

## Observation Report Nutrition Through Out the Lifecycle

Pre-school child

Lei

4 yrs old

Chico State Child Development Lab

I went to the child development lab on the Chico State Campus and watched a four year old child named Lei eat lunch. He was a very good eater and fun to watch. Lei ate an estimate of half a tortilla,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup refried beans,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup banana,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup cheese, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of 2% milk. This food totaled to 468 calories for his lunch. His DRI for total calories in a day is 1,742, his calories for lunch is in a good range if his breakfast and dinner have similar calorie values, and if he includes snacks in his diet throughout the day. Lei fiber content is at 33% of his daily intake after just lunch which is good. In his lunch alone he has 120% of his protein intake so he doesn't need any protein the rest of the day. His carbohydrate intake was 57 grams which is low for his DRI of a range between 185 to 267 grams per day.

The atmosphere of the facility was calm and a good eating environment for the child I observed. Lei's main focus was food the entire meal time. At each table there is a chaperone keeping the children at the table, and serving them food. The children were also allowed to serve themselves food. I thought the tables were perfect for the children because they were size specific to make them feel like they belonged at the table; it was also great to see that they could serve themselves.

I arrived ten minutes before meal time and the teachers were rounding up the children for story time. All the children sat on the other side of the room from the dining area and listened to their teacher read them a story, while other teachers/helpers cleaned the tables, and brought out the food. This seemed like a good tactic to get the children calm before eating, and occupied while the food was brought out.

The meal did not seem like a learning experience for Lei. He seemed very content at the table and very into his food. He was not socializing very much and stayed in his seat the whole time. He started out with half a tortilla, beans, and cheese and made a burrito. He was also given sliced banana and canned corn and he ate it all. Then he got second helpings of the corn and took the last of the cheese on the table and dumped it onto his corn, it looked pretty good and he finished it all. He was also given a half cup of milk and he drank about half of it. Lei cleaned his area very well when he left the table taking everything with him and disposing it in the correct places.

The children really seemed to enjoy what they were eating, and it included all of the food groups, fruit, vegetable, grains, beans, and dairy. I thought it was great that they gave the children an initial amount of food, and the children could help themselves to more. Having story time before eating seems like a good way to calm the children down so they can focus on eating. Overall I thought the facility did a great job with meal time.

School age child (1<sup>st</sup> grade)

Age: 6

Marigold Elementary School

I went to Marigold Elementary School where there are about 500 students and about 200 of the students get a school lunch. On the particular day I observed lunch the school was offering a choice of a corn dog, French bread pizza, or sweet and sour chicken on what looked like brown rice. They were also served a half pint (8 ounces) of milk. Then the children had to pass through the fruit and vegetable bar and take a minimum of one fruit or vegetable. Their choices were ice berg lettuce salad, baby carrots, half kiwi with skin, raw broccoli, celery, and cherry tomatoes. The child I observed I did not get her name, because the lunch lady was acting strange about me getting her name, so I am giving her a hypothetical name of Kim. Kim chose a corn dog, three carrot sticks, two half kiwi pieces, mayo packet, and a milk carton. Kim threw away one carrot stick, one of her kiwi pieces, and most of her milk.

Kim's lunch had a very low fiber content about three grams in her lunch of her DRI of 25 grams; and about of a third of her calorie intake for the day. The fat content of her lunch was high with a total of 28 grams for lunch and a fat DRI of 36-64 grams per day. Kim's protein intake for lunch was about half of her DRI which is good. The carbohydrate intake for Kim's lunch was only 20% of her DRI.

The social interaction was a major problem during the twenty minutes they had to eat lunch. Kim was chatting with her friends the whole time and during the last five minutes she ate most of her lunch. I did not see any peer pressure, or trading food like I remembered in the lunch room. However when Kim was eating her mayo out of the packet her friends were saying ewww but she didn't seem to care and kept eating it.

The lunches that were home packed seemed significantly better than the school lunches. The home packed lunches I observed had PB and J's, nuts, yogurt, fruit juice, and fruit. I observed that the students with home packed lunch ate more of their food maybe because they have had the opportunity of choosing what is in their lunch. The fruit and vegetable bar is a great idea but a lot of the children take the bare minimum of one carrot or one piece of celery, which is not good. The only empty calories I saw children eating were some fun sized candy from their home packed lunch. Otherwise most lunches did not provide empty calories.

There is room for improvement with the school lunch program, although I was very impressed with the fruit and vegetable bar. I think the children need more time to eat because from my observations all they wanted to do was socialize and they didn't get down to eating until that last five minutes of their twenty minute lunch. The children with the school lunches were pressured to eat quickly and did not finish all their fruits and vegetables they chose. As a lunch lady I would also make the children choose three fruits and vegetable with the main course meal. To get children excited about fruits and vegetables they should include fruit and vegetable education during meal times. I would also like to see vegetables on the pizza, so the children are getting their pizza but getting a serving of vegetables too. I know that the corn dog is nutritionally adequate, but I do not like seeing children eating corn dogs.