Creating Happy Mealtimes and Healthy Kids

Lesson Developed by Tiffani Roltgen, CFCS
Certified FCS Teacher and Wisconsin Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Executive Director

Grade Level: Middle School

National FCS Standards:
- Implement strategies to teach children health, safety, and sanitation habits (4.4.3).
- Plan safe and healthy meals and snacks (4.4.4).
- Apply various dietary guidelines in planning to meet nutrition and wellness needs (14.3.1).
- Demonstrate ability to select, store, prepare, and serve nutritious and aesthetically pleasing foods (14.3.3).
- Apply communication strategies that promote positive self-esteem in family members (15.2.2).

Objectives:

Students will...
- Differentiate between parent and child responsibilities at mealtime (Day 1).
- Identify mealtime guidelines for serving food to children (Day 1).
- Demonstrate respectful, appropriate mealtime communication techniques (Day 2).
- Select and prepare a healthy snack for children (Days 3 and 4).
- Assemble babysitting activity kit with healthy snack recipe and mealtime guidelines (Day 5).

Essential Question:
- How can caregivers create happy mealtimes and support healthy eating for children?

Career Clusters (& Pathways):
- Education and Training (Teaching/Training)
- Human Services (Early Childhood Development and Services)
- Marketing (Marketing Communications)

Materials List:
- Right Timer® (TB219937)
- 24" x 36" Reversible Whiteboard/Chalkboard (Z46159H), 3-in-1 Flannel/Wipe-Off Board (SB38786H), or Write-On Cling Sheet (9708303H)
- EXPO® Low-Oc Erase Marker Set (6100285H)
- Toshiba® DVD/VCR Combo Player (SB39460H) or Califone® Deluxe Classroom DVD Player (Z40571H)
- Happy Mealtime & Healthy Kids DVD (WA28879H)
- Art1st® Premium Multimedia Art Paper — 80 lb., 12" x 18", 60 sheets (9728746)
- Classroom Laminator (SB40492CQ)
- Cooking Art: Easy Edible Art for Young Children Book (WA19112H)
- Snack ingredients
- Kitchen facilities
- Tote Boxes (9723220) or empty copier paper boxes
Setup
Prior to Day 1, preview the DVD and supplemental worksheets at
Prior to Day 4, purchase lab ingredients detailed on student grocery orders.

Introduction
Write the following journal questions on the white board:

- Why do people eat? Try to list at least 10 reasons.
- What have you heard parents, teachers, and childcare providers say to children at mealtimes?
- What “food rules” do you try to follow?
- Do you have any food habits you think are negative? Please explain.
- How did your food habits form?

Using the Right Timer®, unveil questions one at a time, and give students three minutes to journal their answers to each question.

Day 1
Complete journaling activity noted in Introduction (15 minutes). Create a class list of reasons people eat on the white board. Discuss answers. View Happy Mealtimes & Healthy Kids DVD (23 minutes). Stop DVD periodically to review questions from the supplemental worksheets.

Day 2
On two blank Art1st® sheets, have each student create placemats by writing and illustrating important mealt ime guidelines from the DVD (20 minutes). One placemat should be designed for the child, while the other placemat is for the caregiver. Collect placemats to be laminated for use in babysitting activity kit. In small groups, ask students to create and role play family mealt ime dilemmas (10 minutes). During “take 1,” students should present an inappropriate response to the situation. During “take 2,” students should demonstrate a respectful response. Possible topics for mealt ime dilemmas include snack requests, new foods, dessert, mealt ime schedule, pressure from parents, serving food, and technology. Present role plays to the class (15 minutes).

Day 3
Introduce the concept of a “babysitting activity kit.” Brainstorm age-appropriate items that may be included in a kit, such as modeling dough, bubbles, coloring book and crayons, stickers, puzzles, learning games, jump rope, books, and art project supplies (10 minutes). Ask students to look in Cooking Art: Easy Edible Art for Young Children to find a recipe for a healthy, aesthetically pleasing snack that avoids both common food allergies and cooking techniques that require adult supervision, such as knife or oven use. Once students have located a recipe and received teacher approval, guide them in completing a grocery order for supplies (35 minutes).

