



## *Economy In The Kitchen*

Training Review Module

3 Clock Hours



**Child Food Program of Texas**

P.O. Box 5465, Katy, TX 77491  
Tel: 281.395.7000; Toll- Free: 877.395.6560  
Fax: 281.395.7002  
[www.childfoodprogramoftexas.org](http://www.childfoodprogramoftexas.org)

### ***Instructions For Completing This Module:***

---

1. After reviewing this material with your day home/center representative, please read and study the material carefully.
2. Complete the test for the material and return it to Child Food Program Of Texas at your convenience. There is no deadline to have this test back to us.
3. When we receive your completed test, we will evaluate it and then send you a certificate for 3 clock hours for completing this material.

### ***Objectives For This Module:***

---

1. To educate caregivers on how to effectively organize the kitchen.
2. To educate caregivers on how to plan and evaluate menus for maximum efficiency.
3. To educate caregivers on how to be a careful consumer of food items.
4. To educate caregivers on how to have safe food handling practices.

### ***Table Of Contents***

---

|                                            |         |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|
| <b>Kitchen Organization</b> .....          | Page 4  |
| <b>The Menu</b>                            |         |
| Planning Ahead .....                       | Page 6  |
| Eliminating Extras .....                   | Page 7  |
| Evaluating Menus .....                     | Page 7  |
| <b>Buying Food</b>                         |         |
| Planning Your Grocery List .....           | Page 9  |
| Be a Careful Consumer .....                | Page 15 |
| <b>Storing Food</b> .....                  | Page 16 |
| <b>Preparing Food</b>                      |         |
| Saving Time .....                          | Page 17 |
| Saving Nutrients .....                     | Page 17 |
| Saving Money .....                         | Page 18 |
| <b>Sanitation</b>                          |         |
| Personal Hygiene: It Starts With You ..... | Page 20 |
| Keeping Food Safe .....                    | Page 20 |
| Keeping It Clean .....                     | Page 20 |
| <b>Evaluating Food Service</b> .....       | Page 22 |
| <b>Peak Harvest Months</b> .....           | Page 23 |
| <b>Menu Planning Worksheet</b> .....       | Page 24 |

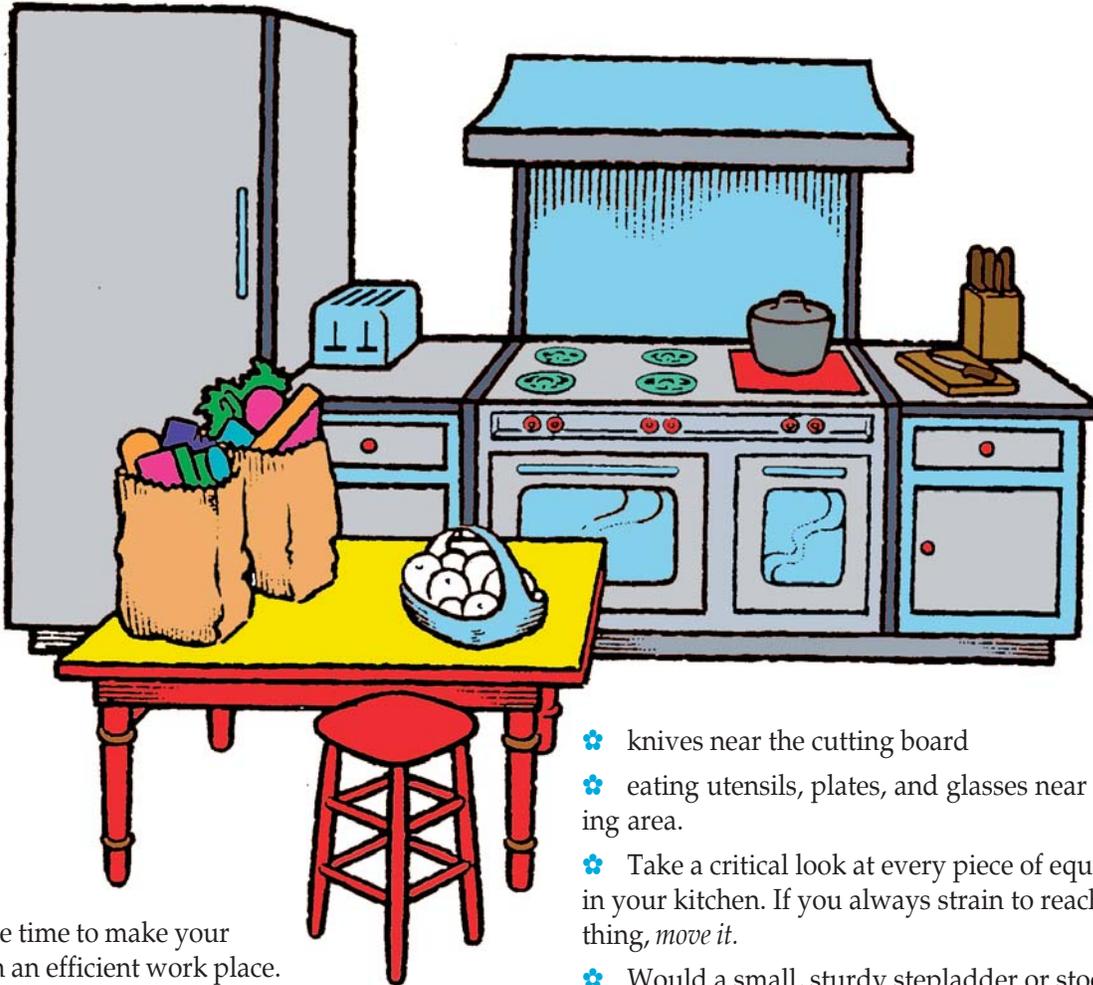
# Preface

---

Every kitchen in every Texas child care center is unique. Kitchens differ in size, shape, equipment, personnel, and food prepared. Small centers often buy food from local grocers, and large centers order food from wholesale distributors. Some centers share their kitchens with a church or school. Procedures, problems, and needs are as varied as the kitchens themselves.

