



## CHILDREN'S APPETITES

A NUTRITION IN-SERVICE FOR STAFF

“Delight and liberty, the simple  
creed of childhood.”  
~ William Wordsworth



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A lesson on the influences on  
children's food portions and a discussion  
on children's appetites.

**Who:** Participants: WIC Staff, range of 2-15 participants with a varying degree of maternal, infant and child nutrition knowledge and WIC experience.

Leader: WIC RD/Nutritionist

**Why:** Children's appetites have many influences. By identifying these influences WIC staff can better discuss with parents their children's appetites.

**When:** A monthly in-service that is designed to be 30 to 45 minutes - depending on the discussion and the number of staff attending.

**Where:** The session was designed for a WIC classroom, meeting room or large office depending on the size of the group.

**What:** By the end of the session participants will have:

- Brainstormed what has influences on children's food portions.
- Reviewed information about children's appetites.
- Illustrated influences on children's appetites.
- Practiced discussing children's appetites with caregivers.

**Materials** Pads of sticky notes, pad for each participant (Intro)

**Needed:** Flip chart paper and markers (Part 2)

Copies of:

- Children's Appetites In-service *Participant Copy*
- Children's Appetites In-service *Feedback Form*

**Background** Please review before leading group:

**Reading for Leaders:** "Trust your child to eat enough" <http://www.wichealth.org> (follow the prompts).

The Washington State In-service: *An Introduction to: Ask, Provide, Ask.*

For further review and consult:

- Ellyn Satter, 2005, *Your Child's Weight, Helping Without Harming*, Kelcy Press, Madison WI
- Janice Woolley & Jennifer Pugmire, 2001, *Food for Tots*, Mammoth Media, Mercer Island, WA

- How:**
- Schedule in-service.
  - Review background information.
  - Review in-service *Leader Copy* (*italicized print indicates leader speaking*).
  - Prepare materials needed.
  - Have fun!

**Introduction / Warm-Up****10 minutes**

*Welcome! I will be the leader for this month's nutrition training. I encourage all of you to participate. Together we can explore our topic and discover strategies to support our WIC clients.*

*By the end of this session you will have:*

- *Brainstormed what has influences on children's food portions.*
- *Reviewed information about children's appetites.*
- *Illustrated influences on children's appetites.*
- *Practiced discussing children's appetites with caregivers.*

*As an American society we suffer from "portion distortion." It's not so much WHAT we eat, as HOW MUCH we eat. We develop food habits as young children; our likes, our dislikes, and amounts to eat.*

*Let's think about the various influences on children's portion sizes. Find a partner. Together brainstorm things that influence children's portion sizes. Write down your idea's on sticky notes, one idea per sheet. When I call "time:" stick your notes on the wall.*

*Allow about three minutes, then call time.*

*Review, clarify and group sticky notes based on ideas listed.*

*Responses and ideas might include:*

- *distortion or inaccurate knowledge of caregiver (parent, grandparent, etc)*
- *"kid size" meals in restaurants*
- *"kid size" packaged meals*
- *"super sized" society*

**Part 1****3 minutes****Children's Appetites**

*Let's read the following information about a child's appetite from Ellyn Satter.*

*A child's appetite can change from day to day. There are times when a small child eats a lot – when going through a growth spurt and their body is growing. There are also times when a small child will only eat a small amount. They are not growing as fast and don't need to eat as much.*

*The best way to help a child develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime is to allow a child to eat when hungry and stop eating when full.*

*It can be difficult to allow a child to eat to his or her appetite. Parents may worry at times that they are not eating enough or too much.*

*It's important to remember that a parent's job is to decide what types of foods are offered and when meals and snacks are offered. But the child decides how much to eat.*

*What are your questions?*

**Part 2****7 minutes****Influences on Appetites**

*Let's talk about what influences our appetites. I would like everyone to think of something that influences their appetite.*

*Who would like to share?*

Hear responses.

*Now let's think about what affects children's appetites. Find a new partner. With your partner, think of things that affect children's appetites. Using a flip chart sheet and markers, illustrate things that affect children's appetite. Each group will share their illustration. You have five minutes.*

Wait five minutes. Have each group share their illustration.

