

HORIZONS



A Bimonthly Newsletter for ND Child Care Providers Participating in the Heartland Child Nutrition USDA Food Program

Nov/Dec 2011



HELP WANTED:

Boys and girls needed to help. Includes picking up toys; setting and clearing dining table; making snacks; creating Christmas decorations; and participating in other elfish tasks.

Elf Training Program



Elf Attire

Purchase elf hats at a dollar store for each child or make paper hat versions. You can decide if the hats may be worn while the children are busy with their work. Or perhaps, over the course of a week, children can earn their own elf hat to proudly wear as a symbol of their helpful nature.

Busy Artists & Snack-Makers

Elf activities could involve making an ornament for the Christmas tree, a gift for parents, or a door decoration. See snack ideas on page 3.

Elf On A Shelf

The "Elf On A Shelf" book has popularized the idea of hiding a toy elf somewhere in the house each day for children to discover. What fun kids will have looking for the elf each day in such places as the cereal cupboard or coat rack.

Fa La La La

Elves make the time fly by singing while they work.

Community Service

Community service is an important part of an elf's duties. Have your elves make table centerpieces for an assisted living facility; collect canned goods for a charity; or make cards to send to soldiers overseas.



New Reason to Start Now, Not Later Submit CACFP Claims Online

If you have been hesitating to claim online due to lack of a conveniently located computer or need of a new computer, check out this new 2011 tax deduction for child care providers!

A major tax law change for 2011 can help lower taxes for family child care providers. If you buy certain types of items in 2011, such as a laptop computer, you may be eligible to use a new 100% bonus depreciation rule to deduct (rather than depreciate) the entire business portion of the item in 2011.



For information, read www.tomcopeland.blog.com/2011-tax-changes.html or contact your tax preparer.

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Regional Directors Support Online Claims

by Shirleen Piela
HCN Executive Director

We are in our third year of offering online claiming services to our providers. Minutemenu.com has engineered a service that combines the speed of the internet with a "click-ease" approach to completing meal counts and menu records.

Comments from Heartland providers using Minute Menu have been positive and varied. Providers have been pleased with the simple steps it takes to record meals, enroll children, check menus, and review attendance. More surprising to us was to hear that providers are excited that they can print off reports for parents, tax preparers, and themselves.

The staff at Heartland enjoys hearing these positive remarks. This has been a so-to-speak, "seal of approval" for us knowing that from our services and benefits we offer, Minute Menu has definitely been one that is a crowd pleaser.

With that said, we have received several provider comments regarding the role of the Regional Director and how Minute Menu affects their job. Let us reassure you that Minute Menu has not replaced the Regional Director. Regional Directors will not lose their job if their providers use Minute Menu, nor will Regional Directors have changes in their job responsibilities. Please know that Heartland values and appreciates the skill and hard work Regional Directors provide and would not jeopardize this relationship for any cause.

We appreciate on-going feedback and correspondence from providers. Thank you for your comments - they make us better to help make the program better.



Thank you for introducing me to Minute Menu and relieving my deep fear of the internet and computer in general. I truly appreciate this service and highly recommend it to everyone!

Ardella Jangula, Bismarck child care provider

Online claim processing will start on the 5th of every month. Please remember to check your "Claim Summary and Error Letter" online the day after you submit your claim.



If submitting your claim on paper, you may check your reimbursement amount online after the 17th of the month. Log onto Minute Menu with the Log In ID given to you by Heartland. If you have questions contact the Heartland Child Nutrition office.

Get A Food Program Form.....RIGHT NOW!

If you need a food program form and cannot wait until your regional director visits or the mail arrives, many forms are available to print from the Heartland website. At www.heartlandnutrition.org it only takes a few seconds to print what you may need ASAP.

- Child Enrollment forms
- Income Eligibility forms
- Meal Counts/Menu Record
- Internet Claim Agreement
- Infant Meal Records
- Special Diet Statement form

Receive Food Recall Alerts

For information and to sign up for email updates about recalls and public health alerts go to:
www.fsis.usda.gov/FSIS_recall/index

Training Opportunities from Heartland Will Be Growing Futures Approved

As of January 1st, 2012, all educational credit hours used towards child care licensing requirements will need to be approved through the ND Growing Futures registry. Heartland Child Nutrition's Learn-At-Home courses and annual spring workshops will have approval status from this program.

Heartland Spring Workshop 2012: "Meals and Deals"

Providers Ask....

About Milk In The CACFP

Q: If a parent wants their one-year-old to have whole milk, is it okay if the parent brings the whole milk? Can I still claim the meal?

No. One-year-olds are not affected by the new low-fat milk requirements for ages 2-12, so a child care provider must supply the appropriate milk for any claimed meal or snack. Whole or 2% milk is recommended for one-year-olds, however, 1% is also acceptable.

Q: A 4-year-old in my care refuses to drink plain milk. He will only drink milk that is flavored with strawberry or chocolate powder. The other children in my care are also asking for flavored milk at every meal, which I don't want to make a habit. How should I handle this situation?

