

MENU PLANNING

Reducing Food Costs and Environmental Impacts

Reflect on each statement below. What is the current practice at your child care setting? What opportunities do you see for change?

My childcare setting:

Currently in place

Yes

No

To do

Uses plant-based proteins (e.g., tofu, beans, lentils).

Offers several menu items that use the same ingredients to simplify purchasing, receiving, and storage.

Conducts monthly inventory check to decrease spoilage and waste and identify food items that could be removed from the menu.

Reduces use of single serve packaged foods.

Uses energy-saving appliances like fridges, stoves, and dishwashers that meet the ENERGY STAR® standard (energystar.gc.ca).

Uses reusable plates/cutlery/glassware or when needed, disposable versions that can be composted.

Monitors leftovers and alters menu items accordingly (e.g., use leftover vegetables in soups and casseroles, freeze fruit for muffins or smoothies).

Composts and recycles according to local guidelines to reduce amount of waste going to landfill.

Grows vegetables and herbs.
(Check with your local health unit for more information.)

Uses frozen or canned fruits and vegetables when fresh versions not available or are too costly.

Plans adaptable menus using sale items or locally/seasonally available options.

Uses fresh produce and menu items that can be stored for longer (e.g., replace lettuce with cabbage).

Adapted in 2023 from Ottawa Public Health and Algonquin College's Food Skills Program for Child Care Cooks - Participant Guide, 2017.



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