



# Smarter Mealtimes



*Make the healthy choice the easy choice.*

# Learning Objectives

- Understand the relationship between the environmental factors and the food choices children make.
- Identify free resources that support the implementation of Smarter Mealtimes strategies.
- Apply the strategy “enhance taste expectations” to child care menu offerings.
- Assess the 5 Smarter Mealtimes strategies applied in the child care mealtime environment using the National Smarter Mealtimes Scorecard.



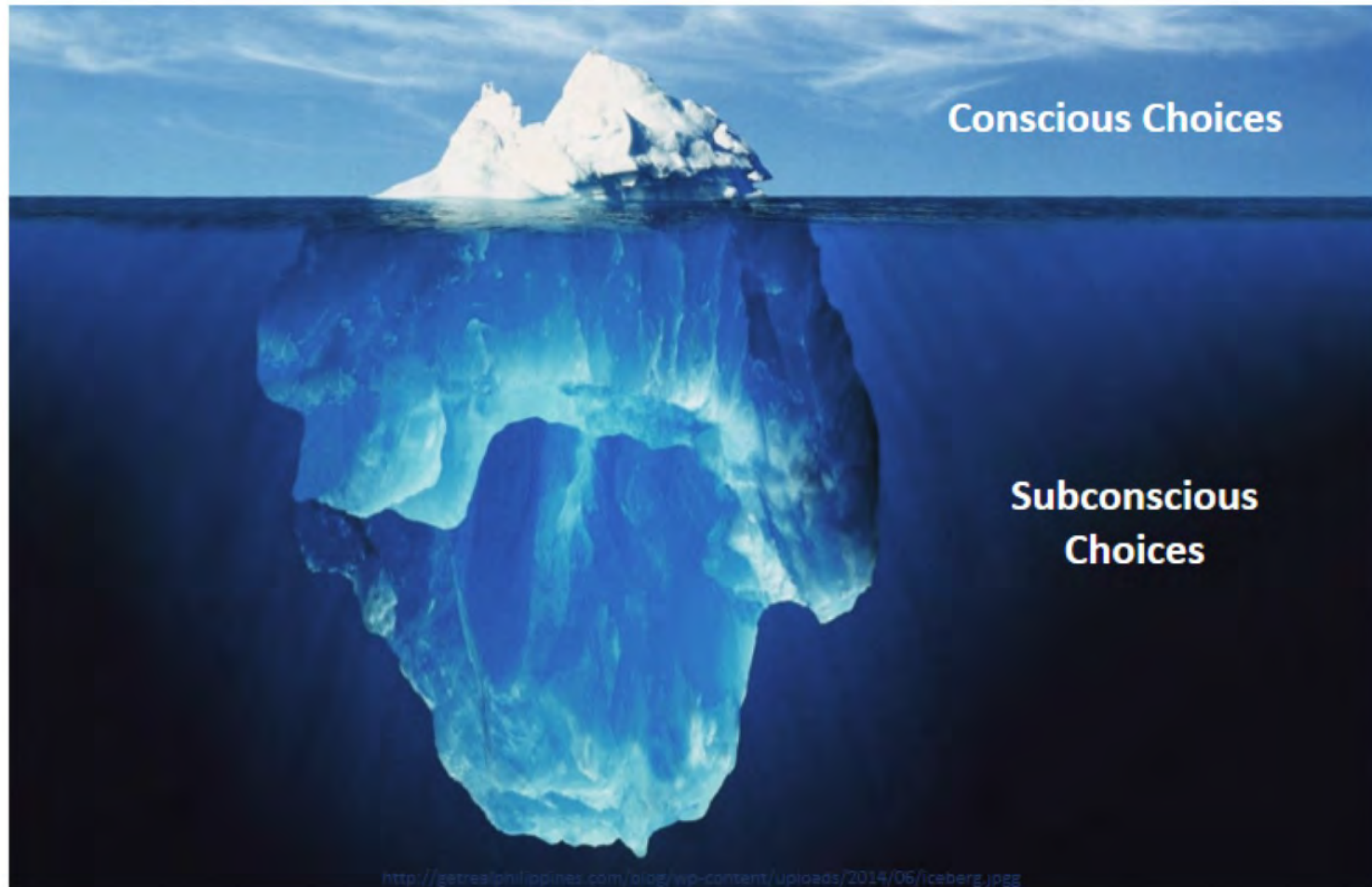
# What is the Smarter Mealtimes Movement?

- Created by Cornell BEN Center
- Evidence-based
- **With Smarter Mealtimes, kids select and eat more of the healthy foods offered**
- Low/no-cost, simple





# Why do we eat what we eat?





# Challenging Foods to Promote

- What are some foods you have a hard time getting kids to try?
- **Write down one of these foods**







# 5 Strategies

These principles are based on extensive research. Implementing these concepts in child care homes and centers has proven to be successful.

Adult Role  
Modeling

Increase  
Convenience

Improve  
Visibility

Enhance  
Taste  
Expectations

Child  
Involvement



# Adult Role Modeling

- Children look up to their caregivers
- Be a healthy role model

## Tips

- Caregivers sit at the table with the children during mealtime.
- Caregivers eat the same meal as the children.









**Smarter Mealtimes  
Movement** *National Office*

# Increase Convenience

- The quicker/easier it is to eat a food, the more likely we are going to eat it
- We like the foods we see first

## Tips

- Offer fruits and vegetables first during meal time.
- Serve sliced fruit options every day.
- Serve raw cut veggies with a dip.
- Offer fruits and veggies at least two times during meals.





