

Share Tables for Child Nutrition Programs in Alaska

REDUCING WASTE

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and Alaska Department of Education & Early Development have collaborated on guidance for implementing share tables at schools and other school-aged child nutrition programs including outside school hours care and summer feeding. In an effort to reduce the amount of food waste and encourage the consumption of food served, many food service operations have established share tables. Children can place unconsumed food and beverage items that they choose not to eat or drink on the table, providing other children the opportunity to take additional helpings of food or beverages at no extra cost.

- ◆ If the food service operation is not already implementing Offer vs. Serve (OvS), this is the best way to combat excess waste on trays. Under OvS students are given the ability to decline certain meal components.
- ◆ Offer multiple choices within components. Students are more likely to find something that they will want to eat.
- ◆ Prepare food in ways that enhance their appeal - season for ultimate flavor, scratch cook more often, batch cook so food is fresh and appetizing, and ensure food is served at proper temperatures.
- ◆ Allow appropriate time to eat, and space meals so they are not too close to one another.
- ◆ Implement recess before lunch, so children can work up an even larger appetite.

SHARE TABLES

- ◆ Review production records to help plan amounts to prepare, and document leftovers to reduce overproduction.
- ◆ Before implementing a share table, make sure to discuss these plans with your state or local health department.
- ◆ Figure out the location of the share table - ideally the table should be close to the cashier or wherever students exit the food service line.
- ◆ The share table must be monitored by any employee other than the cashier.
- ◆ If time is used as a public health control, food service operations have a 4 hour period where students can share and the food service operation can resell unopened milk, cheese sticks, and other temperature controlled food or beverages. Programs cannot donate these foods and beverages if using time as a public health control.
- ◆ Only food or beverages that do not require temperature control, or have been maintained in temperature control, may be collected for resale or recovery. Collected food and beverages should be clearly labeled in a container or box marked for resale or recovered food for donation and not mixed with unsold foods.

FOOD SAFETY

- ◆ Students are allowed to drop off their unwanted food on the share table or in the designated fridge/coolers at any point during the lunch service. However only temperature controlled food dropped off immediately after leaving the serving line can be donated to food recovery groups.
- ◆ The monitor should identify any food, beverage, or condiment to make sure it has not been contaminated (e.g. opened, partially consumed, etc.) and the original packaging is in sound condition.
- ◆ Discard share table items that require temperature control and have been in possession of the consumer at the end of the last meal service or within 4 hours of service.
- ◆ Students may not be allowed to donate items brought from home.
- ◆ Develop a Standard Operating Plan (SOP) in the Food Safety HACCP Plan.
- ◆ ALLOWABLE: Non-temperature controlled pre-packaged products like food bars, drinks, crackers and cereal packs.
- ◆ ALLOWABLE: Wrapped fruit and vegetables or fruit with an inedible skin, like bananas and oranges.
- ◆ ALLOWABLE: Temperature controlled pre-packaged products like cheese and milk as long as they are placed in a cooler, refrigerator, or ice bath, or are consumed within the same lunch period (no more than 4 hours).

RESOURCES

- ◆ USDA Policy Memo SP 41-2016, CACFP 13-2016, SFSP 15-2016, "The Use of Share Tables in Child Nutrition Programs"
- ◆ USDA Policy Memo SP 11-2012, CACFP 05-2012, SFSP 07-2012 "Guidance on the Food Donation Program in Child Nutrition Programs"
- ◆ USDA FNS Instruction 786-6 "Reimbursement for Recycled Milk and Other Meal Components"

AK Department of Education
& Early Development
Child Nutrition Program
(907) 465-8712

AK Department of Environmental
Conservation
Food Safety and Sanitation Program
(877) 233-3663

Municipality of Anchorage
Food Safety and Sanitation Program
(907) 343-4200