Illinois Child Care Bureau News

January – March 2016

Dear Provider:

During your visit between October 1, 2015 – January 31, 2016, your Illinois Child Care Bureau (ICCB) Program Advisor reviewed your meal/snack times with you. It is very important that you feed the children within those designated time frames. If the stated times no longer work with your schedule, please call the Illinois Child Care Bureau office for assistance in making this change. In addition, we hope that you will enjoy using the 2016 calendar which was hand-delivered during this visit.

TIP: Recording attendance and menus daily is critical to your successful participation in the food program. Remember to use *Daily Meal Worksheets* when you are not able to access the internet to record online. If you need copies of your *Daily Meal Worksheets*, please call the Illinois Child Care Bureau. If you use paper menus, remember to complete them daily.

Are you looking for free training? Visit the Illinois Child Care Bureau's website (IllinoisChildren.com) or call the Illinois Child Care Bureau for assistance.

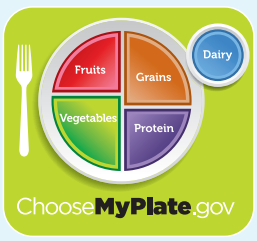
ICCB welcomes **Yolanda Alvarez-Vargas** of Chicago, **Beverly Atterberry** of Chicago, **Ester Banks** of Chicago, **Linda Banks** of Forest Park, **Colisha Britton** of Kankakee, **Paradize Coopwood** of Chicago, **Cinthia Estrada** of Waukegan, **Denisse Garza** of Huntley, **Olivia Gilkey** of Sterling, **Jannie Godfrey** of Chicago, **Keith Hallom** of Chicago, **Sabrina Harris** of Harvey, **Erica Hastings** of Waukegan, **Tamara Irwin** of Berkeley, **Ashia Jackson** of Rockford, **Ebony James** of Waukegan, **Emma Jefferson** of Calumet City, **Mary and Lamar Lee** of Machesney Park, **Mildred Lewis** of Chicago, **Kandy Martinez** of Addison, **Vanessa McCoy-Pulphus** of Olympia Fields, **Jolynn McCray** of Chicago, **Teri Meyer** of Spring Grove, **Deandrea Moore** of Chicago, **Yecenia Perez** of Chicago, **Felicia Robinson** of Joliet, **Tanya Selvy** of Chicago, **Zelda Tarr** of Country Club Hills, **Marie Thomas** of Waukegan, and **Jettie White** of Calumet City.

ICCB welcomes back **Cicely Cash** of Chicago, **Natolie Drewitt** of Chicago, **Kizzie Harris** of Oak Park, **Tina Hill** of Evergreen Park, **Dayna Pearson and Tena Langford** of Chicago, and **Tanya Wilkins** of Chicago.

ICCB's office will be closed:

- ✓ Friday, January 1, 2016 in observance of New Year's Day
- ✓ Monday, January 18 in observance of Martin Luther King Day
- ✓ Friday, February 12 in observance of Lincoln's Birthday
- ✓ Monday, February 15 in observance of President's Day

– Cathy, Kim, Maria, Marguerite, and Mary



Choose My Plate

Visit www.choosemyplate.gov to see the 'new look' of this great resource packed with helpful tips on child care, nutrition and more.

A Provider You Should Know

by Kim Klimek, Compliance Supervisor

For the past twelve years, Ms. Eucaris Torres has owned and operated **Day Care Esperanza,** located in Chicago's Albany Park neighborhood. The word "esperanza" means "hope" in Spanish. Before choosing a career in home day care, Ms. Torres earned a law degree in her home country of Colombia. In Colombia, Ms. Torres specialized in family law and was very involved in her community. In April of 2003, Ms. Torres and her family relocated to the United States. Ms. Torres was introduced to home day care by a family friend. Ms. Torres enjoyed working with and helping families in Colombia so it was a natural transition to open a home day care to serve her community.

Ms. Torres has a group home day care license and typically cares for children 6 weeks to 12 years old. Currently, she is caring for children between 2 – 9 years old. Ms. Torres teaches the

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Celebrate Slow Cookers

Cooking a meal in a slow cooker gives you the opportunity to prepare the meal when you have time while still taking care of the needs of the children in your care. Slow cookers 'lock in moisture' which allows flavors to fully develop. Cooking with a slow cooker, a counter-top electrical appliance, is safe and energy efficient.

