

Meal Observation Tool—Part II: Eating and Serving Behaviors

I. BACKGROUND ENVIRONMENT.

1. The meal period began at _____ and ended at _____
2. Children were actually seated and eating beginning at _____ and ending at _____
3. How many children were eating at the meal? _____
4. How many childcare staff were in the room during the meal? _____
5. How many childcare staff were sitting with the children during the meal? _____
6. What kitchen equipment is present in the room?
 - Microwave
 - Toaster
 - Toaster oven
 - Oven/stove
 - Refrigerator
 - Dishwasher

II. TIME

1. Were any children rushing to finish eating before the meal period ended?
 - No
 - Yes
2. Did any children complain that they did not have enough time to finish?
 - No
 - Yes

III. DRINKING WATER

1. How accessible was drinking water in the classroom?
 - Not available at all (no presence of sink or fountain in classroom)
 - Sink, fountain, or cooler in classroom, but would require adult assistance
 - Child-level sink or cooler with pitcher/cups within children's reach or child-level fountain
 - Other:
2. Did you witness teachers prompting children throughout the visit to drink water?
 - No
 - Yes, at specific times only (such as coming in from outdoor play)
 - Yes, multiple times throughout the day

Did you witness any staff members using food as a behavioral contingency? Describe below:

IF FEASIBLE, ask center director or lead teacher to show what foods/brands the center has in the kitchen or cupboards. Emphasize that this is to get more precise data on nutritional content and will also help us find more cost-effective ways for them to obtain healthy foods. List brands here:

Note the following about all visible foods:

- **Brand**
- **Characteristics** (e.g., whole grain vs. white, sweetened vs. unsweetened, 100% juice, low-fat cheese, % fat milk, organic)
 - If a pre-packed mixed dish (e.g., frozen pizza) is served for a meal and the brand is uncommon, write down the information on the nutrition facts panel
 - If a grain product is questionably whole grain, check the ingredient list.
- **Approximate size** of food containers
 - For most items, mark “regular” (for typical sizes you see at the grocery store), “large” (for family or bulk size containers), or “individual” (for individual portions of foods sold together, like yogurt cups or pudding cups). If you are unsure about size, write more detailed information.
 - For milk, write the exact size of the container

Foods stored at room temperature (e.g., canned, boxed, jarred)	Foods in the refrigerator or freezer	Fresh produce