# Brain Break



# Improve Visibility

- Out of sight, out of mind
- Highlight healthier options

## Tips

- Offer fruit and vegetable options in colorful attractive bowls
- Promote healthy choices with signage and stickers
- Offer a variety of fruit and vegetable choices every day
- Ensure lights in the eating area work and are on.

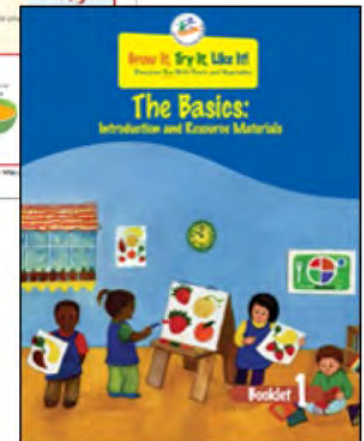


<http://www.littlesunflowers.com/images/set-4-windhorse-rainbow-bowls.jpg>



# Team Nutrition

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn>





# Smarter Mealtimes Tools



Available at:

[www.smarterlunchrooms.org/smarter-mealtimes](http://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/smarter-mealtimes)



# Enhance Taste Expectations

- Food tastes how we expect it to taste
- Name, appearance, and reputation create our expectations
- Our taste expectations are easily influenced



# Create Fun Food Names

Fruit	Vegetables	Entree
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Orange Smiles</li><li>• Pot of Gold Pineapple</li><li>• Apple Crunchers</li><li>• Cool Kiwi</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• X-Ray Vision Carrots</li><li>• Superhero Salad</li><li>• Little Trees</li><li>• Zombie Fingers (Green Beans)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monster Lasagna</li><li>• Champion Chili</li><li>• Rainbow soup</li></ul>



# Create Fun Food Names

- Go to:
  - [Creative, Fun, and Descriptive Names Webpage](#)



## TRIED AND TRUE

Vegetables	Fruits	Entrees	Unflavored Milk	Reimbursable Meals*
Big Bad Bandit Beans	"Orange" You Glad You're Picking Fruit?	Bean And Cheese Burrito Blaster	Mickey's Mighty Milk	All-Star Meal
Butter-Nutty Bites [Squash]	All-Mixed-Up Fruit Cup	Big Bad Bean Burrito	White Milk: Tooth Fairy's Choice	Athlete's Meal
Cauliflower Clouds	Apple Crunchers	Fish Sticks Of The Sea	Ice Cold White Milk	Lions' Lunch







# Break

# Name that Food!

- Form groups of 2-3
- Come up with at least one creative name for the foods you wrote down earlier



# Nutrition Education

- Let kids play with, learn about, and taste foods before trying them at mealtime
- Mystery bag activity





# Free Nutrition Curricula

- *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*
- *Harvest for Healthy Kids*
  
- Gardening-based curricula
- Ages 3-5 years old
- Easy and fun activities

[www.harvestforhealthykids.org](http://www.harvestforhealthykids.org)



# Share/Announce the Menu

- Lets kids know what they are about to eat.
- Opportunity to prime kids' expectations
- Opportunity to use fun food names to get kids excited ahead of time.

We are having a special meal today! We are having silly sweet apple slices and green hulk salad!

# Child Involvement

- Getting the children more involved with mealtime:
  - Makes mealtime more positive and fun
  - Teaches children valuable skills and citizenship

## Tips

- **Family style meals are implemented.**
- Children are involved with mealtime set-up and clean-up routines
- Child artwork is posted in mealtime space
- Children and their families are given opportunities to provide feedback on menu









**Smarter Mealtimes  
Movement** *National Office*

# Assess Your Program



## Smarter Mealtimes Scorecard



Date \_\_\_\_\_ Site Name \_\_\_\_\_ Completed by \_\_\_\_\_

The Smarter Mealtimes Scorecard is a list of simple, inexpensive strategies to promote healthy eating in half- or full-day programs that serve young children. These strategies work in childcare centers, Head Start programs, and family homecare settings.

### Instructions

1. Review the scorecard.
2. Observe meal and snack times throughout a single day. Check off statements that are completely true on the observed day. (Check with caregivers about daily routines.)
3. Add up the Scorecard total to determine your award level.
4. Go to [SmarterLunchrooms.org/Smarter-Mealtimes](https://SmarterLunchrooms.org/Smarter-Mealtimes) for information, tips, recipes, links to signs and labels, and other helpful advice for implementing the strategies.
5. Choose 2-3 unchecked strategies to incorporate into your daily routine. Use the Smarter Mealtimes Challenge worksheet to track your progress.
6. Once the new strategies are part of the daily routine, excellent! Keep it up! Fill out a new Scorecard and repeat this process at least once per year.

For more information visit:

[SmarterLunchrooms.org/Smarter-Mealtimes](https://SmarterLunchrooms.org/Smarter-Mealtimes)



**Smarter Mealtimes**  
**Movement** *National Office*





# Questions?

**Presenter/Contact Name**

(555) 555-5555

[name@email.com](mailto:name@email.com)



**Thanks for Coming!**



*Make the healthy choice the easy choice.*

# References

Go to the [complete literature review](#) for Smarter Mealtimes strategies discussed in this training.



# Acknowledgements

This training was created in partnership with Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Cornell Center for Behavioral Economics in Child nutrition (BEN Center). Graphics for this project were purchased by OSPI using Team Nutrition Grant funds.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