The suggestions and information in this booklet won't apply to every center, but the booklet can make your job a little easier and help you prepare more nutritious food for the children in your care.

# Kitchen Organization



Take the time to make your kitchen an efficient work place.

Keep it that way by having certain places for all kitchen equipment. You don't want to waste time looking for things. Keep these tips in mind when you organize the storage of kitchen equipment and food:

- ❁ Save steps by storing small equipment and supplies near places they'll *first be used*. Review your recipes to figure out where items are used first; you may be surprised.

## Some obvious examples:

- ❁ hot pads near the stove
- ❁ serving dishes near your work area
- ❁ cleaning supplies near the sink and dishwasher

- ❁ knives near the cutting board
- ❁ eating utensils, plates, and glasses near the serving area.
- ❁ Take a critical look at every piece of equipment in your kitchen. If you always strain to reach something, *move it*.
- ❁ Would a small, sturdy stepladder or stool help you? If so, get one. (Putting one foot on a stool while mixing or chopping can relieve a tired back.)
- ❁ Hang some equipment in your working area. Install a pegboard or rack and hang the gadgets, pots, and pans you use every day. If your kitchen has two work areas, hang equipment in both. Don't stack equipment on pegs unless the pieces are interchangeable.
- ❁ Create a mixing center, and store in it everything you need for making breads, rolls, cookies, and other baked foods. Include the mixer, mixing bowls, measuring equipment, spoons, rubber spatulas, and

staple foods such as flour, sugar, cornmeal, vegetable oil, baking powder, soda, salt, vanilla, and spices. Do you usually fill baking pans at the mixing counter? If so, store baking pans and sheets there, also.

- ❁ Arrange small, frequently used items in the front of top drawers, or hang them on pegs or magnets.
- ❁ Store rarely used items in lower drawers, or in storage cabinets or closets. If you never use something, get rid of it.
- ❁ Label drawers, shelves, and cabinet doors to indicate contents.
- ❁ Arrange spices in alphabetical order with labels facing forward. Store measuring spoons near spices.
- ❁ Stack or group similar canned goods together. Keep fruits together, vegetables together, juices together, and canned meats and sauces together.

- ❁ Organize refrigerator shelves. Keep meats and cheeses in a drawer or container; store condiments such as mayonnaise, mustard, and salad dressing together on a shelf; and reserve one area for leftovers.

- ❁ Repair or discard broken equipment. Plan to restock as soon as you can afford it.

Make it everyone's job to return equipment to assigned spots. If you hang equipment on a pegboard, outline each item on the pegboard so you can find storage spots easily.

# The Menu

## Planning ahead

Planning menus in advance is an efficient way to run your kitchen. Daily menu planning is a hassle, and you could use that time in better ways. By planning menus in advance, you can avoid repetition and have exciting, nutritious meals.

Using cycle *menus* saves time. A cycle menu is a set of carefully planned menus used again and again. Although each day of the cycle is different, many foods are used more than once in different combinations and in different weeks. A cycle should last at least three weeks. Shorter cycles can be predictable and boring.

Consider your first cycle menu a test. At the end of the first cycle, adjust the menu to reflect the children's likes and dislikes, solve production problems, and reduce cost. Eventually your cycle menu will feature the best you can offer. Adapt cycle menus to include seasonal fruits and vegetables, holiday meals, and new recipes.

Cycle menus will also save time when you calculate amounts of food to purchase, because you can refer to old shopping lists and purchase orders.

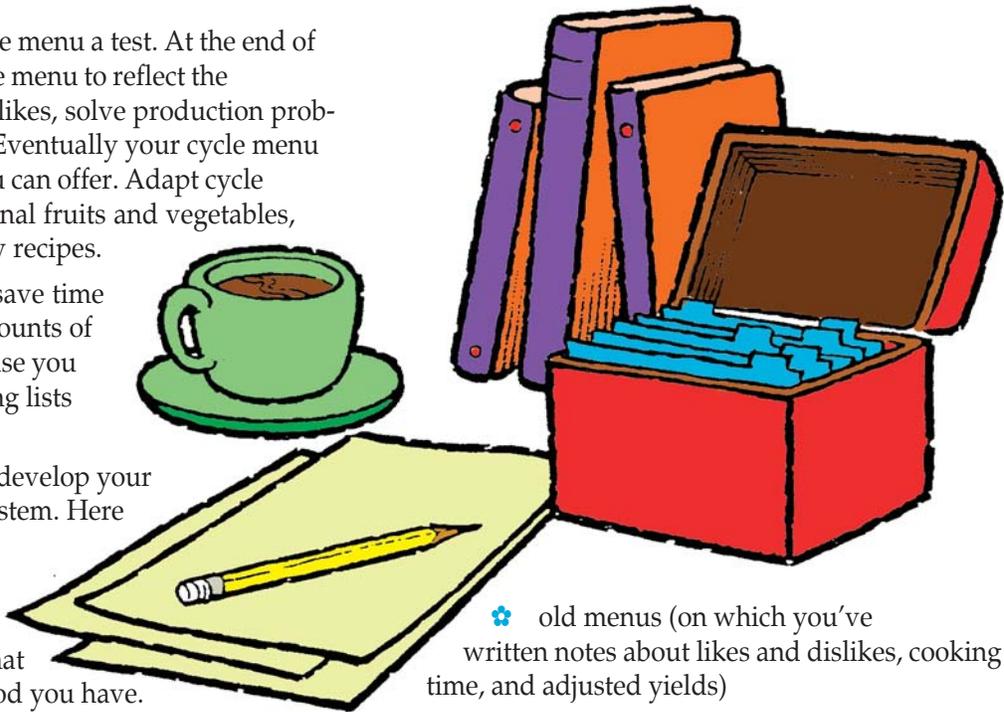
With experience you'll develop your own menu planning system. Here are some suggestions.

