. Focus on variety and plan menus that have at least three different colors. Encourage children to try new foods, but never force children to try food or to eat all of their food.

Set goals for incorporating more physical activity throughout the day. Physical activity has a variety of benefits, both short term and long term. When children participate in physical activity on a regular basis, they are more likely to maintain a healthy weight. In addition, physical activity is a great way to release natural energy. Commit to providing both indoor and outdoor physical activity opportunities. Choose activities that are fun, noncompetitive, and that allow all children to participate.

Set goals for increasing nutrition education. Nutrition education is one of the most important and successful ways for helping children develop healthy eating habits. When children know where new foods come from, participate in preparing simple meals or snacks, and are engaged in fun activities, they are more likely to want to try new foods. Nutrition education is also a great source for introducing children to a variety of subject areas, such as math, science, and foreign languages. Commit to including nutrition education in your curriculum each day. Focus on ways you can include nutrition education throughout the day, such as during circle time, free play, or teacher-led activities.

Commit now to set S.M.A.R.T. goals for this year. Your role in promoting a healthy lifestyle can impact children, not just while they are growing up, but for the rest of their life.



Nutrition Fact

Did you know Norovirus is the most common cause of foodborne-disease outbreaks in the United States? According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, each year over 19 million people are infected by Norovirus. It is often referred to as the “stomach flu” or “food poisoning.” However, Norovirus is not related to the flu (or influenza). Norovirus affects the stomach and intestines, causing an illness called acute gastroenteritis.

Common Norovirus symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramps. Some people also report headache, fever or chills, and muscle aches. Symptoms usually begin one to two days after contact with the virus and usually last for one to three days. Children and adults experiencing Norovirus symptoms should be excluded from the child care facility until they are free of the symptoms for at least 48 hours. For more information on how Norovirus spreads and ways to prevent norovirus, check out *Norovirus Fact Sheet* at <http://www.nfsmi.org/DocumentDownload.aspx?id=3379>.

Recipe of the Month

Berry Banana Split

Are you looking for a new snack using seasonal fruits? Check out the Berry Banana Split in the resource, *First Years in the First State: Improving Nutrition & Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care*.

Ingredients (24 Servings):

12 bananas
6 cups vanilla yogurt, low-fat
4 cups berries, fresh or frozen, any variety

Directions:

1. Cut bananas in half lengthwise. Then, cut again, so each banana produces 4 long slices (quarters).
2. Put $\frac{1}{4}$ cup yogurt in each bowl.
3. Place 1 banana quarter on either side of bowl.
4. Top with berries.

For additional tips and crediting information, check out this and other recipes at <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/Delaware/nhpsmenuplanning.pdf>.

References

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Fruit of the Month: Clementine

The clementine is believed to have been discovered by Clément Rodier of Misserghin, Algeria in the 1900s. His mandarin tree produced a hybrid orange that was named the clementine. This fruit is the smallest of the mandarin oranges with a glossy, deep orange peel. The skin is loose on the fruit, making it easier to peel, pull apart, and enjoy. Clementine oranges provide an excellent source of vitamin C and are fat-, saturated fat-, cholesterol-, and sodium-free. When shopping for clementines, choose those that are soft and without blemishes. Store them at room temperature for two to three days, or store them in the refrigerator to preserve for longer periods. Serve clementine pieces as a fresh topping for salads or slices during meals or snacks.

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