Cooking with a slow cooker has many benefits:

- A slow cooker uses less electricity than an oven.
- Slow cookers are useful throughout the year. The aroma of hot soup is a welcoming scent as the children are playing before lunch. A slow cooker will not heat up the kitchen in the summertime the way an oven may.
- Slow cookers help tenderize less expensive cuts of meat because they cook for a longer period of time at a lower temperature.
- Instructions for many recipes will allow placing all ingredients in the slow cooker at same time making it easier to produce the meal.
- Many foods may be cooked in a slow cooker including soups, stews, and casseroles.

Most slow cookers have 2 – 3 settings. When using the low setting, food will cook in 6 – 10 hours. Using the high setting allows food to cook in 4 – 6 hours. If possible, turn the slow cooker on the high setting for the first hour of cooking time and then use the setting that fits your needs.

Safety Is Important

Some basic rules to follow when using a slow cooker:

- Wash hands before, during and after food preparation.
- Always start with a clean slow cooker, utensils, and work surface.
- Always thaw meat and poultry in the refrigerator before cooking in the slow cooker. This will ensure complete cooking.
- Consult the instructions that came with your slow cooker for recommendations on large cuts of meat and poultry. Slow cookers are available in different sizes, so the instructions will vary. If you cannot find the instructions, cut the meat into smaller chunks to ensure thorough, safe cooking. Add the liquid, such as broth or water, suggested in the recipe and keep the lid on tightly during cooking.
- Liquids do not evaporate as they do when cooked on the stove. About half the recommended amount of liquid usually works unless the recipe contains rice or pasta.
- Once meats or vegetables are chopped, refrigerate these perishable foods in separate containers until ready to place in slow cooker.
- Spray the inside of the slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray before using to avoid a lengthy clean-up.
- Dense vegetables like potatoes, carrots and other root vegetables take the longest to cook, so place them on the bottom and cut the pieces no thicker than one inch. Tender vegetables, such as tomatoes, mushrooms, zucchini and squash, which can overcook easily, should be added during the last two hours of cooking.
- Place the meat on top of the vegetables and top with liquid.
- Most uncooked meat and vegetable combinations will require cooking for at least 8 hours on low in a slow cooker.
- Removing the lid slows the cooking time. Each time the lid is lifted the cooking time is increased by about 20 minutes.

- If you are not home during the entire cooking process and the power goes out, throw the food away even if it looks cooked. If you are home when the power goes out, use an alternate method of cooking such as the oven.
- Once the food is completely cooked, the food will remain safe for up to two hours.
- Slow cookers really do cook slowly, so a few extra hours on low will not be a problem.
- Dairy products such as milk, sour cream or cream should be added during the last 30 – 60 minutes of cooking.
- Rice and pasta may become starchy when cooked for long periods of time. For the best results, cook rice or pasta on the stove and add them to the slow cooker a few minutes before serving.
- Measure the temperature of the food before eating them. Follow these recommended safe internal temperatures:
    - Fresh beef, lamb, pork, veal (chops, roasts, steaks) – 145 F; allow a three-minute rest time after removing from heat
    - Fish – 145 F (or cook until flesh is opaque)
    - Eggs; ground meat and meat mixtures (beef, chicken, lamb, pork, turkey, veal) – 160 F
    - Casseroles; poultry (chicken, duck, goose, turkey) – 165 F

Do not store leftovers in a deep container (such as a slow cooker). Refrigerate leftovers in a shallow container – food about 2 inches deep. Do not reheat leftovers in a slow cooker. Use a microwave or oven to reheat leftovers until the internal temperature reaches 165 F. Once the internal temperature has reached 165 F, it may be placed in the slow cooker on low or warm during serving.

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children letters, numbers, math and science. Day Care Esperanza has an area for blocks and shapes, as well as a drama area for the children to play dress up. The children enjoy story time when Ms. Torres or her assistants read to them. One of their favorite activities is a science experiment with sand and rocks. The children love all of the hands-on activities at Day Care Esperanza.

