

Nutrition Notes

Hopefully, this school year so far has been a rewarding one, and everyone is enjoying the beautiful colors of autumn as well as the crispness of the cool air! In the past, we have talked at great length about how special each and every one of you are to our students; and that without the nutritious meals you provide, so many of our children would go hungry. It's because of the work you do EVERY day that students are able to learn and succeed in life!



Marla Caplon, R.D., L.D.
MdSNA Nutrition Chair

A few days ago, I received an article from one of our colleagues and friends, Karen Olsen, supervisor in Harford County. I read the article and it made me think of the work you do every day. We have reprinted for you the article on page 6 of this magazine and it is really focused on mealtime at home. The story provides simple tips to parents and guardians about creating healthy relationships between food and children. I thought it interesting that parents are receiving the guidance that you practice each day!

A few examples:

Respecting children and trusting them to make their own decisions about food. Isn't that offer versus serve? You encourage students and provide them with **healthy** options, thus teaching them to make decisions about their meal. All foods and beverages available in your cafeterias meet the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines; adhering to the offer versus serve rules, you allow students to make healthy decisions about their meal choices!

Setting a routine. Everyone one of you can give guidance to parents about creating a routine! Your day has to be organized and well planned. Breakfast and lunch need to be served at the same time every day. You know what happens when there is a power outage and meals aren't ready!!! Total chaos! As students pass through your cafeteria lines, you and your staff are setting the tone for the student's meal. Through your outstanding customer service, your warm smile and kind greeting, students are made to feel comfortable as they prepare to eat.

Don't force children to clean their plate. You are the masters of ensuring that students select enough items that constitute a reimbursable meal, without forcing them to take more than they wish. For the most part, you allow students to serve themselves, which naturally empowers them to select what they will eat. If the selection of a fruit or vegetable is not readily accepted, you encourage that they take and perhaps "try" it. Many of you have "share tables" in your cafeterias where unwanted items can be placed for others to enjoy. You don't bribe children or reward them for making food selections.

Being a positive role model. How many times have you heard an adult speak of their time back in school and refer to the cafeteria "lunch lady" as the person they remember so fondly? Yes, that's you! From filling the bellies of our kids, to hearing

about the events the night before, to the problems with peers, to excitement and “guess what’s”, you demonstrate the value of compassion, empathy and the importance of plain “listening”. Your smile, your words “please” and “thank you”, and remembering a student’s name are role modeling behavior that helps to mold a successful adult. Your clean hands; clean and neat clothes and organized kitchen demonstrate the importance of good hygiene and proper sanitation which are priceless attributes.

Have fun! You have probably heard the saying, “when you love what you do, you will never work another day”. When students feel your warmth and kindness, they feel special and cared for. Their time with you is unique, it is the one of the few stress-free times of their day! No homework, no test, no grades – simply a smile and a kind word, along with a nutritious meal. Be proud of your role in the life of our children; it’s priceless! Just know that at the end of each day, you make a difference in the lives of our children.

I know many of you think of and refer to the students in your schools as if they were your own! After reading the article and reflecting on a typical ‘day in the life of a cafeteria employee’, you really are the breakfast and lunch moms and dads for our lucky kids!

Thank you for caring for all of our students every day!

Enjoy good health!
Marla Caplon, R.D., L.D., MdSNA Nutrition Chair

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Treats

APPLE SAUCE & APPLE SLICES

APPLE SAUCE
BLUE RASPBERRY

APPLE SLICES
WINTER WONDERLAND

PERISHABLE
REFRIGERATED

NET WT 2 OZ (57g)
= 1/2 CUP FRUIT SERVING

PLAN YOUR MENU NOW FOR SOME
Winter Wonderland
FUN, WITH FRESH HEALTHY TREATS.

PRODUCT OF USA

AMERICAN HEALTHIER GENERATION
SNA PATRON
Smart SNA&K APPROVED

ACDA
Agriculture • Industry • Government • Community
Working Together to Nourish the Nation

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