1. Take an *inventory* of food and supplies. An inventory is a list of what kind and how much food you have. You'll need it to plan menus and grocery lists.
2. Find a quiet time and place to plan or revise your menus. Try to do it on the same day each week and allow plenty of time. Hurrying can cause mistakes, and mistakes are expensive.
3. If you shop at a grocery store, check the newspaper and make a list of useful specials. Cycle menus

take better advantage of specials, because they allow you to predict amounts needed.

4. Collect these menu writing tools:

- ❁ menu planning worksheet (see sample in appendix)
- ❁ recommended serving sizes according to state *Minimum Standards for Licensing* or, if you participate in the Child Care Food Program, "Meal Patterns for Young Children in Child Care Programs"
- ❁ list of foods in season (see "Peak Harvest Months for Texas Produce" in appendix)
- ❁ food and supply inventory



- ❁ old menus (on which you've written notes about likes and dislikes, cooking time, and adjusted yields)
  - ❁ recipes and cookbooks
  - ❁ current food price list or newspaper ads
  - ❁ pencils, paper, and eraser.
5. When planning a new menu, try to plan meals in the following order:

- ❁ lunches and suppers
- ❁ begin by choosing a meat or meat alternate for each day of the week
- ❁ select vegetables, salads, and fruits for each day
- ❁ add breads or bread alternates
- ❁ add beverages
- ❁ breakfasts
- ❁ snacks.

6. Avoid planning to serve the same food on consecutive days. Compare first and last days of cycle menus to make sure they aren't similar. Choose foods for a variety of flavors, colors, and textures; and be sure you include good sources of iron and vitamin C every day and good sources of vitamin A every other day.

### ***Eliminating Extras***

---

Food costs are rising, and all of us can reduce waste by eliminating *extras* and serving only nourishing foods. Here are some cost-cutting tips.

- ❁ Plan *only* the foods meeting meal pattern requirements, because such foods supply all the nutrients children need. Extra foods are those that provide few nutrients and many calories. They can't be classified into the Basic Four food group, nor do they meet Child Care Food Program requirements. Potato chips; sweetened, plain gelatin; fruit-flavored drinks; jam; jelly; cakes; ice cream; and bacon are some of the extras you can eliminate.
- ❁ You don't have to serve meat every day. Once or twice a week use meat alternates such as dried beans, peas, cheese, cottage cheese, peanut butter, or fish. Tell parents what you're trying to accomplish and why. You might include a copy of the menu in a center newsletter, or ask the parents for meat alternate recipes. (Check the appendix for meat alternate ideas.)

- ❁ Serve fresh fruits and vegetables only when they are in season; they cost less and taste best at that time. In Texas you'll find fresh fruits and vegetables available all year.

- ❁ Serve homemade muffins, cornbread, and other quick breads often. They cost less per serving than commercially prepared bread. Try boosting their nutrients by adding whole wheat flour, powdered milk, or wheat germ to test batches. You can double the recipes if your freezer is big enough.

- ❁ Substitute *cooked* cereals for prepared ones whenever you can. Cooked cereals cost less per serving, need less storage space, and usually have less sugar than prepared cereals. (To avoid lumps in cooked cereals, add a little extra water or milk.)

- ❁ Include *planned-ovens* in your menu. Planned-ovens are leftovers from one meal planned for use in a second meal. Plan to increase the yield of recipes that take extra time and energy, and save the leftovers for another meal. Double a recipe using dried beans, for example. Serve the beans plain one day and in a casserole later that week. (Use prepared food within two days, or freeze it; spoiled food is wasted money.)

- ❁ Plan summer meals that need little or no cooking. Kitchen heat increases your air conditioners load, and your utility bills get higher.

### ***Evaluating Menus***

---

After you plan a menu, put it aside until the next day and ask someone to review it. Double check to be sure you've included:

- ❁ foods from the Basic Four food groups or foods meeting Child Care Food Program requirements.
- ❁ one good source of vitamin C daily.
- ❁ one good source of iron daily.

- ❁ one good source of vitamin A every other day, preferably three days a week.
- ❁ whole grain or enriched breads and cereals.
- ❁ meals with contrasting flavors, colors, textures, shapes, temperatures, and methods of preparation.
- ❁ foods that can be prepared and served *on time* with equipment and personnel you have.
- ❁ foods within your budget.
- ❁ foods children like.
- ❁ foods that are easy for children to eat.
- ❁ foods that reflect children's cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- ❁ at least one new food each week—either a new fruit, vegetable, or a new recipe. Children will accept new food more easily if you serve one of their favorites in the same meal.

Try to avoid:

- ❁ planning foods for Monday that require Sunday preparation, such as large pieces of frozen meat, or dried beans needing over-night soaking.

- ❁ planning to serve the same food twice a day, or on consecutive days.
- ❁ foods prepared the same way each time they are served.
- ❁ limiting the menu to your favorite foods.
- ❁ salty foods.
- ❁ fried foods.
- ❁ foods containing a lot of sugar.

Did you:

- ❁ plan to use fresh produce soon after buying?
- ❁ plan to serve nourishing snacks like fruits, vegetables and proteins, instead of pastries and cakes?

When you complete your menus, post them near the center's entrance where parents will be sure to see them. Post a copy of the current menu in the kitchen. Remember to record substitutions and other menu changes.

# Buying Food

## Planning your grocery list

Whether you buy food from a wholesale distributor or shop for it yourself, begin with an accurate list of what and how much you need. If you often end up with too much food, follow these steps to learn how to plan the correct food purchases for your menus.

1. Plan the *serving size* for each menu item, using as a guide the Child Care Food Program or state *Minimum Standards for*

*Licensing* meal pattern requirements. Pay special attention to correct serving sizes for each age group.

2. Calculate the *total amount* you'll need of each menu item. Count the children in each age group and multiply by the recommended serving sizes.

