

Mealtime Memo

for Child Care

11 TIPS FOR A BETTER SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Shopping for your Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) site can be a chore. However, like with any chore, your approach can set you up for success! From starting with the basics to considering all your options, creating a game plan can reduce your stress and save you time.

PREPARE

1. Educating yourself is always a best practice. Check out the [John C. Stalker Institute blog](#) for tons of information on menu ideas, meal pattern requirements, and other best practices.
2. Review your menu, take inventory of your stock, and utilize the many apps available to help organize your list, such as the Iowa Department of Education's [CACFP Shopper](#).
3. If you prefer a traditional list, consider organizing it by aisle so you can see what you need aisle by aisle and reduce backtracking across the store for an overlooked item on your list. Many grocery store apps list what aisle an item is stocked on if you aren't sure.
4. Know what days your store restocks produce and proteins for the best possible selection.





AT THE GROCERY STORE

5. Take a moment to wipe down the cart handle and seat with sanitizing wipes to protect yourself and your produce from contaminants. [You'd be surprised what's on them.](#)
6. Shop for non-perishable items first, and arrange your cart with [food safety](#) in mind.
7. Read the Nutrition Facts Label to ensure you're getting the most nutritious option. If you are unsure how to read the new Nutrition Facts Label, check out the FDA's [simple breakdown](#).

CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE SHOPPING VENUES

8. USDA's [Farm to Preschool](#) offers information on sourcing, crediting, and using local foods in your program.
9. Procuring produce through [Community Supported Agriculture](#) can reduce costs and provide access to healthy, local produce and food items. USDA can help [find](#) one near you.
10. Shop at farmer's markets to take advantage of local, seasonal produce—often for lower prices and higher quality than traditional grocery stores. [Find](#) one near you!
11. If time is not on your side, order what you need online for pick up from your grocery store. There are [pros and cons](#), so finding what works best for you may take some trial and error.



There are many other [tips](#) and [tricks](#) that may work for you and your organization. Armed with knowledge, best practices, and tips from this Mealtime Memo, you can ease your grocery shopping stress and reclaim your time.

REFERENCES

- AgriLife Extension, Texas A&M. (2010, June). *Food safety and the shopping cart* [PDF file]. <http://agrilife.org/urbantravis/files/2010/06/Food-Safety-Shopping-Cart.pdf>
- Iowa Department of Education. (2019, January 2). *An app for a particular kid of foodie*. <https://educateiowa.gov/article/2019/01/02/app-particular-kind-foodie>
- John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition. (2020). *Nutrition for Child Care Programs* [Blog post]. <http://johnstalkerinstitute.org/blog/jsi-resource-center/nutrition-for-child-care-programs/>
- Kime, L., Kelley, K., & Harper, J. (2014, January 29). *Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)*. PennState Extension. <https://extension.psu.edu/community-supported-agriculture-csa>
- Reese, Julene. (2013, November 13). *Beware of bacteria on shopping carts*. Utah State University Extension. <https://extension.usu.edu/archive/beware-of-bacteria-on-shopping-carts>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2020, March 4). *Local food directories: National farmers market directory*. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/farmersmarkets>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2020). *Food shopping and meal planning*. <https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/shopping-cooking-and-food-safety/food-shopping-and-meal-planning>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Choose MyPlate. (n.d.). *10 tips: Save more at the grocery store*. <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-save-more-at-the-grocery-store>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2017, December 14). *Farm to Preschool local food and learning in early child care and education settings*. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cfs/farm-to-preschool>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Library. (2019, May). *Community supported agriculture*. <https://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/community-supported-agriculture>
- U.S. Food & Drug Administration. (2020, January 23). *How to understand and use the nutrition facts label*. <https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label>
- Utah State University Extension. (2016, September 10). *Pros & cons of online grocery shopping*. https://extension.usu.edu/news_sections/home_family_and_food/pros-cons-online-grocery-shopping

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with the Institute of Child Nutrition at the University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights; Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

© 2020, Institute of Child Nutrition, The University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use with no cost to the participant for the training providing the following credit is included. These materials may not be incorporated into other websites or textbooks and may not be sold.

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by the University of Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The University cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images.

