

Red River CCFP, Inc.
 168 Scenic Point
 Gainesville, Tx. 76240
 1-800-588-8153
 FAX: 888-499-2237
 EMAIL: rrrccfp@ntin.net
 Tonya- 940-507-1389
 Trina-940-372-0322
 Melissa-940-736-5031



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Developing Healthy Eating Habits in Children

Child care providers take on an important role in helping to develop healthy habits in our nation’s children. Studies show that about 75% of children aged 2 to 5 spend an average of 15-20 hours in child care each week. Approximately 50-75% of younger children’s daily energy intake occurs while in full-time child care settings, making this an excellent environment for encouraging healthful eating.

What happens when children refuse to eat? Children who display picky eating habits can cause care providers to worry about what they’re eating, or not eating. Despite fussiness about what they eat, most children eat a variety of foods and get adequate nutrition in their diet over the course of the week. On occasion, limited variety in food choices during early childhood could lead to concern about possible nutrient deficiencies and poor health. Finding a middle ground concerning food will help most children learn to eat well and enjoy a variety of foods over time.

With feeding children, responsibility should be divided between the extremes. The “what, when, where of feeding” is the responsibility of caregivers; the “how much and whether of eating” are the responsibility of the child.



Let’s look at the roles and responsibilities of both child care provider and child with regards to meal time .

Child’s Role:

1. **Decide how much to eat.** A child’s food intake will generally match her/his needs. The amount of food a child eats is up to the child.
2. **Decide what to eat from the foods served.** Young children like: • Simple meals with food separated from each other • Finger foods • Foods with bright colors and varied shapes
 Young children often **DO NOT** like: • Highly seasoned food • New foods and/or foods mixed together
3. **Decide if they will eat.** Children should eat only if they want to eat. They should never be forced or coerced to eat.

Child Care Provider’s Role:

1. **Select and buy nutritious foods from the 5 food groups (vegetables, fruits, whole grains, protein, and milk).**
2. **Make and offer nutritious, balanced meals.**
3. **Make and offer colorful meals.**
4. **Give the child food they can handle.**
5. **Decide when meals and snacks are offered.**
6. **Insist the child be present at meals, but do not make the child eat.**
7. **Model appropriate eating behaviors.**
8. **Reinforce appropriate eating behaviors and ignore inappropriate behaviors.**
9. **Make family meal times pleasant (provide comfortable seating and easy-to-use utensils).**

Check Schedule

Claim Month	Due Date	Claim Paid
January	February 5	February 15-16
February	March 5	March 15-16

This is a projected schedule. Actual dates may vary. Get your claim in early and checks get out early! All claims are due in office by close of business day (5 PM) on the 5th of each month. Possible delays due to National Budget not being approved yet.

Healthy Morning Glory Breakfast Muffins

Prep Time 15 minutes min Cook Time 20minutes

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups white whole wheat flour **	1 cup quick-cooking "instant" oats
2 teaspoons baking soda	2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger	1/2 teaspoon salt
3 large eggs	3/4 cup unsweetened applesauce
1/3 cup avocado or olive oil	1/3 cup maple syrup or honey
1 teaspoon orange zest	1/4 cup orange juice
2 cups grated carrot	1 cup grated apple
1/2 cup raisins	1/2 cup chopped pecans
3 Tablespoons ground flax seed optional)	

** (can sub with whole wheat or all-purpose)

Preheat oven to 400degrees. Line a standard muffin tin with paper liners (this recipe makes 14 to 16 muffins so use a second muffin tin or make more after the first batch has cooked). In a medium bowl, whisk the flour, oats, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, and salt until well combined. Set aside. In a large bowl, whisk eggs, applesauce, oil, maple syrup, orange zest, and orange juice until well combined. Pour the dry ingredients into the bowl with the wet and stir until just combined. Do not overmix. Using a large spoon or spatula, fold in the grated carrot, apple, raisins, pecans, and ground flax, if using. Scoop batter into prepared muffin cups filling them to the top. Sprinkle each muffin with extra pecans, if desired. Bake until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out clean, about 22 to 24 minutes. Cool muffins for 10 to 15 minutes, then enjoy warm or at room temperature. 185 Calories per muffin.

Sweet Potato Peanut Butter Muffins

1 cup smooth natural peanut butter	1/2 cup cooked and mashed sweet potato
3 eggs	1/2 tsp baking soda
1/4 cup maple syrup or honey	1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon	1/4 tsp ground ginger
1/4 tsp sea salt, omit if using salted peanut butter	

Preheat your oven to 350°F and line a muffin tin. Combine all ingredients in a food processor or bowl. Mix until smooth and all ingredients are incorporated evenly. Using a 1/4 cup measuring cup, portion batter out between lined muffin tin holes. Bake for 16-18 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out clean. Let cool for 15-20 minutes and then enjoy! Store leftovers in fridge for up to a week or in freezer!



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