Providing Nutritious Home Lunch Options: A parent workshop

Updated 2014
Parent Workshop Outline

The following outline was designed to assist in implementing a one and one half hour parent workshop entitled: Munch on a Home Lunch.

This parent workshop may be implemented during a school’s “parent night” or may be offered as a separate workshop. Only one parent (mother/ father/ guardian) needs to attend this workshop if childcare is a concern—it would be best to have the parent who prepares the meals attend. If your preschool can provide childcare while the parents attend the workshop, that would be great! The children can then participate in the “hands on” activity portion of the workshop. An ideal sized group would be about 15 parents due to the “hands on” session.

This workshop was initially developed in response to the needs and inquiries of parents of young children, staff of various preschools, and child care licensing workers. A survey was distributed to nine preschools across the state. We received input from over 160 parents from Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and the Big Island. Parents want simple and practical ideas and suggestions. Time efficiency, convenience, and cost were other concerns. How can we incorporate all these elements while providing a healthy lunch to our children?

The highlight of this workshop is the “hands on” activity session. The hands on experience of trying/making new and different lunch ideas and sampling them gives parents fun and practical skills that they can use daily. Discussing new ideas and menu planning as a group provides an opportunity for parents to implement new concepts.

Please use this program or parts of this program to fit your needs and the needs of your parents. Best wishes on your upcoming workshops!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was originally developed through funding from the Hawaii State Department of Health, Health Promotion and Education Division, now the Community Health Division. It has been revised and updated by the Hawaii Child Care Nutrition Program through funding from the Department of Human Services, Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division.
Munch on a Home Lunch
Parent Group Workshop Outline
(ALLOW 1½ HOURS FOR PARENT WORKSHOP)

I. WELCOME PARENTS AND INTRODUCE PRESENTERS (teacher, director, etc.).
Nametags for parents and presenters are helpful.

INTRODUCE HOME LUNCH OPTIONS PROJECT
Time allotment: 5 minutes

- Thank parents for coming.

- This project was originally developed through funding from the Hawaii State Department of Health, Health Promotion and Education Division, now the Community Health Division, who we continue to partner with. It has been revised and updated by the Hawaii Child Care Nutrition Program through funding from the Department of Human Services, Benefit and Support Services Division.

- Briefly mention that nutrition is important as part of their childrens’ and their families’ total health and that we have to somehow fit it realistically and comfortably into our daily lives.

Presentation Mode: informal and participatory; encourage questions, sharing of experiences and suggestions.

II. BRIEFLY REVIEW THE PARENT HANDOUTS THAT ARE INCLUDED IN YOUR CURRICULUM - Distribute Parent Handouts.
Time allotment: 10 minutes

a) A Food Guide: go over A Food Guide, Produce a Plate, Eating more fruits and vegetables every day; emphasize eating a variety of foods, moderation, the importance of whole foods, water and physical activity.

b) A Food Guide: Review food groupings on the back page. Discuss the different food groups and foods in each group. Posting the Guide on a refrigerator door may remind them of serving a balanced meal.

c) ChooseMyPlate.gov – Healthy Eating for Preschoolers (2 handouts):
Handouts were developed by USDA – www.ChooseMyPlate.gov. Handouts provide information on food groups in addition to general guidelines on serving sizes for young children.

d) Be Safe: A Home Guide to Help Keep Foods Safe:
*Stress the absolute requirement of sanitation. Foods should be packed
cooled in order to avoid spoilage. Warm foods cannot be kept hot enough to be safe. If fast food is picked up for a children’s lunch, it should be completely cooled off first rather than leaving it warm in its container. Remember to wash your hands with soap and warm water. Keep everything clean. Tell parents that there is no 24 hour flu - these symptoms are usually the result of very mild food poisoning.

III. REVIEW “CHOICES”, “BASIC MEAL PATTERNS” AND “LUNCH CATEGORIES”: (Make 3 poster boards or chart paper containing this information for visual aids). - Distribute Parent Handouts.