Day 4
Prepare and sample healthy snacks (35 minutes). Clean up lab facilities (10 minutes).

Day 5
Review healthy snacks from yesterday’s lab. Discuss what went well, what could be improved, and adjustments that would need to be made if preparing the recipe with a young child (20 minutes). Assemble the start of a “babysitting activity kit” with two mealt ime guidelines placemats (one for child and one for caregiver) and healthy snack recipe. Begin personalizing and decorating the boxes (20 minutes). Throughout the course, additional items and activities can be added to the kit. Complete activity noted in conclusion (5 minutes).

Conclusion
Review the journal questions from the introduction activity. Discuss the following questions:
1. What are the most important mealt ime guidelines you will remember and use with children you babysit or with your own children someday?
2. Are there any mealt ime guidelines from the experts that you disagree with? Explain.

Beyond the Classroom
Partner with an afterschool program or childcare center to empower middle school students to lead young children in preparing healthy snacks from babysitting activity kits. Serve the snacks at the table and use mealt ime guideline placemats as visual reminders to help middle school students respond respectfully and appropriately to children’s requests and behaviors. Assist the young children in designing and coloring grocery bags with important mealt ime guidelines for parents. Ask a local grocer to use the bags for purchases made during National Nutrition Month (March) or a similar promotional period.
Creating Happy Mealtimes and Healthy Kids

Lesson Developed by Tiffani Roltgen, CFCS
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Grade Level: High School

National FCS Standards:
- Apply menu-planning principles to develop and modify menus (8.4.2).
- Demonstrate cooking methods that increase nutritional value, lower calorie and fat content, and utilize herbs and spices to enhance flavor (8.5.14).
- Analyze the governmental, economic, and technological influences on food choices and practices (14.1.3).
- Analyze legislation and regulations related to nutrition and wellness (14.1.5).
- Apply various dietary guidelines in planning to meet nutrition and wellness needs (14.3.1).
- Demonstrate ability to select, store, prepare, and serve nutritious and aesthetically pleasing foods (14.3.3).

Objectives:
Students will...
- Create a food timeline illustrating recommended feeding practices from birth through school age (Days 1, 2, and 4).
- Prepare nutrient-rich homemade baby food purees (Day 3).
- Compare and contrast food recommendations from Ellen Satter, Ruth Yaron, and Michael Pollan with common “kids’ menu” items (Day 5).
- Design an aesthetically appealing, marketable, and research-based kids’ menu (Days 6-8).

Essential Question:
How can caregivers implement research-based feeding and mealtime practices from birth through school age?

Career Clusters (& Pathways):
- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (Food Products and Processing Systems)
- Hospitality and Tourism (Restaurants and Food/Beverage Services)
- Human Services (Early Childhood Development and Services)
- Marketing (Merchandising)

Materials List:
- Paper plates
- Colored pencils and/or markers
- 24” x 36” Reversible Whiteboard/Chalkboard (Z46159H), 3-in-1 Flannel/Wipe-Off Board (SB38786H), or Write-On Cling Sheet (9708303H)
- EXPO® Low-Odor Dry-Erase Marker Set (6100285H)
- Toshiba® DVD/VCR Combo Player (SB39460H) or Califone® Deluxe Classroom DVD Player (Z40571H)
- Art1st® Premium Multimedia Art Paper — 80 lb., 12” x 18”, 60 sheets (9728746)
- Lab ingredients
- Kitchen facilities
- Kids’ menu samples
- Computer lab with Microsoft® Publisher or similar program
- Index Cards — 5” x 8”, pack of 30 (K1010368ICM)
- Reference books: Super Baby Food by Ruth Yaron
  Omnivore’s Dilemma and Food Rules by Michael Pollan
Setup
Prior to Day 1, preview the DVD. Prior to Day 3, purchase lab ingredients. Prior to Day 5, collect and/or print kids’ menus from various restaurants.