Also count staff members and teachers who will share meals, and multiply by the recommended serving sizes for children 6 and older.

Study this sample lunch menu for a child care facility.



### Menu Item: Chicken and Noodles

| Age groups (yrs.) | Number to be served | Multiplied by | Serving size | Equals   | Amount needed |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| 1 and 2           | 16                  | X             | 1/3 C.       | =        | 5-1/3 C.      |
| 3, 4, 5           | 22                  | X             | 1/2 C.       | =        | 11 C.         |
| 6 and older       | 5                   | X             | 3/4 C.       | =        | 3-3/4 C.      |
| <b>Total</b>      |                     |               |              | <b>=</b> | <b>20 C.</b>  |

**Menu Item: Carrot and Raisin Salad**

| Age groups (yrs.) | Number to be served | Multiplied by | Serving size | Equals   | Amount needed |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| 1 and 2           | 16                  | X             | 1/8 C.       | =        | 2 C.          |
| 3, 4, 5           | 22                  | X             | 1/4 C.       | =        | 5-1/2 C.      |
| 6 and older       | 5                   | X             | 1/2 C.       | =        | 2-1/2 C.      |
| <b>Total</b>      |                     |               |              | <b>=</b> | <b>10 C.</b>  |

**Menu Item: Apple Slices**

| Age groups (yrs.) | Number to be served | Multiplied by | Serving size | Equals   | Amount needed |
|-------------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| 1 and 2           | 16                  | X             | 1/8 C.       | =        | 2 C.          |
| 3, 4, 5           | 22                  | X             | 1/4 C.       | =        | 5-1/2 C.      |
| 6 and older       | 5                   | X             | 1/2 C.       | =        | 2-1/2 C.      |
| <b>Total</b>      |                     |               |              | <b>=</b> | <b>10 C.</b>  |

**Menu Item: Milk**

| Age groups (yrs.)                                    | Number to be served | Multiplied by | Serving size | Equals | Amount needed |
|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|--------|---------------|
| 1 and 2                                              | 16                  | X             | 1/2 C.       | =      | 8 C.          |
| 3, 4, 5                                              | 22                  | X             | 3/4 C.       | =      | 16-1/2 C.     |
| 6 and older                                          | 5                   | X             | 1 C.         | =      | 5 C.          |
| <b>Total = 29.5 C. ÷ 4 = 7.4 QTS. or 1.8 GALLONS</b> |                     |               |              |        |               |

3. For foods prepared *without* recipes, refer to a food buying guide to find out how many servings each purchase unit yields.

**Example**

You need 10 cups of fresh, sliced apples. Your food buying guide says: 4 small apples = 1 pound = 2 cups sliced apples.

| Amount you need to serve | Divided by | Cups of slices apples per pound | Equals | Amount to buy |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|--------|---------------|
| 10 cups                  | ÷          | 2 C.                            | =      | 5 lbs.        |

4. For foods prepared *with* recipes, calculate the recipe's total yield as illustrated below. A recipe's yield is how much food or number of servings the recipe makes. Multiply the number of servings yielded by the serving size. Watch out—serving sizes vary from recipe to recipe, so check your recipes carefully.

| Number of servings | Multiplied by | Size of serving | Equals | Recipe yield |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------|--------------|
| 50                 | X             | 1/4 C.          | =      | 12-1/2 lbs.  |

5. If your recipe doesn't yield the right amount, change it using an adjustment factor:  
 Amount you need - Recipe yield *Adjustment* factor

**Menu Item: Chicken and Noodles**

| You need | Divided by | Recipe yield | Equals | Adjustment factor |
|----------|------------|--------------|--------|-------------------|
| 20 C.    | ÷          | 25 C.        | =      | .8                |

**Menu Item: Carrot and Raisin Salad**

| You need | Divided by | Recipe yield | Equals | Adjustment factor |
|----------|------------|--------------|--------|-------------------|
| 10 C.    | ÷          | 12-1/2 C.    | =      | .8                |

To adjust your recipe yield, multiply each recipe ingredient by the adjustment factor, rounding off the ingredient amounts when necessary.

*For example:*

7.2 tsp. might be rounded to 7 tsp. or 2 TB. + 1 tsp.

**Menu Item: Chicken and Noodles**

|                        | Original recipe     | Multiplied by | Adjustment factor | Equals | Adjusted recipe            |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| Chicken, ready to cook | 13 lbs.             | X             | .8                | =      | 10.4 lbs. or 10-1/2 lbs.   |
| Salt                   | 3 TBS. = 9 tsp.     | X             | .8                | =      | 7.2 tsp. or 2 TB. + 1 tsp. |
| Water                  | 1-1/4 gal. = 5 qts. | X             | .8                | =      | 4 qts. or 1 gal.           |
| Noodles                | 3 qts. = 12 C.      | X             | .8                | =      | 9.6 C. or 2 qts. + 2 C.    |
| Flour                  | 3/4 C.              | X             | .8                | =      | .6 C. or 2/3 C.            |
| Yield                  | 25 C.               | X             | .8                | =      | 20 C.                      |

**Menu Item: Raisin Salad**

| Original recipe   |                  | Multiplied by | Adjustment factor | Equals | Adjusted recipe         |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| Carrots, shredded | 3 qts. = 12 C.   | X             | .8                | =      | 8.6 C. or 2 qts. + 2 C. |
| Raisins           | 1-1/4 qt. = 5 C. | X             | .8                | =      | 4 C.                    |
| Salt              | 1 tsp.           | X             | .8                | =      | .8 tsp. or 1 tsp.       |
| Mayonnaise        | 2-1/2 C.         | X             | .8                | =      | 2 C.                    |
| Yield             | 12-1/2 C.        | X             | .8                | =      | 10 C.                   |

6. Calculate and record how much of each recipe ingredient to buy. (Refer to a food buying guide for amounts.) If, for example, you have plenty of flour, salt, and mayonnaise, you only need to buy chicken, noodles, carrots and raisins.