*Time allotment: 10 - 15 minutes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choices:</th>
<th>Basic Meal Pattern:</th>
<th>Lunch Categories:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Perfection to Strive For</td>
<td>1. Protein</td>
<td>1. Sandwiches</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The Healthy Moderation for</td>
<td>2. Starch</td>
<td>2. Bentos</td>
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<td>Most of the Time</td>
<td>3. Fruits/Vegetables</td>
<td>3. Left – overs</td>
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<td>5. Beverage</td>
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Share with the parents the importance of planning. Planning their childrens’ and families’ meals leads to healthier meals/eating, time efficiency, cost savings and less stress.

a) “CHOICES” Share with the parents that there are varying levels of functioning and that it is okay to make realistic choices:

1. The Perfection to Strive For:

   This is the ideal lunch/situation to strive for. This includes “homemade” goodies from scratch. **Give examples:** a bento lunch with fruits and vegetables, nice/complete/well balanced lunches, wholesome sandwiches with fixings, chilled milk, sliced fruit and vegetables, etc. In reality, this is not always possible to attain (we are not all “Susie homemakers”: all of the time). It would be great if we could shoot to attain this about 2 times a week.

2. The Healthy Moderation for Most of the Time:

   This is the second best lunch/situation to strive for. **Give examples:** a peanut butter sandwich with a small apple/fruit, leftovers, etc. It would be great if we could shoot for this category about 2 times a week.
3. **The Okay for Some of the Time:**

This is for “those” times – when you’re out of time, when you need to reach for something quick, etc.

**Give examples:** convenience foods such as a muffin with a piece of cheese and a piece of fruit, a microwave mini pizza cooled completely, or fast food sandwich cooled completely. (Stress the importance of cooling off any fast food picked up that’s packed in any type of container - Styrofoam.) Leaving it warm in its container invites trouble. This category is okay about once a week.

b) **“BASIC MEAL PATTERN”** Share with the parents that this basic meal pattern helps to meet nutrition requirements; it acts as a basis for quick menu planning, and stresses the need for all components and a variety of foods within the components:

1. **Protein**

   Examples: fish (tuna), peanut butter, beans (as in soups, chili), tofu, beef, poultry, eggs, etc.

2. **Starch**

   Examples: rice, breads, noodles, taro, potatoes, crackers, tortillas, etc.

3. **Fruits/Vegetables**

   What kinds of fruits and vegetables do your children like to eat?

4. **Calcium**

   Stress the importance of this component among growing preschool aged children. Necessary for bone/teeth, growth/development.
   Examples: milk, yogurt, cottage cheese (as dips, as part of fillings for sandwiches), string cheese, etc.

5. **Beverage**

   Stress importance of drinking lots of water. Water is important for children to keep well hydrated, especially in the warm Hawaii weather.
   Low fat (1%) or skim (nonfat) milk are appropriate choices for children 2 years and older.
   Examples: milk, and water are the best types of beverages.
c) “LUNCH CATEGORIES”

1. SANDWICHES

Share with parents that sandwiches don’t always mean only bread or conventional types of sandwiches. Give one or two examples of a different kind of sandwich (whole wheat tortilla rolled up with filling mixed with 1/2 the mayo and cottage cheese, pita pocket bread stuffed with filling and veggies, etc.). Encourage whole grain products. If children don’t like whole wheat bread, use 1 slice white/1 slice brown - hapa sandwich. You can get creative in the making of a sandwich.

These are some ideas to share later during discussion which happens after the “hands on” session:

a) **Sandwiches with cheese** (sticks, strips, roll-ups) - many different kinds of cheeses may be used in making sandwiches. Cheeses are excellent calcium sources. They may be cut into different shapes using cookie cutters or a knife. String cheese is a fun and an excellent lower fat cheese that can be included in the child’s lunch. Cheeses may be grated, cut up and rolled up in the various breads/tortillas/pitas. Real cheese is the best source but it’s okay to use processed cheese some of the time. A piece of cheese may be included with rice crackers or different breads as part of a convenience lunch or lunch from parts.

b) **Sandwiches with cottage cheese** (stuffings, dips, base) - cottage cheese may be drained and mixed/mashed with a myriad of fillings. Cottage cheese is actually a pretty bland, calcium/protein rich food source that may be mixed with fillings such as tuna, chicken, turkey, etc. It may also be combined with ranch mix, seasonings, etc. to serve as a dip, spread or base for sandwiches, vegetables, etc.