The most rewarding part of Ms. Torres career is having a direct relationship with the children and their families. Ms. Torres is very proud that she is able to help the families even beyond day care. She has a strong bond with each of the families that she serves. In addition to caring for the children, Ms. Torres believes in providing full support services to the families as well. Ms. Torres provides as much help as she can to the parents/guardians of the children in her care. In the beginning, her most difficult challenge was dealing with children of different ages. Ms. Torres stated that it took time and patience but she has learned to deal with it. She stated that she has grown from her experiences. Ms. Torres provides specialized attention to each child's age and needs.

Ms. Torres keeps up with her food program responsibilities by entering her menus and attendance daily. She submits her training on time and follows the *Meal Pattern for Children* to ensure that she is providing the correct portion size by age group. Ms. Torres keeps in mind the menu items the children enjoy while she is preparing a recipe. Ms. Torres gets the children involved in the food preparation in order to get the children to try new foods. They begin with the recipe and are involved with looking at all the ingredients to produce the menu item. This strategy has worked most of the time to engage the children to try new foods.

Day Care Esperanza has a good relationship with many day care homes in her area. They keep in contact and plan activities together. They are not part of an association, however, they regularly discuss issues faced by day care home providers. In addition, Ms. Torres utilizes the online training provided by DCFS.

Ms. Torres would "absolutely" choose the same career again. She has dedicated her adult life to serving children and their families and truly enjoys the career that she has chosen. Ms. Torres wants to stay with the food program for a "very, very, long time".

Converting Recipes For Your Slow Cooker

Most recipes can be converted to cooking in your slow cooker. Because liquids do not boil away in a slow cooker, in most cases, you can reduce liquids by 1/3 to 1/2. In soups, this will not matter. Add pasta at the end of the cooking process or it may become mushy. Pasta may get too soft in the slow cooker, so cook pasta separately and add it just before serving. Milk, cheese, and cream may be added one hour before serving. One hour on the high setting – 300 degrees – is equal to 2 hours on low setting – 200 degrees.

Time Chart For Adapting Recipes

Recipe instructions for oven	Cook on Low	Cook on High
15 – 30 minutes	4 – 6 hours	1.5 – 2 hours
35 – 45 minutes	6 – 10 hours	3 – 4 hours
50 minutes – 3 hours	8 – 16 hours	4 – 6 hours

recipes

Wild Cowboy Stew

Ingredients

½ lb Turkey Breast, ground
1 cup canned Baked Beans, drained
½ cup canned Kidney Beans, drained
½ cup Onion, chopped
6 TB Brown Sugar
½ cup diced Tomato, canned
1 TB Ground Mustard
½ cup chopped Celery
1 tsp Cider Vinegar

Instructions

1. Brown turkey over medium heat.
2. Combine all ingredients in slow cooker. Stir.
3. Cover and cook on high for 1 hour.

Servings: 6

Big Bad Wolf Soup

Ingredients

½ TB Olive oil
½ cup Onion, chopped
¾ cup Red Bell Pepper, chopped
½ clove Garlic
½ TB Chili Powder
2 cups Butternut Squash, peeled, diced
¾ cup Water
1 cup whole-kernel Corn, frozen
2 cups Pinto Beans, canned, drained, and rinsed
½ cup Stewed Tomatoes

Instructions

1. Heat oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add onions, bell peppers and garlic. Cover and cook for 8 minutes.
2. Add chili powder. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly.
3. Place onion and pepper mixture in slow cooker. Add squash, beans, water, corn and tomatoes. Cover and cook for 8 hours or until soup is thick.

Note: Cooking on high will take less time, but be sure not to scorch the soup on the bottom of the pot.

Servings: 6

Apple and Sweet Potato Mash

Ingredients

2 large Sweet Potatoes (peeled or not, your preference)
3 Golden Delicious Apples (peeled or not, your preference)
2 tsp Cinnamon

Instructions

1. Wash and cut potatoes into quarters. Place in slow cooker.
2. Wash and core apples. Cut into eighths and place in slow cooker.
3. Sprinkle with cinnamon.
4. Cook on high for 2 hours or until potatoes are fork tender.
5. Remove from heat and beat with a hand mixer until smooth. Serve warm.

Servings: 6

Special thanks to University of Illinois Extension Program, West Virginia Child Care Nutrition Service, and North Dakota State University Extension Service.

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