**Sample Food Buying Guide**

| Ingredient        | Recipe calls for | Purchase unit | Unit conversion                                | Amount to buy |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Chicken           | 10-1/2 lbs.      | lb.           | none                                           | 10-1/2 lbs.   |
| Noodles           | 9.6 C.           | lb.           | 1 lb. = 7-1/4 C.<br>$9.6 \div 7.25 = 1.3$ lbs. | 1-1/4 lbs.    |
| Carrots, shredded | 9.6 C.           | lb.           | 1 lb. = 2.3 C.<br>$9.6 \div 2.3 = 4.2$ lbs.    | 4-1/2 lbs.    |
| Raisins           | 4 C.             | lb.           | 1 lb. = 3.2 C.<br>$4 \div 3.2 = 1.3$ lbs.      | 1-1/4 lbs.    |

7. Prepare a list of foods you need for the week. List similar foods together (see below). Using your food inventory, list how much of each food you have. To figure how much food you should buy, subtract the amount of each food you *have* from the amount of that food you need. Buy perishable foods in the smallest packages that will meet your needs.

### Sample Grocery List

| Food    | Specification | Times on menu | Amount needed each time | Total       | In stock | Amount to buy |
|---------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| Milk    | low fat - 2%  | 5             | 1.8 gal.                | 9 gal.      | 2 gal.   | 7 gal.        |
| Apples  | small, red    | 2             | 20                      | 40          | 8        | 32 apples     |
| Oranges |               | 1             | 20                      | 20          | 0        | 20            |
| Raisins |               | 1-1/4 lbs.    | 1-1/4 lbs.              | 1-1/4 lbs.  | 1/2 lb.  | 3/4 lb.       |
| Carrots | fresh         | 1             | 4.2 lbs.                | 4.2 lbs.    | 0        | 4.2 lbs.      |
| Chicken | whole, fresh  | 1             | 10-1/2 lbs.             | 10-1/2 lbs. | 0        | 10-1/2 lbs.   |
| Beef    | ground        | 1             | 4 lbs.                  | 4 lbs.      | 0        | 4 lbs.        |
| Noodles | small, flat   | 1             | 1-1/4 lbs.              | 1-1/4 lbs.  | 0        | 1-1/4 lbs.    |
| Rice    | white         | 1             | 1-1/2 lbs.              | 1-1/2 lbs.  | 1/2 lb.  | 1 lb.         |

8. Check your supply of staple items, spices, cleaning agents, and paper goods, and include these on your list if necessary.

9. *Don't* throw out your calculations or grocery lists. Keep them on file with menus, because you'll probably use them when you repeat the cycle menu. You can also use them to plan menu costs.

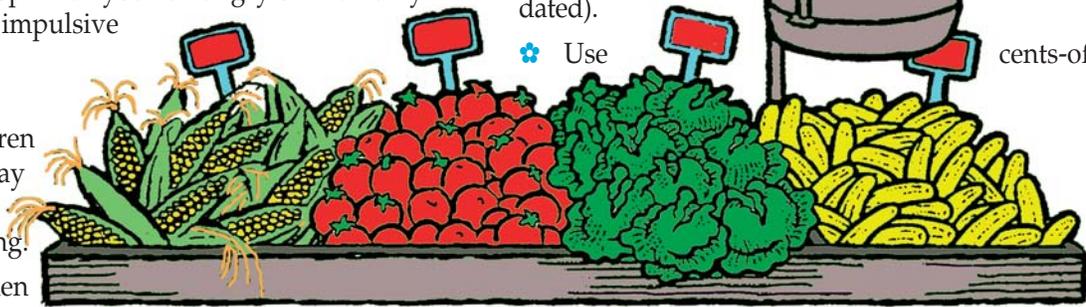
## Being a Careful Consumer

If you buy wholesale, compare costs from at least two distributors. If you shop at a local grocer's, compare other stores' prices and take advantage of the best buys. You can sometimes save money by shopping at more than one store, but remember that time and gasoline are expensive.

Take along your grocery list and menu when you shop. If a food you planned isn't available, refer to the menu before selecting a good substitute. Extra trips to the store waste time and cost money.

Give yourself every chance to be a careful consumer:

- ❁ Stick to your list.
  - ❁ Don't shop when you're hungry or in a hurry—this leads to impulsive buying.
  - ❁ Shop without children so you can pay attention to your shopping.
  - ❁ Shop when you're alert, not exhausted.
  - ❁ Shop on "special" days instead of double-stamp days. Check the newspaper ads, but remember that sale items are bargains only if you can use them.
- Be aware of psychological marketing tricks:
- ❁ Store managers put special displays in places where you have to look at them. These items may or may not be good buys or even on sale, so compare them carefully with similar items on the shelves.
  - ❁ Before choosing brands at eye level compare the prices and quantities with brands above and below them on the shelves.



- ❁ Buy store brands or *generic* products whenever possible. They are usually cheaper than name brands and are of good quality.
- ❁ Bigger doesn't always mean cheaper. Many stores display *unit costs* — the cost of each product per unit of weight or volume. Unit costs compare brands packaging offering product for your money. — allow you to and select the the most prod-
- ❁ The freshest items are in front. Check the dates on items such as dairy products (many are dated). — item isn't al- freshness-
- ❁ Use cents-off

coupons for items you use regularly, but compare prices before you buy. A product of equal quality may be cheaper. (Parents may be a good source for coupons.)

- ❁ Buy day-old bread if you have a convenient bakery thrift store. Many bakeries sell day-old bread at reduced prices. Day-old bread is nutritious, and its firmer texture is better for sandwiches.

# Storing Food

Spoiled food is wasted money. After you shop, store your food promptly. Make frequent refrigerator and freezer temperature checks to assure the quality and safety of your food. Refrigerator temperatures should be 36° to 40° F; freezers should be 0° F or below.