c) **Sandwiches with beans** (baked, salads, dips) - beans may also be used in a myriad of ways. Cooked and mashed beans (high in protein) may be served as a filling, spread or dip for tortillas, pocket breads, and rice crackers. A slice of bread may be served with a 3 bean salad (mild vinaigrette dressing) or baked beans for a lunch from parts.

d) **Sandwiches with peanut butter** and . . . use your imagination. The old fashion Peanut Butter can be combined with raisins, bananas, or with other fruit or carrots. Peanut butter and . . . can also be used as a filling for celery sticks, as a spread on rice crackers, or spread on fruit such as apple slices.

e) **Sandwiches with protein soups** - Sandwiches, rolls, breads, crackers may be served with cooled bean soup (lentil, split peas, 9 bean etc. -
homemade or canned is great). Low fat assures no globs of fat floating to the top when soup is served cooled.

f) **Sandwiches from parts** - great idea since the developmental stage of 4-5 year olds is at the point where foods are sometimes eaten better in parts. Think about it - a 4 year old cannot comfortably grab a sandwich without it usually falling apart. They end up eating it in parts anyway. It will save parents’ time and their children will eat better if they have a piece of some kind of bread, or a rice cracker with a piece of cheese and fruit, or a piece of meat, chicken, veggie stick, etc.

2) **BENTOS: RICE OR NOODLES WITH…**

Share with parents that bentos are lunches that have rice or noodles as the carbohydrate/starch source.

These are some ideas to share *later* in the Regroup/Discussion Section (Section V): Get creative with the rice and noodles too!

a) **Rice** - Encourage parent to use a mixture of half white and half brown rice (more fiber and nutrients). Different molds and shapes (musubi, sushi) can be used to make rice more fun. A pot of easy barasushi can be made by grating and cutting up different veggies and cooked meat and cooking it in the pot with the rice. It also can be added to already cooked rice, add sushi su (vinegar sauce) and you have barasushi. You can even wrap it in nori (seaweed) or other wrappings (lumpia, rice paper, aburage, blanched cabbage/lettuce leaves, etc.). You can also make unfried fried rice - just add the ingredients to a pot of cooked rice and mix.

b) **Noodles** - Children love noodles and that is a fact. There are so many different kinds of noodles to use: somen, soba, pastas galore (shells, spaghetti, angel hair, macaroni, colored corkscrews) chow mein and dried saimin noodles (can combined with leftovers), or with different sauces - somen sauce, bottled spaghetti sauce and grated mozzarella cheese for a simple pasta dish, low fat Italian dressing and veggies and leftover meats for a simple pasta salad. Again, you can make unfried fried noodles with any of these noodles.

3) **LEFT-OVERS**

Remember to include a fruit or vegetable if the left-over does not contain any vegetable (such as in a stir fry or pork and peas, etc.)

4) **CONVENIENCE FOOD PUT TOGETHERS**

Share with parents that it is okay to put together a convenience lunch for
their children (about once/week is okay). Some suggestions include: grabbing a muffin, a piece of cheese and a piece of fruit; a microwaved mini pizza with cheese and fruit; fast food; etc.

IV. HANDS-ON ACTIVITY SESSION - Make and taste creative lunch ideas. Buying all food items suggested may be costly. Therefore, you do not need to buy all items listed. Pick a few food items from each section for parents to try new creations. You can also split the same food item between the different food stations. Suggested food items are denoted with an asterisk*

*Time allotment: 30-40 minutes*

Encourage parents that unusual or different does not mean unacceptable. They will be surprised as to what children consider acceptable and what they will eat. Encourage creativity and trying new ideas, try as many stations as they can, parents sample what they make. Make sure there is a sink/soap/paper towels nearby for parents to wash hands before beginning.

1) STATION B - RICE (use mixture of half brown/half white or “hapa” rice) Many of our families in Hawaii use only white rice. Encourage every parent to at least taste 1 teaspoon of the rice mixture (half brown/half white rice).

