

Family-Style Dining Policy

{Name of Early Care and Education Center} encourages a supportive mealtime environment by subscribing to the recommendations below for children one year of age and older:

- ★ Food is placed in serving bowls, plates, or baskets; beverages are placed in pitchers on the table.
- ★ Children serve themselves food using child-friendly serving utensils.
- ★ Staff will participate, sit, and interact with children at mealtimes.
- ★ When eating meals with children, the adults will eat the same food as the children
- ★ Staff will encourage the children to discuss the food texture, taste, color, shape, size, quantity, number, and temperature of food.
- ★ Staff will encourage, but not force, children to try new foods through modeling behavior and positive behavior and words
- ★ Staff will not use food as a reward or punishment.
- ★ Staff will model family-style practices and appropriate table etiquette for children.
- ★ After the meal, children will participate in an engaging activity while others are finishing up.
- ★ Children will participate in both the preparation of setting the table and the clearing, scraping of plates and separating of utensils, and wiping of the tables.

Family-Style Dining is considered Best Practice by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

All the of the above listed activities promotes language development, supports social, emotional skills and gross, and fine motor skill development.

- ★ **{Name of Early Care and Education Center}** encourages their families to practice Family-Style Dining at home as a *best practice* and to support the work being done in school.
- ★ **{Name of Early Care and Education Center}** will host a minimum of family days a year when family members can come to the center and participate the Family-Style model.