- ❖ Immediately refrigerate perishable foods such as meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, and eggs. Freeze, or cook within 24 hours, any fresh fish, poultry, steaks, stew meat, and ground meat. Also freeze large cuts of beef you can't use within three days.

- ❖ Before you freeze food, wrap it in moisture-proof paper or plastic. Thin, flat Packages freeze and thaw quickly, and are easy to stack. Label *frozen items* with the product's name, weight, and the date it was put in the freezer. (This will save time later.) Don't overload your freezer. Leave space between packages for air to circulate and freeze food rapidly.

- ❖ Thaw meats, especially poultry and fish, in the refrigerator. Plan to move tomorrow's meat from the freezer to the refrigerator each day at a specific time. *It's dangerous to thaw meats at room temperature*—this

promotes bacterial growth. Cook meat and fish within 24 hours after thawing. *Never refreeze meat or fish.*

- ❖ Cheese, eggs, milk, butter, and margarine absorb odors from other foods, so store them in tightly covered containers. Wrap cheese tightly to prevent drying.

- ❖ Most fresh fruits and vegetables should be refrigerated promptly. (See exceptions, below.) Keep vegetables fresh and crisp by storing them in plastic bags or containers.

- ❖ Some fruits and vegetables should not be refrigerated. Store these in a cool and dry closet, cupboard, or shelf—*never* on the floor.

- ❖ Bananas should not be refrigerated, because refrigeration makes the flesh darken. Keep them in dry storage, and protect them from bruising.

- ❖ Refrigerating unripe avocados will darken the meat and brown the skin. Keep them at room temperature until they're ripe; then you can refrigerate them.

- ❖ The same rule applies to unripe melons, peaches, pears, pineapples, plums, and tomatoes. Check them frequently, and refrigerate ripe fruit before it spoils.

- ❖ Potatoes, sweet potatoes, winter squash, and onions keep best in a well-ventilated dry storage area.

- ❖ Arrange canned goods on shelves with similar food items together. Remember the "first in-first out" rule. Store new cans toward the back of the shelf so you'll use the older ones first.

- ❖ Store flour, cornmeal, cereals, sugar, dry beans, and peas in tightly covered, waterproof containers. Be sure to label containers so you don't waste time searching for ingredients.

In warm, humid weather, refrigerate dried fruit, powdered whole milk, whole grain cereals, and nuts.



# Preparing Food

---

## Saving time

---

Begin preparing the day before the meal is served. Follow these steps:

1. Read the next day's menu. Be sure you understand it.
2. Don't guess on preparation. Use reliable recipes, and review them the day before. Use a tested, standardized recipe that states clearly the number and size of servings it yields.
3. Be sure you have the food you need to prepare your recipes and menu items. If something isn't available, plan a substitute supplying the same nutrients, or buy the food you need.
4. Decide what you can do the day before to make meal preparation more efficient. Here are some examples:
  - ❁ put frozen meat in refrigerator to thaw.
  - ❁ boil chicken and refrigerate overnight for quick and easy deboning the next day.
  - ❁ boil potatoes, and refrigerate for potato salad.
  - ❁ hard-cook eggs, and refrigerate for salads.
  - ❁ sort and wash dried beans, and soak overnight.
  - ❁ soak dried fruit.
  - ❁ pre-mix dry ingredients for baked goods.
  - ❁ make a congealed salad.

The day the meal is served, begin preparation in an organized way by following these steps:

1. Organize your work. Write a preparation schedule to make sure all foods are served on time and at the right temperature. Start with foods taking the longest time to prepare and cook, or with foods that need chilling.
2. Count children and staff before you prepare a meal or snack. Ask the teachers to report attendance early in the day, and adjust your recipes to the number of servings you need.

3. Before beginning a job, make a list of everything you need. Collect all food and equipment, and arrange it in the order you'll use it. Use trays or carts to bring supplies from refrigerator or storage areas.

Here are more timesaving suggestions. Consider your routine jobs, and think of your own short cuts to save time and energy.

- ❁ Use accurate equipment to weigh and measure food. When a recipe calls for a quart of liquid, don't use a one-cup measure four times. Use a quart measure and do the job in one step.
- ❁ Weighing your ingredients is a timesaving and accurate way to measure. The guide in the appendix shows how to convert volume measures to weight measures. (Once you try it, you'll want to convert all your recipes.)
- ❁ Instead of sifting, blend dry ingredients with a wire whisk or a mixer at low speed.
- ❁ Mix dry ingredients together and liquid ingredients together before blending them.
- ❁ Use both hands at the same time when you can. Both hands should start at the same time, perform the same motions, and stop at the same time. For example, place pear halves on lettuce leaves using both hands at once. Don't hold with one hand and work with the other.
- ❁ A *sharp* knife and cutting board are time-savers. Chop food with a French knife, not a paring knife. Line up your fruits and vegetables, and cut as many pieces as possible at one time. Sweep cut pieces into a bowl placed at a level lower than the cutting board.

## Saving Nutrients

---

Fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of vitamins and minerals, but their nutritive value depends on careful selection, storage, preparation, and time between cooking and serving. You can save nutrients by following these suggestions:

- ❁ Cook vegetables in a small amount of liquid just until they are “fork tender” (slightly crisp). The longer they cook the more nutrients they lose. Serve cooked vegetables within 15 to 20 minutes.
- ❁ Don’t soak fresh vegetables; nutrients are lost in the water.
- ❁ Scrub—don’t peel—vegetables such as celery, carrots, turnips, potatoes, and parsnips. Use a vegetable brush or plastic scrubber. *Don’t scrub with steel wool because pieces of the steel may remain on the vegetables.*
- ❁ Canned vegetables are thoroughly cooked in the canning process and only need heating. Drain off the liquid, boil it until its reduced one-half, add the vegetables, and heat.
- ❁ Frozen vegetables are partially cooked and need less cooking time than fresh. Follow package directions.
- ❁ Bite-size pieces of raw vegetables and fruits are excellent finger foods and contain more nutrients than they would if cooked. You might prepare them in advance and store them in air-tight containers to keep them fresh.

