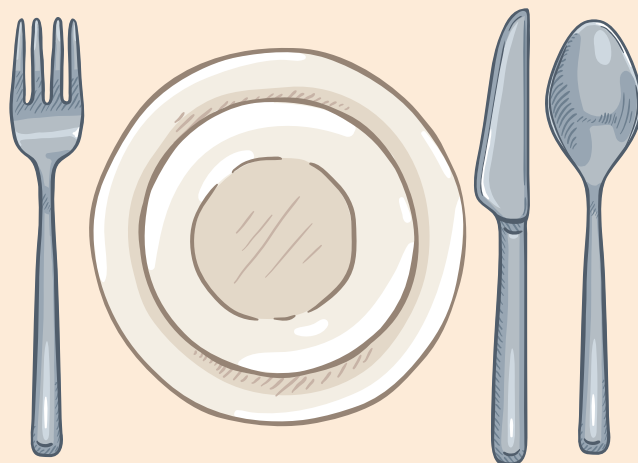


# Nutrition in Kindergarten

COLLECTION OF  
EXAMPLES OF BEST  
PRACTICES



September 2024

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# Introduction

Mealtime at the kindergarten is a pedagogical moment where educators serve as role models and can instill good eating habits in children, so it is highly recommended that we eat together with them. The essence is to try the same foods as children and encourage them to taste.

In this booklet, examples of good practices from our classrooms are collected, which educators shared with each other at the pedagogical conference in September 2023.



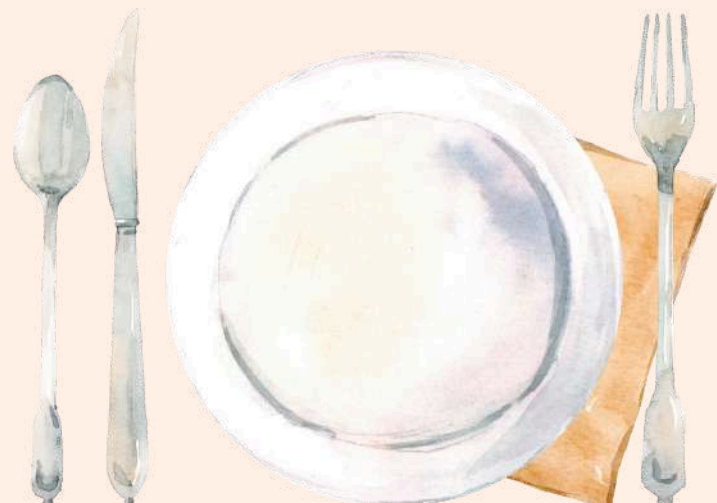
# Encouraging children to eat and taste

- Motivational, fairy-tale stories about the origin of food, specific foods;
- Unusual, "magical names" (space spread, dinosaur spread);
- Encouraging children to explore food with all senses: smell, look, taste;
- Self-service method (while following hygiene recommendations);
- Aesthetic presentation;
- Setting an example as an adult;
- Child prepares, grows, or gathers food themselves; I
- Inviting kitchen staff into the playroom to introduce new dishes or preparations;
- Adult expresses enthusiasm for food, regardless of what's on the menu;
- Offering a small portion on the plate (for tasting, not too much), repeated exposure to new foods;
- Adult explains which foods are in the dish (e.g., potatoes and meat in moussaka);
- Children have the option to taste and leave if they don't like it.



# Organization of space before and during meals

- Recurring (regular) routine;
- Table settings and decorations (flower bouquet, candles);
- Assigned children (rotating responsibilities);
- Seating arrangement;
- Song or rhyme before meals;
- Flexible breakfast or other special arrangements during meals;
- Role-playing (restaurant theme);
- Self-service breakfast;
- Use of dining area (where possible);
- Adequate space between tables and among children (each child sits on their own side of the table);
- Drawing lots and calling children to determine seating order;
- Tables marked with colors, shapes, or other symbols;
- Outdoor meals: on the terrace, outside, picnics;
- Designated (assigned) children ensure adherence to rules, table setup, place settings;
- Calm background music.



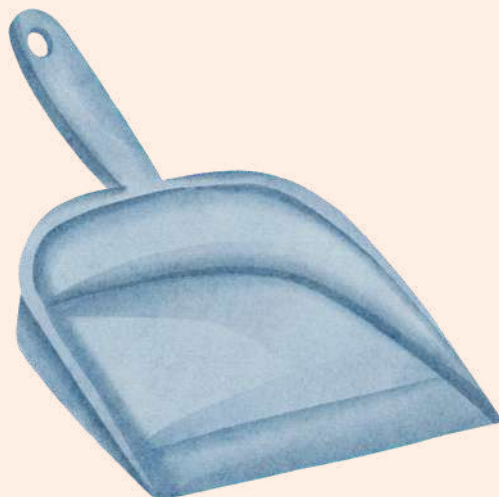
# Calming children before and during meals

- Adjust seating arrangements;
- Assign roles to children as helpers;
- Provide tools for restless children (weighted cushions, inflatable balls, elastic bands, appropriate chair size, sand timer, sensory rollers);
- Collaborate with parents (family mealtime culture);
- Sing songs, nursery rhymes, riddles, play musical instruments;
- Establish rules and be consistent.



# Etiquette during meals

- When ordering food, children should name the type and amount of food;
- Etiquette (we wish you bon appétit, thank you, etc.);
- Extras: Children get their own extra portions of food– self-service or wait for adults to serve, or another arrangement, so that children and educators have the opportunity to eat culturally;
- Children use cutlery, napkins; they are informed about the purpose of both;
- The child should take responsibility for the amount of food they choose, awareness of quantity;
- Children clean up after themselves (spilled liquids, used plates and cutlery, etc.).





# Incorporating nutrition content into planned activities

- Exploring our town(e.g., traditional dishes such as Vrhnika štruklji);
- Traditional Slovenian Breakfast,
- New Year's Menus, Carnival Doughnuts;
- Gardening (From Seed to Harvest), From Garden to Kitchen, From Garden to Plate: gardening in the garden or in classrooms;
- Exploring Nature and Foraging Edible Plants (Elderflower, Dandelion Flowers, Herbs);
- Visiting a Local Farm;
- Learning About Professions Related to Food Production/Preparation;
- Visiting the Market;
- Reading Literature About Food, Singing Songs, Fingerplays;
- Collaboration with Vrhnika Health Center;
- Planning Activities on the Topic of Food: healthy and unhealthy food, food pyramid, culinary journey around the world;
- Week of Vrhnika Dishes (Menu);
- Preparing Simple Dishes (lemonade, cookies, vegetable soup, apple strudel, etc.);
- Kitchen Corner (Symbolic Play in the Playroom) / Outdoor Mud Kitchen;
- Exploring the Senses;
- Didactic Games.





# Reducing Food Waste

- We use fruit, bread, and other suitable foods during the day or the next day.
- Drying fruit in the playroom.
- Make fruit drinks, juices, compote, apple strudel/pie from the fruit in the classroom.
- Dry bread for kindergarten animals.
- Use spreads during the afternoon snack.
- Inform the kitchen that we do not need fruit (note on the cart or board).
- Offer excess food to neighboring groups.
- Communicate with the kitchen (if there are leftovers, we will receive less next time).

