



## Nutrition for Early Learning and Child Care

# Menu and Mealtime Environment Checklist

This checklist will lead you through the process of reviewing your menu and mealtime environment. It will help you to set goals, while highlighting your strengths and areas that may be more challenging.

Even small changes can have a positive impact!

- STEPS:**
1. Check all items that are currently being met.
  2. Choose at least one unchecked item that you or your facility would like to focus on.
  3. Set an achievable goal and create an action plan.

### Menu Checklist

What is Required	✓
When a <b>MEAL</b> is provided, it includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two selections from the vegetables and fruit group</li> <li>• One selection from the grain products group</li> <li>• One selection from the milk and alternatives group and/or one selection from the meat and alternatives group</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
When a <b>SNACK</b> is provided, it includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One selection from the vegetables and fruit group</li> <li>• One selection from any other food group (grain products, milk and alternatives or meat and alternatives)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
What is Recommended	✓
A variety of vegetables and fruit (fresh, frozen or canned) are offered every week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red (ex. tomatoes, beets, strawberries)</li> <li>• Yellow/Orange (ex. yams, pumpkin, cantaloupe)</li> <li>• White/Brown (ex. cauliflower, turnip, bananas)</li> <li>• Green (ex. cucumber, snap peas, kiwi, kale)</li> <li>• Blue/Purple (ex. purple cabbage, plums, blueberries)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
At least half of the grain products offered are whole grain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ex. foods made with whole grains like pasta, tortillas, pitas, crackers, couscous and bread; also, barley, brown rice, oats or quinoa</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meat alternatives are offered at least once per week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ex. pulses (ex. chick peas, kidney beans and other beans, lentils, split peas) tofu, fish, nut or seed butters</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offer whole foods and cook recipes from scratch 80% of the time (4 out of 5 meals and 4 out of 5 snacks). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ex. make whole wheat pasta with a simple cheese sauce (with milk and shredded cheese) rather than boxed macaroni and cheese</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food offered includes a variety of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• textures</li> <li>• shapes</li> <li>• temperatures</li> <li>• foods from various cultures and traditions.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

*\*Consider allergies and potential choking hazards when planning and offering meals and snacks\**

## Mealtime Environment Checklist

What is Recommended	✓
Children decide which foods to eat from the foods provided, and how much to eat (including food coming from home). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ex. children are not pressured to eat or try new foods; bribes/rewards are not used to increase intake; children choose the order in which they eat the foods offered</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children serve themselves from the food offered (when age-appropriate).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children and child care staff/providers eat together at the same table (when possible).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff/providers engage children in casual conversation during meal/snack time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ex. What was the highlight of your day? What are you thankful for? If you could have a superpower, what would it be?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children are actively involved in mealtimes by engaging in age-appropriate tasks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ex. planning, preparing and serving food, gardening, shopping, setting the table, cleaning up</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child care staff/providers avoid sharing personal views about food and body weight. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ex. labeling foods as 'healthy' or 'unhealthy'; sharing personal likes and dislikes; relating food and eating to body weight</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Setting Goals

When setting goals consider: action steps (ex. find new recipes, seek nutrition education opportunities), timeline for achieving goals, who is responsible for each step and the monitoring required to stay on track.

Goal(s):
Action steps:
Timeline:
Monitoring plan:
Who is responsible?

### For more information:

Visit the Nutrition for Early Learning and Child Care Website at [manitoba.ca/health/foodinchildcare](http://manitoba.ca/health/foodinchildcare)  
 Call the toll free line at **1-888-547-0535**  
 Email at [mbchildcarenutrition@dietitians.ca](mailto:mbchildcarenutrition@dietitians.ca)