Many nutritionist believe that drinking flavored milk is better than drinking no milk at all. However, the way one child's demands affect a group of children at the same meal needs to be considered. If you are already flavoring his milk, gradually cutting back on the amount of flavored powder, until very little is added, may not be noticed. It is okay to simply say you do not have flavoring and "vanilla" milk is tasty, too.

Q: I am serving 2% milk to a one-year-old in my care and 1% to the older children. Do I have to write both types of milk I am serving on my menu record at snack?

You may write both, but writing just the word "milk" is also acceptable.



❀❀ Snacks for the Season ❀❀

Ornament Crackers

On LARGE round crackers, spread a thin layer of low-fat cream cheese. Provide a variety of diced, colorful, fresh vegetables for children to use to decorate their crackers to look like ornaments. Thawed peas and cut cheese could also be used. Provide extra vegetables or juice to complete the vegetable portion requirement for snack.

Tortilla Snowflakes

Fold a small whole grain tortilla in half once and then in half again, so that you end up with a shape that resembles a wedge of pie (it will be thick). Using clean scissors, cut triangles, circles, or squares out of the edges, as if you were making paper snowflakes. Unfold the tortillas.

Lightly brush the tops of the snowflakes with canola oil (or use non-stick spray) and place them on a cookie sheet slightly apart. Sprinkle with sugar. Bake at 400° F for about 4 minutes or just until edges start to brown.



Welcome to Heartland Child Nutrition

 **Heartland Child Nutrition, Inc.**
Sponsor of the USDA Child & Adult Care Food Program

Belcourt: Kimberly DeCoteau
Stacy Poitra
Beulah: Andrea Anderson
Bismarck: Amanda Beers
Lanette Rasmussen
Felicia Watson
Garrison: Dorothy Smith
Grafton: Amy Martinez
Gr. Forks: Jimena Hallenger
Shannon Schafer
Kimberly Tolpingrud
Jamestown: Brooke Hunt
Valley City: Danielle Brandtl
West Fargo: Bernell Gange

Welcome back:

Lisa Aune, Richardton
Karie Doubek, Minot
Marie Kramer, Grand Forks

Our thanks to child care providers
Brenda Staehr & Lisa Aune
for a referral of a new provider



Crediting Pumpkin

For the CACFP, at least 1/8 cup (2 Tbsp.) vegetable or fruit needs to be in a serving to credit towards a meal or snack requirement. Keep in mind that the total fruit/vegetable servings range from ¼ to ¾ cup depending on age. A can of pumpkin contains approximately 2 cups vegetable. So calculate the amount of pumpkin in your servings of pie or dessert to determine if it may count towards the total meal requirement.



Nutella Not Creditable

Nutella is a hazelnut spread that is now commonly available in the United States. Popular for years in Australia and Europe, Nutella is typically used in ways similar to peanut butter.

Nutella is NOT a creditable food because it is a nut "spread." Any item labeled as a type of nut "spread" is not counted as a meat alternate in USDA Meal patterns; this includes peanut butter spread. Only nut "butters" may count towards a reimbursable meal or snack.

Cook and puree an entire Butternut squash to freeze in small portions and thaw as needed for an infant's meals. A pound of squash will yield about 2 cups of cooked pureed squash. If butternut squash is purchased for 98¢/lb, the cost of a ¼ cup serving is only 12¢. What a nutritious bargain!



Pureed Baby Food : Butternut Squash

- 1) Preheat oven to 400° F. Cut squash in half and scrape out the seeds.
- 2) Place the squash in a glass baking pan, face down.
- 3) Bake for about 40 mins. The squash is done when it feels soft.
- 4) Remove the flesh from the skin. For babies, the squash may be pureed.

This recipe is shared by provider Terri LaPlant, who found the recipe in her local newspaper. Terri says it was a very easy and tasty recipe resulting in thick applesauce. The whole process was a learning experience for little ones, too.



Microwave Applesauce

- 6 cups apple slices ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup water ¼ tsp. cinnamon or nutmeg (optional)

Wash, peel, core and slice apples. Mix all ingredients into a 2 qt. micro-wavable bowl. Cover and cook apples on high for 6 to 10 minutes. Stir half way through cooking time. After cooking, mash apples with a potato masher for a chunky applesauce. For a smoother applesauce, puree cooked apples in a blender. Chill in the refrigerator. This will make about 4 (½ cup) servings for a snack/breakfast or 8 (¼ cup) servings for a lunch/dinner.

It's hot dish weather and this recipe has only 5 ingredients. You could make another version of this hot dish by using tomato soup instead of mushroom with a little chili powder instead of soy sauce.

Skillet Beef and Rice

- 1 lb. lean ground beef 1½ cups instant brown rice
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup Soy sauce to taste
- 1 soup can of water

Brown the ground beef in a large skillet; drain fat. Add soup, water and rice; bring to a low boil. Lower heat and cover the pan, simmer for several minutes until rice is done. No need to add salt as the soup and soy sauce are already high in salt content.

Yield: 8 servings. One serving is a meat (1.5 oz) and a grains/bread serving for a 3-5 year old lunch/dinner.

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