**Supplies needed:**
- Rice cooker
- Rice Paddle Musubi/sushi molds
- Utensils: measuring spoons, spoons, spatulas, knives
- Bowls
- Cutting Board
- Vegetable grater
- Small paper plates, plastic forks/spoons

**Food Items:**
- *Canned tuna packed in water
- Turkey cold cuts
- Fresh veggies: *shredded carrots, cucumbers, etc.
- *Frozen mixed veggies (peas, carrots, corn)
- *Tofu
- *1 Bottle and/or package instant sushi sauce
- *5 cups half brown/white rice (may need to increase water up to a cup for desired consistency) - you may want to use less depending on number of parents
- Small container salt or furikake (seaweed seasoning)

2) STATION C - NOODLES (use colored corkscrew pasta) You can set up a display of different kinds of noodles such as dried saimin, soba, somen, different pastas, etc. - to inform parents about the different kinds of noodles are out there.
Supplies needed:
Wok/pot to cook pasta
Bowls
Cutting board
Colander
Large bowl to hold cooked pasta
Utensils: wooden spoons, spatulas, knives, vegetable grater, tongs
Small paper plates, plastic forks/ spoons

Food items:
*1 jar Spaghetti sauce
1 container Parmesan Cheese
*1 shredded low-fat/part skim mozzarella cheese
*1 bottle low-fat Italian dressing
1 bottle somen sauce
Turkey cold cuts
*Tofu
*1 package cooked pasta (more may be needed, depending on the number of parents)
Fresh veggies: broccoli, carrots, lettuce, zucchini, mushrooms, etc.
*1 package frozen mixed veggies (peas, carrots, corn)

3) STATION D - SANDWICHES
Supplies needed:
Bowls
Cutting board
Utensils: wooden spoons, spatulas knives vegetable grater
Waxed paper (1 roll) - tear pieces for parents to work on
Small paper plates, plastic forks/spoons/knives

Food Items:
*1 package whole wheat pita bread (cut into halves)
1 package rice crackers
1 loaf whole wheat bread
*1 package whole wheat tortillas
Canned tuna packed in water
*Canned chicken
*1 container low-fat cottage cheese
Turkey cold cuts
1 shredded low-fat/part skim mozzarella cheese
1 jar peanut butter & *1 jar old fashioned peanut butter
*1 can Vegetarian Refried beans
Fruits & Veggies: raisins, *bananas, *apples, carrots, lettuce, *cucumbers, etc.
V. REGROUP / DISCUSSION

Time allotment: 15-20 minutes
Stop activity after 30-40 minutes. Have parents share what they have tried and what they experienced. Here, you may share the other ideas for discussion mentioned in Section III regarding “Lunch Categories”.

PLANNING “FOR REAL” LUNCHES:

1) Home Lunch Categories Worksheet
Have parents write down things they tried. Encourage parents to list/plan 3 new things that they will try in the next 2 weeks.

2) Blank Calendar Worksheet
Plan one week of home lunch meals as a group. Be sure to incorporate all meal components that were previously discussed (protein, starch, fruit/vegetable, calcium, beverage).

Healthy food practices start at home. Stress the importance of role modeling good behaviors; parents are their child’s role model. If parents think certain foods are yucky, so will children. Parents tend to pass on their own food preferences, likes and dislikes to their children. Encourage parents and children to at least taste different foods and if it isn’t palatable, teach children to politely dispose of it in a napkin. Children may learn to like foods with repeated exposure.

Distribute the Meal Categories handout. Encourage parents to make a home lunch consisting of the foods they discussed or tried within the next week.

SUMMARY / CLOSURE / EVALUATION
Bring workshop to a close. Questions/answers/concerns. Have parents fill in the evaluation form. This will assist you in evaluating your parent workshop. If you have any questions nutrition-related or otherwise, you may e-mail hccnp@hawaii.edu. Please do NOT have parents e-mail the program directly.

LIST OF HANDOUTS

1. A Food Guide
2. www.choosemyplate.gov - Healthy Eating for Preschoolers/Meal & Snack Patterns
3. Be Safe
4. Home Lunch Handout
5. Home Lunch Categories/Blank Calendar
6. Meal Categories
7. Participants Evaluation
8. Cookbook (optional)
9. Meals in Minutes (optional)