Illustrations may include:

- |                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| -illness        | -grazing               |
| -growth         | -portion size served   |
| -activity       | -caregiver expectation |
| -access to food | -meal and snack timing |
| -bottle use     | -fluid intake          |

**Part 3****10 minutes****Practice Using Ask, Provide, Ask**

*Role-play discussing children's appetites with caregivers by breaking up into groups of two or three. Review Ask, Provide, Ask.*

*Ask...Ask what the client knows, or would like to know*

*Provide...Offer information in a neutral, nonjudgmental manner*

*Ask...Ask about the client's thought, feelings, and reactions*

*You may wish to begin with one of the following "Ask" questions:*

So, your daycare requires you to bring your child's lunch and your child seems to not eat what you bring. What would be helpful to discuss about this?

I hear you say that your child is very active and yet they seem to "live on air." What do you know about children's appetites?

You mentioned your child doesn't eat well at mealtimes. What are your concerns about this? What makes this hard for you?

How does the feeling of being rushed to prepare meals when you return from work because your child is so hungry, affect the foods you choose?

Mary has really taken some independent steps in feeding herself table foods and she seems to be having a hard time giving up her bottle. What have you heard about weaning a child off the bottle? How do you think Mary's appetite might be affected?

*You have five minutes. Please begin.*

Wait five minutes. Call group back.

*What thoughts and ideas did you discover that you will start using in your work with clients?*

<b>Closing</b>
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<b>1 minute</b>
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*Thanks for participating today. We heard some great discussion and ideas that will help us to better serve our WIC clients.*

*For further information and ideas: "Trust your child to eat enough"*  
<http://www.wichealth.org> - follow the prompts.

*Please fill out a Feedback Form – your input is greatly appreciated.*

Collect Feedback Forms.

Make any notes you have as a leader.

Review participants' Feedback Forms.

Document this training.



## A lesson on the influences on children's food portions and a discussion of children's appetites.

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this session you will have:

- Brainstormed what has influences on children's food portions.
- Reviewed information about children's appetites.
- Illustrated influences on children's appetites.
- Practiced discussing children's appetites with caregivers.

As an American society we suffer from "portion distortion." It's not so much WHAT we eat, as HOW MUCH we eat. We develop food habits as young children; our likes, our dislikes, and portion size.

Let's think about the various influences on children's portion sizes. Write down your idea's on sticky notes, one idea per sheet. When I call "time;" stick your notes on the wall.

### Part 1

#### Children's Appetites

Let's read the following information about a child's appetite from Ellyn Satter.

A child's appetite can change from day to day. There are times when a small child eats a lot – when going through a growth spurt and their body is growing. There are also times when a small child will only eat a small amount. They are not growing as fast and don't need to eat as much.

The best way to help a child develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime is to allow a child to eat when hungry and stop eating when full.

It can be difficult to allow a child to eat to his or her appetite. Parents may worry at times that they are not eating enough or too much.

It's important to remember that a parent's job is to decide what types of foods are offered and when meals and snacks are offered. But the child decides how much to eat.

What are your questions?

## Part 2

### Influences on Appetites

Let's talk about what influences our appetites. I would like everyone to think of something that influences their appetite.

Who would like to share?

Now let's think about what affects children's appetites. Find a new partner. With your partner, think of things that affect children's appetites. Using a flip chart sheet and markers, illustrate things that affect children's appetite. You have five minutes. Each group will share their illustrations.

## Part 3

### Practice Using Ask, Provide, Ask

Practice discussing children's appetites with caregivers by breaking up into groups of two or three.

Review:

Ask...Ask what the client knows, or would like to know

Provide...Offer information in a neutral, nonjudgmental manner

Ask...Ask about the client's thoughts, feelings, and reactions

You may wish to begin with one of the following "Ask" questions:

So your daycare requires you to bring your child's lunch and your child often does not eat what you bring. What would be helpful to discuss about this?

I hear you say that your child is very active and yet they seem to "live on air." What do you know about children's appetites?

You mentioned your child doesn't eat well at mealtimes. What are your concerns about this? What makes this hard for you?

How does being rushed to prepare meals when you return from work affect the foods you choose for your hungry child?

Mary has really taken some independent steps in feeding herself table foods and she seems to be having a hard time giving up her bottle. What have you heard about weaning a child off the bottle? How do you think Mary's appetite might be affected?

You have five minutes. What thoughts or ideas did you discover that you will start using in your work with clients?

## Closing

Thanks for participating today. Please fill out a Feedback Form - your input is greatly appreciated. For further information and ideas: "Trust your child to eat enough" <http://www.wichealth.org> - follow the prompts.

