



# No Time To Train

## Short Lessons for School Nutrition Assistants

### Quality Standards: A Cafeteria Checklist

#### Lesson Overview

**Lesson Participants:** School Nutrition Assistants/Technicians

**Type of Lesson:** Short, face-to-face training session

**Time Needed to Conduct the Lesson:** 20 minutes

**Lesson Description:** This lesson discusses the importance of quality standards for customer service in a school nutrition environment. The activity uses a cafeteria checklist to increase awareness of indicators of a positive school nutrition environment. The lesson is designed for managers to teach school nutrition assistants/technicians.

#### Lesson Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, the participant will be able to

1. Discuss how a school nutrition environment influences customer choice.
2. Evaluate your school cafeteria based on quality standards.

#### Get Ready to Train

The format for the **No Time to Train** lessons includes an overview, preparation checklist, lesson at a glance with timeline for conducting the lesson, references, and an instructor's script. The manager/instructor will use the script to present the lesson to the participants. The script gives directions to the manager/instructor—**DO, SAY, ASK, LISTEN, AND ACTIVITY**—for delivering the lesson.

No special audiovisual or electronic equipment is needed to conduct the lesson. The lesson can be presented in the cafeteria, media center, or classroom.

## Preparation Checklist

**Directions:** Use the Preparation Checklist to prepare for the training session. Track your progress by checking off tasks as they are completed.

| Done<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Lesson Tasks  |
|---|---|
|   | <p><b>Gather Materials</b></p> <p>Materials Needed:</p>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor’s Script</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pencils (one for each participant)</li> </ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Session Evaluation form (one for each participant)</li> </ul>  |
|   | <p><b>Prepare for Lesson</b></p> <p>Before the Training:</p>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make copies of Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist (one for each participant)</li> </ul> |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make copies of Session Evaluation form (one for each participant)</li> </ul>                             |
|   | <p>On Training Day:</p>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place pencils on tables (one for each participant)</li> </ul>  |
|   | <p>On the Instructor’s Table:</p>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor’s Script</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist</li> </ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Session Evaluation forms</li> </ul>  |

**Lesson at a Glance**  
**(20 minutes)**

| <b>Time</b> | <b>Topic</b>  | <b>Task</b>   | <b>Materials</b>                                    |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| 2 minutes   | Introduction and Overview   | Instructor introduces the concept of quality standards in a cafeteria to the participants.              | Instructor's Script                                 |
| 9 minutes   | Objective 1: Discuss how a school nutrition environment influences customer choice. | Participants select the quality standards of a cafeteria where they would choose to eat.                | Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist |
| 5 minutes   | Objective 2: Evaluate your school cafeteria based on quality standards.             | Participants evaluate and discuss their cafeteria environment based on the quality standards checklist. | Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist |
| 2 minutes   | Wrap up and Review  | Participants share ideas for changes to increase customer choice.                                       |   |
| 2 minutes   | Session Evaluation  | Conduct a short evaluation of the lesson.   | Session Evaluation form                             |

**Note to Instructor:**

The checklist for the school cafeteria evaluation can be distributed before the session takes place or during the session.

**Reference:**

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2010). *School health index: A self-assessment and planning guide*. Atlanta, GA: Department of Health and Human Service. Retrieved October 21, 2011 from <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/shi/index.htm>

National Association of State Boards of Education. (2005). *Fit healthy, and ready to learn: A school health policy guide*. Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved October 21, 2011 from [http://nasbe.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=396:fit-healthy-and-ready-to-learn-a-school-health-policy-guide&catid=53:shs-resources&Itemid=372](http://nasbe.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=396:fit-healthy-and-ready-to-learn-a-school-health-policy-guide&catid=53:shs-resources&Itemid=372)

National Food Service Management Institute. (2001). *Barriers to a good nutrition environment in the middle grades: Views from school administrators, teachers, and foodservice administrators. NFSMI Insight, 17*. University, MS: Author. <http://nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080313032658.pdf>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2000). *Changing the scene: Improving the school nutrition environment*. Alexandria, VA: Author. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/changing.html>



## Instructor's Script



### SAY:

It is important to maintain a positive and pleasant atmosphere for the customers in a school nutrition environment.

In this lesson we will discuss why the cafeteria presentation is important, and we will identify characteristics that make the nutrition environment more pleasant and appealing to the customer.



### DO:

Distribute a copy of **Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist**.



### SAY:

Let's look at **Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist**.