Introduction (10 minutes)
Distribute paper plates to students. Ask students to divide their plates into three pie pieces and draw pictures in response to the following: What should infants, toddlers, and children eat?

Day 1
Complete the brainstorming activity noted in introduction (10 minutes). Share ideas and discuss. View and take notes on Better Breastfeeding: A Guide for Teen Parents DVD (25 minutes). Hand out three pieces of Art1st* sheets to each student for their food time line. On the first sheet, ask students to design a poster noting what infants should eat with key points from the DVD (25 minutes). Encourage students to create innovative titles for their posters such as “Babies on the Breast are Ahead of the Rest” or “Breastmilk: It’s What’s for Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner!”

Day 2
Continue the food time line activity by asking students to design a second poster noting what infants/toddlers (ages 6 months through 3 years) should eat. Allow students to access the book Super Baby Food by Ruth Yaron and Ellen Satter’s work at elynsatter.com/ (60 minutes).

Day 3
Guide students through a lab activity featuring several varieties of super porridge from Super Baby Food by Ruth Yaron and various pureed fresh fruits and vegetables. Discuss and demonstrate the introduction of spices such as cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, ginger, and garlic and nutritional supplements such as flaxseed, brewer’s yeast, and egg yolk. Allow students to taste and share their thoughts (60 minutes).

Day 4
Introduce students to the work of Michael Pollan at michaelpollan.com/ through reading of a story or chapter from The Omnivore’s Dilemma (20 minutes). Allow students to access copies of Food Rules. Continue the food time line activity by asking students to design a third poster noting what children over 3 years of age should eat, based on Michael Pollan’s Food Rules (40 minutes).

Day 5
Display the food timelines throughout the classroom. Hand out “kids’ menus” from various restaurants and divide students into groups of two. Ask groups to critique the menus based on the information they now know about what infants, toddlers, and children should be eating (15 minutes). Which menu items follow the recommendations? Which ones are not in keeping with them? What changes could be made? Are there kids’ menus that fail to offer any “real food” options meaning “fresh, non processed food?” Ask each group to present their discoveries to the class (45 minutes).

Day 6
Invite a panel of restaurant professionals to the classroom to speak to students about menu design and marketing (60 minutes). Questions they might address include: What factors need to be considered when planning a menu? How was the restaurant’s current menu established? What changes have been made over the years? What changes might be coming in the future? What marketing principles are used in menu design?

Day 7
In the groups from Day 5, have students create an aesthetically pleasing, marketable, and research-based kids’ menu following the recommendations found in their food timelines. After approving their rough draft, allow students to add graphics, color, and formatting to their final menu in Microsoft® Publisher or a similar program (60 minutes).

Day 8
Finish, print, and hand in kids’ menus (40 minutes). Complete conclusion activity (20 minutes).

Conclusion (10 minutes)
Ask each student to review their original answers to the question, “What should infants, toddlers, and children eat?” As a class, discuss ways in which society encourages and discourages the research-based feeding and mealtime recommendations. After reflecting on the unit activities and lessons, guide students in writing a three-part commitment statement detailing “Three Things I Would Like to Do to Improve My Food Habits and Be a Better Role Model for Children in My Life.”

1. By the end of today, I will…
2. By the end of next week, I will…
3. By the end of next month, I will…

Transfer the goals onto an index card to display in the student’s locker or where they will see it daily. Revisit the goals weekly to assess progress.

Beyond the Classroom
Set up a meeting with school food service staff to learn more about the guidelines governing school lunches. Have students present their food timelines and the information they have learned. Open up the discussion for potential changes that could be made to the school lunch menus by sharing and discussing revised kids’ menus.