- ❁ Salads taste best when cold. Lettuce and other greens become crisp if they are washed, drained, covered with a damp cloth, and thoroughly chilled.
- ❁ Fresh fruits are excellent vitamin sources, but they need plenty of tender care to keep these nutrients. Prepare fresh fruits close to serving time, and keep them covered until they’re served.
- ❁ Dip peeled bananas, apples, peaches, or pears in lemon-water or orange juice to prevent darkening.
- ❁ After you open a can of fruit or vegetable juice, cover it tightly or transfer contents to an air-tight container and refrigerate. Don’t pour juice until serving time, because exposure to air causes loss of vitamin C.

### *Saving Money*

---

Every time you throw food away, you waste money. Find ways to prevent wasted food. Here are some suggestions:

- ❁ Serve—or encourage the children to take—small portions, especially when you’re introducing a new food. Don’t offer seconds until the children have eaten first servings.



- ❁ Serve with scoops and ladles to make sure your serving sizes are accurate. The scoop size refers to the number of servings you'll get from a quart of food if you use that scoop; the ladle size refers to the number of fluid ounces the ladle contains.

- ❁ Scoops also help you make each serving the same size. Use them to put sandwich fillings on bread, and cookie dough on baking sheets. Scoops are also handy for dividing meat into patties and meatballs.

- ❁ Keep special leftover shelves in your refrigerator and freezer. Keep a leftover list so you won't forget food and waste it. Be sure to label containers with the date and contents.

Meat is one of the most expensive items on the shopping list. Here are some money-saving tips for preparing meat:

- ❁ Use cheaper cuts, and tenderize by cooking at low temperatures in moist heat.

- ❁ Don't overcook meat; overcooking causes shrinkage and yields fewer servings. When roasting meats, insert a thermometer into the meat's thickest part, away from bone, fat, or gristle. Internal temperatures should be: 170° F-185° F for well cooked meat, 160° F for medium, and 165° F-185° F for reheating.

- ❁ Learn to use meat alternates in a variety of tasty recipes.

More suggestions for reducing overall meal costs:

- ❁ Use fewer convenience foods; they're expensive. If you plan wisely, you'll have plenty of time to prepare foods from "scratch."

- ❁ When a recipe calls for milk, use dry skim milk powder. Save time by combining the powdered milk with the recipe's other dry ingredients before adding the correct amount of liquid. Nonfat dry milk is equal to fluid milk in nutritional value, is cheaper, and takes up less refrigerator space.

When you use the oven, cook as many foods in it as possible. Many foods cooked on a burner can be cooked in the oven just as easily in covered, heat-proof dishes. Heat vegetables, for example, while you cook meat or bake bread.

# Sanitation

---

You can provide healthful, nourishing food to children *only* if everyone preparing and serving food uses sanitary methods and observes local health agency laws.

## **Personal hygiene: It starts with you.**

---

- ❁ Learn your local and state health requirements, and comply with them.
- ❁ Practice good personal hygiene at all times. Specifically:
  - ❁ clean hands and fingernails,
  - ❁ hairnets,
  - ❁ clean aprons, clothes, and uniforms,
  - ❁ no nail polish, and limited jewelry.
- ❁ Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before you start to work, and after you use tissues or the toilet. In fact, it's best to wash your hands after touching anything other than the food you're preparing. If you have sores or cuts on your hands, work in clean rubber or plastic gloves. When serving food use tongs, forks, scoops, gloved hands, or ladles.
- ❁ Handle eating and drinking utensils properly. Don't touch plate surfaces. Don't touch utensil surfaces which come in contact with the mouth.
- ❁ Don't handle food or equipment when you're sick. Find a replacement.
- ❁ Don't smoke where food is prepared, stored, or served (remember to wash your hands after smoking).

## **Keeping food safe**

---

- ❁ Examine food before you use it. Wash dirty food, and throw out spoiled food. Wash tops of cans before you open them.
- ❁ When in doubt, throw it out. You can't always tell if food is safe by looking or smelling. If leftover food is three days old, if an egg is cracked, if a can bulges,

if food doesn't smell right or food is moldy—**THROW IT OUT.**

- ❁ Buy and use a food thermometer.
- ❁ Keep hot foods *hot* (140° F or above) to kill bacteria. Heat food thoroughly before serving, and serve it while it's hot. Be sure the children are seated and ready to eat before the food is served.
- ❁ Keep cold foods *cold* (below 45°) to stop bacterial growth. Refrigerate food in pans no deeper than 4 inches so food will cool quickly. Stir large amounts of food often to speed up cooling. Place large pans of pudding in ice or cold water, and stir until the temperature drops below 140° F.
- ❁ Never leave foods containing meat, fish, poultry, eggs, mayonnaise, or milk at room temperature—even for a short time. Bacteria grow whenever food temperature is between 45° and 140° F, and the time adds up. Never take these foods on a picnic or outing unless you pack them in ice or thermal containers. Make sure food is *very* cold or *very* hot when you put it in thermal containers.
- ❁ Keep a thermometer in your refrigerator and check the temperature often. It should stay between 36°-40° F. Keep a chart on your refrigerator door, and record the temperature each time it's checked.

