



## FAMILY STYLE DINING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Question:** If preschool children are participating in family style dining, is it required that they place all components onto their plates? Are appropriate serving sizes also required?

**Answer:** To ensure regulatory compliance, there must be an adequate amount of prepared food presented to the children to assure they can have required components and portions as well as additional portions available. With family style – there is no requirement that the food be portioned out onto the plates of the children. Instead, children are allowed to take turns using the serving utensil to make their own selections and serve themselves the food (s) they choose from the components that are presented.

All regulations regarding food service/meals would be observed; i.e., the food prepared would include all required components, be developmentally appropriate, have enough food prepared that each child has the required components available plus additional portions, etc.

When a center implements Family Style Dining, the containers of food from which the children served themselves must be discarded at the conclusion of the meal. This food may not be refrigerated and served a second time!

I have included examples of regulations that pertain to food service. Kentucky Child Care Regulations do not prohibit “family style” food service. Family style food service is in compliance with regulations as it does not withhold food from children. While the components are not measured and placed on each child’s plate – the food is available and presented in a way that the child is able to serve themselves. Family Style is typically used in centers that want to promote self-help skills and allow children to have choices. Typically, during family style, you find the staff person seated at the table engaged in conversation with children as the children and staff enjoy their meal.

### **922 KAR 2:120. Section 9. Food and Meal Requirements.**

*(1) Food shall be:*

*(g) Served in a quantity that is developmentally appropriate for the child with additional portions provided upon request of the child;*

### **922 KAR 2:120. Section 9. Food and Meal Requirements.**

*(3) A serving of milk shall consist of:*

*(a) Breast milk or iron-fortified formula for a child age;*

*1. Age birth to twelve (12) months; or*

*2. Beyond twelve (12) months of age as documented by the parent or the child’s physician;*

*(b) Pasteurized whole milk for children ages twelve (12) months to twenty-four (24) months; or*

*(c) Pasteurized low fat one (1) per cent or fat-free skim milk for children ages twenty-four (24) months to school-age.*

### **922 KAR 2:120. Section 9. Food and Meal Requirements.**

*(11) An individual portion of food served to a child or adult shall not be served again.*

### **922 KAR 2:120. Section 9. Food and Meal Requirements.**

*(18) A snack shall include two (2) of the following:*

*(a) Milk;*

*(b) Protein;*

*(c) Bread; or*

*(d) 1. Fruit;*

*2. Vegetable; or*

*3. 100 percent juice.*

**922 KAR 2:120. Section 9. Food and Meal Requirements.**

**(19) Lunch and dinner shall include:**

- (a) Milk;
- (b) Protein;
- (c) Bread; and
- (d) 1. Two (2) vegetables;
- 2. Two (2) fruits; or
- 3. One (1) fruit and one (1) vegetable.



**Family-Style Meal Service (Information taken from the Child and Adult Care Food Program Web-site)**

<https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/hsmrs/Montana/PPMeals/PassPeachesHandouts.pdf>

Family-style meal service means serving foods in bowls or dishes on the table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves, or serve themselves with help from an adult. Enough food must be placed on the table to provide the full required portion size for all the children at the table.

***Family-style meal service has some advantages...***

**Family-style meals allow children to identify and be introduced to new foods, new tastes, and new menus.**

Children are often unsure about new foods. Seeing new foods and watching others serve themselves gets them interested. They are more willing to try a small serving when they see other children trying new foods.

**Children can choose the amount of food they want to have on their plate.**

When foods are served family-style, children may choose to take a small portion of food, knowing that the food will still be available if they would like a second serving. Children feel more in control to judge their hunger and fullness throughout the meal, knowing that more food is within easy reach.

**Children practice good table manners and new skills with their hands and fingers.**

Serving themselves gives children time to practice skills like passing, pouring, and scooping foods. Taking turns, sharing, and politely turning down foods are all a part of the table manners children learn by participating in family-style meal service.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - SUBSTITUTIONS**

**Question:** A center director indicated a parent has provided them with a lengthy (3 page) list of dietary restrictions for her child. For example, the parent indicated permissible snacks should be limited to cheese balls, Trix brand yogurt, 2% milk, animal crackers and Cheezits. The parent did not report any food allergies or include a physician's note for these restrictions.



The parent has agreed to pack the child's meals. However, when the parent forgets, the child is given the same meals and snacks the other children receive. When this happens the parent is very upset that her child has been given a food that is not on her approved list.

Would the documented parent requested restrictions be enough to keep the center from getting cited for Food and Meal Requirements under 120 Section 9 (14)?

**Answer:** Yes. If it is an acceptable practice at the child care center, parents may provide meals and snacks for their child. Written documentation provided by the parent is needed. Regardless of who is supplying the food, the parent and center must assure that the basic required components of each meal are being met; i.e., 2% milk would substitute for the milk requirement and she would have to read the product label of the cheese balls and Cheezits to assure they meet the required component as a substitution. A good resource to determine what foods are acceptable meal components is the Child and Adult Food Program web-site: <https://education.ky.gov/federal/SCN/Pages/CACFPHomepage.aspx> Perhaps the child care center would share this link with the parent as a resource for her food choices.

**Question:** When the parent forgets to send in food, is the center acting appropriately by providing the child snacks and meals even though they are not on the parent approved list?

**Answer:** No. Since this child has a documented dietary restriction, the center would have to assure that the foods provided as a supplement fall within the restricted menu provided in writing by the parent.

**922 KAR 2:120. Section 9. Food and Meal Requirements.**

*(14) All children should be offered the same food items unless the child's parent or health professional documents a dietary restriction that necessitates an alternative food item for the child.*

**922 KAR 2:120. Section 9. Food and Meal Requirements.**

*(18) A snack shall include two (2) of the following:*

- (a) Milk;*
- (b) Protein;*
- (c) Bread; or*
- (d) 1. Fruit;*
- 2. Vegetable; or*
- 3. 100 percent juice.*

**922 KAR 2:120. Section 9. Food and Meal Requirements.**

*(19) Lunch and dinner shall include:*

- (a) Milk;*
- (b) Protein;*
- (c) Bread; and*
- (d) 1. Two (2) vegetables;*
- 2. Two (2) fruits; or*
- 3. One (1) fruit and one (1) vegetable.*