Great menus with tasty food products are only part of ensuring effective customer service in a school nutrition environment. The appearance of the servers, dining room, serving area, serving tables, food, and trays influence how the customer thinks of the establishment.

If the facilities are clean and organized, the staff looks fresh and uses effective customer relation techniques, and the food looks well prepared and is presented to enhance its appearance, then the facility is sending a message that they value their customer.

This builds trust in our customers. When customers trust us to provide them good, nourishing, wholesome food that they enjoy, this can greatly affect their willingness to participate in the program and select a variety of healthy foods.

This handout divides the cafeteria into five areas:

- cafeteria dining room,
- cafeteria serving area,
- nutrition assistants/technicians,
- hot and cold serving tables, and
- food.

Use this checklist to make observations relating to how well each area is presented.

Check whether you agree or disagree with each observation and make comments if you have them. It is important to recognize standards that make a cafeteria pleasant and appealing. In order to correct problems you must be aware of where the problems could be.



**ACTIVITY:**  
**Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist.**



**DO:**  
Allow 9-10 minutes for the activity.

Briefly discuss the checklist responses (see **Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist**).

Emphasize that this activity demonstrates how many criteria affect the presentation and atmosphere of the cafeteria.



**ASK:**  
Do you have any questions about our activity? What do you think are the most important observations made for your cafeteria?



**LISTEN:**  
Listen to individual responses.



**SAY:**  
The school nutrition environment plays a big part in whether the customers will choose to eat in the cafeteria. It is our responsibility to make sure the cafeteria is inviting to children who eat in the cafeteria every day.



**LISTEN:**  
Listen to individual comments.

Answer questions to the best of your ability. If there are questions you can't answer, tell participants you will find out the answer and let them know later. If you need assistance in finding answers, please call the National Food Service Management Institute at 800-321-3054.



**DO:**  
Distribute Session Evaluation forms.



**SAY:**  
Thank you for participating in the lesson today. Please take a couple of minutes to complete the Session Evaluation Form. Thank you for your input.

## Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

| Observation   | Agree | Disagree | Comments |
|---|-------|----------|----------|
| <b>Cafeteria Dining Room</b>  |       |          |          |
| 1. The dining room looks clean and fresh; furnishings are clean and in good repair.   |       |          |          |
| 2. Interesting items such as artwork and posters decorate the walls.  |       |          |          |
| 3. The floor and tables are cleaned often, and always after each serving period.  |       |          |          |
| 4. The tray return area is kept clean and orderly; if there is a garbage can in the dining room for scraping trays it is hidden.        |       |          |          |
| 5. Table tents with nutrition messages, centerpieces, and other table decorations are sometimes used.                                   |       |          |          |
| 6. The lines are short and there are optional serving areas available or “grab and go” items available as part of the unit-priced meal. |       |          |          |
| 7. The dining room has sufficient seating for the number served; there is no overcrowding.  |       |          |          |
| 8. The cafeteria smells clean, but not of chemicals; the food aromas that permeate the air are appealing.                               |       |          |          |

### Cafeteria Serving Area

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 1. The area is kept clean and organized. No empty used pans or soiled wiping cloths are visible.                              |  |  |  |
| 2. Any area of the kitchen visible from the serving area is clean and organized.  |  |  |  |
| 3. There are clean wiping cloths in sanitizing solutions below each of the serving tables to clean drips.                     |  |  |  |
| 4. All portioning tools and surfaces are cleaned after each serving period, or as needed.                                     |  |  |  |
| 5. All signage is colorful and professionally-developed; there are no hand written signs.                                     |  |  |  |
| 6. The serving area is decorated with colorful posters and items such as a bowl of gourds, or fruit and vegetable sculptures. |  |  |  |
| 7. Only clean pot holders are used.   |  |  |  |

## Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist (continued)

| Observation   | Agree | Disagree | Comments |
|---|-------|----------|----------|
| <b>Nutrition Assistants/Technicians</b>   |       |          |          |
| 1. Everyone is wearing a fresh apron or other appropriate uniformed dress, such as a school tee shirt or certain color top and dark pants. Apparel looks like commercial restaurant uniforms.       |       |          |          |
| 2. Each person has taken a few minutes to personally “freshen up” prior to service.   |       |          |          |
| 3. All service staff members wear a smile and speak to the students in a respectful manner.   |       |          |          |
| 4. Service staff offer foods by asking random questions such as “What vegetable are you having today?” or “Have you tasted this broccoli?” as a friendly reminder of the healthy choices available. |       |          |          |
| 5. Free samples of a new food are offered the day before it is served.  |       |          |          |