## **Keeping it clean**

---

- ❁ Clean and sanitize equipment and work surfaces before use. Make it a part of your daily routine to sanitize work surfaces every morning, and to sanitize the children's tables before each meal. Use a clean cloth and a sanitizing solution such as the ones described below. Double check equipment with hard-to-clean pieces—equipment such as beaters, grinders, can openers, and strainers.
- ❁ Scrub thoroughly with soapy water and sanitize chopping boards, knives, and work surfaces used in preparing raw poultry, meat, and fish. Do this immediately after use, to prevent contamination of other foods. Use one cutting board for meat and a

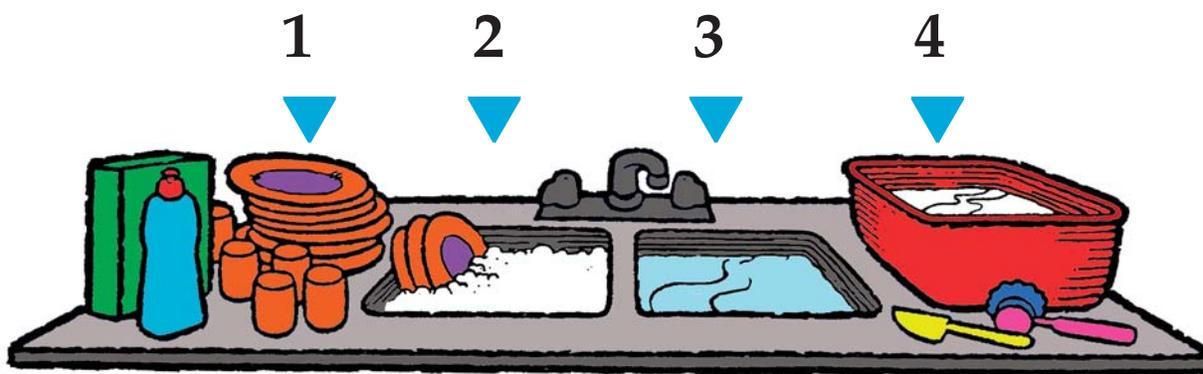
different one for produce. Be sure you know which is which.

- ❁ Throw out foods children or adults leave on their plates. Also discard food left in serving dishes on the tables.
- ❁ Put waste in clean, tightly covered containers right away.
- ❁ Keep rodents and insects away from food areas by plugging holes, eliminating accessible food, and using poisons (cautiously).
- ❁ To keep your work area clean and save steps, tape a large paper sack to the side of the work table. Put food scraps and waste in the sack as you work. When the sack is full, put it in a garbage can and

begin with a new sack.

- ❁ When you prepare meals, keep a sink full of soapy water and wash utensils right after you use them. Pots containing starch and protein need soaking in cold water. Soak greasy or sugary pans in hot, soapy water. Soaking saves cleaning time.
- ❁ To prevent noodles and rice from sticking, oil the pot before cooking, or add a little oil to the boiling water.
- ❁ Three-compartment sinks are best for hand washing dishes, pots, pans, and utensils. If you don't have such a sink, use three separate containers. Wash cooking and eating utensils according to your local and state health requirements.

Follow these steps:



1. Scrape or rinse food from plates and utensils before washing.
2. Wash dishes in clean, sudsy, water as hot as hands can stand (usually 100° to 125° F).
3. Rinse in the middle compartment using clean, hot water.
4. Sanitize in the third compartment by immersing everything you wash in one of the following solutions:
  - ❁ one teaspoon chlorine bleach for each gallon of lukewarm water,
  - ❁ one half teaspoon iodine for each gallon of luke-

warm water,

- ❁ Lukewarm water with *quaternary ammonium compounds* or acid *sanitizes* mixed according to directions.
- 5. Never wipe dishes and utensils dry. They should be air dried on a rack or clean towel. Wiping dishes with a towel spreads germs.
- ❁ When machine-washing dishes, follow these suggestions:
  - Scrape plates and utensils before putting them in the machine.
  - Wash-water temperature should be 140° F.
  - Final rinse water should be *at least* 180° F.

# Evaluating Food Service

---

To conserve time, money, and nutrients always evaluate your work. Are there better, quicker, or easier ways to prepare meals?

- ❁ Make notes on your menu or recipe card about successful and unsuccessful meals, and then refer to old menus when adjusting or revising your cycle menus.
- ❁ Make a plate check after every meal and snack. Wasted food is wasted money, so find new ways to prepare these foods. Involve the children in activities that teach them about food and increase their acceptance of new and different foods.



# Peak Harvest Months In Texas

---

## January

Apples  
Oranges  
Broccoli  
Cabbage  
Carrots  
Tangerines  
Cauliflower

Spinach

Lettuce

Grapefruit

## February

Broccoli

Cabbage

Apples

Oranges

Tangerines

Carrots

Spinach

Lettuce

Grapefruit

## March

Broccoli

Cabbage

Carrots

Spinach

Oranges

Grapefruit

## April

Carrots

Strawberries

Oranges

Onions

## May

Tomatoes

Cantaloupes

Sweet Corn

Cucumbers

Strawberries

Onions

## June

Cantaloupes

Sweet Corn

Cucumbers

Honeydew Melons

Tomatoes

Onions

Green Peppers

Watermelons

Peaches

## July

Cantaloupes

Cucumbers

Watermelons

Onions

Peaches

Peanuts

## August

Cantaloupes

Watermelons

Onions

Peanuts

## September

Carrots

Sweet Potatoes

Watermelons

Peanuts

## October

Carrots

Cucumbers

Sweet Potatoes

Lettuce

Avocados

Pecans

Peanuts

## November

Carrots

Cucumbers

Green Peppers

Tomatoes

Pecans

Avocados

Peanuts

## December

Spinach

Cabbage

Cauliflower

Cucumbers

Green Peppers

Tomatoes

Peanut

Oranges

Lettuce

Grapefruit

Pecans

Apples

# Menu Planning Worksheet

---

Week Of: \_\_\_\_\_

| Pattern                                                                                                             | Monday | Tuesday |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| BREAKFAST<br>Meat or meat alternative<br>Cereal or bread<br>Milk<br>Other foods                                     |        |         |
| AM SUPPLEMENT                                                                                                       |        |         |
| LUNCH OR SUPPER<br>Meat or meat alternative<br>Vegetables and fruits<br>(2 or more)<br>Bread<br>Milk<br>Other foods |        |         |
| PM SUPPLEMENT                                                                                                       |        |         |

| Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|-----------|----------|--------|
|           |          |        |
|           |          |        |
|           |          |        |
|           |          |        |