### Hot and Cold Serving Tables

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| 1. All foods should fit on the wells of the steam table with the possible exception of pizza. Foods on the steam table should be attractively presented and held at the appropriate food temperatures. |  |  |  |
| 2. An assortment of various sized steam table pans is available. Pans are not stacked or balanced on top of one another on the steam table.  |  |  |  |
| 3. All drips are wiped from the plate or serving table immediately, using a wiping cloth kept in a container of sanitizing solution under the serving table away from food.                            |  |  |  |
| 4. The runner replaces the pans of food before they are empty so that no customer is getting a serving that has been scraped from the bottom of the pan.   |  |  |  |
| 5. The cold tables or self-serve bars are enhanced with decorations to make them more attractive. The hot table is decorated seasonally.   |  |  |  |
| 6. If self-serve bars are used, an employee is assigned to keep it neat and clean, log temperatures, and keep containers at least half full.   |  |  |  |

## Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist (continued)

| Observation  | Agree | Disagree | Comments |
|--|-------|----------|----------|
| <b>Food</b>  |       |          |          |
| 1. Daily choices are available in each menu category: entrée; grains/breads; cooked vegetables; raw vegetables; and fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and juices.                  |       |          |          |
| 2. Pans of hot foods are presented to enhance appearance.  |       |          |          |
| 3. Cold foods are presented attractively to introduce new foods to the students.   |       |          |          |
| 4. Excess grease is removed from foods to enhance the appearance.  |       |          |          |
| 5. All pre-portioned items are arranged on the serving line so that each choice is readily available and customers do not have to reach over the other food to select a serving. |       |          |          |
| 6. A choice of lower fat condiments such as dips and salad dressings are readily available for student selection.  |       |          |          |
| 7. Any food that has been sitting out too long and become dry, discolored, or otherwise unappealing is removed from the serving table and replaced with fresh product.           |       |          |          |
| 8. Operating procedures should be followed with leftover foods that are reserved for a later date.   |       |          |          |
| 9. Chilled milk is maintained and always available.  |       |          |          |
| 10. Foods are batch cooked as directed by the recipe and held in warming cabinets for a minimal amount of time.  |       |          |          |
| 11. Standardized recipes are used for every preparation for consistent quality. Foods are seasoned according to the recipe, not by personal taste.                               |       |          |          |
| 12. All foods are consistently served at the appropriate temperatures and temperatures are recorded throughout the serving period.   |       |          |          |
| 13. Healthy foods are packaged for convenience for eating in the allotted meal period, for example sectionizing apples and oranges rather than serving them whole.               |       |          |          |



## Handout 1: Evaluate Your School Cafeteria Checklist (continued)

Using the evaluation you have just completed, write your suggestions for change that might increase the enjoyment of our customers when they dine with us.

Suggested changes to the physical environment:

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Suggested changes to the style of service:

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Suggested changes to the food:

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Other suggested changes:

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## Session Evaluation

**Instructions:**

*Completely fill in the circle of your answer. Use a #2 pencil.*

Please select only one response for each statement. Do not fold or crease this sheet.

|                         |                 |                                  |  |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Title of Meeting: _____ |                 | Trainer's Code: _____            |  |
| Session Topic: _____    |                 | Date: _____                      |  |
| Time Slot: _____        | Location: _____ | Length of Event (hrs/min): _____ |  |

**Attendee Status:**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> District director  | <input type="radio"/> Major city director       | <input type="radio"/> Private consultant/trainer |
| <input type="radio"/> State agency staff | <input type="radio"/> Site-level manager        | <input type="radio"/> Foodservice assistant      |
| <input type="radio"/> Educator           | <input type="radio"/> Other (please list) _____ |  |

| Reaction to this Session  |  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| Please read the following statements related to the session. Rate your level of agreement by using the scale 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). |  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 1.  | The session objectives were clearly presented.             | 5              | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1                 |
| 2.  | The session objectives were achieved.                      | 5              | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1                 |
| 3.  | I can apply what I learned in this session to my job.      | 5              | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1                 |
| 4.  | Attending the session increased my skill on the topic.     | 5              | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1                 |
| 5.  | Attending the session increased my knowledge on the topic. | 5              | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1                 |
| 6.  | I would recommend this session to others.                  | 5              | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1                 |
| 7.  | Overall, the session met or exceeded my expectations.      | 5              | 4     | 3       | 2        | 1                 |

| Comments about this Session  |
|--|
| <p><b>The information I found MOST useful was:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> |
| <p><b>Please share any additional comments:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>    |

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