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Food for future citizens: School meal culture in Sweden

Gullberg, E. (2006). *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, Vol. 9(3).

Every child in Sweden between years 1 and 10, has the right to eat a free school lunch every weekday. These lunches are cooked and served by professional staff in suitable, well equipped dining halls. Ever since schooling has existed in Sweden authorities in charge of the education system have organized school meals. Until the 1930s only children who revealed an obvious need received school meals. Every family had to apply and every single case was carefully investigated. Discussions on "the modern school lunch" started during the 1930s, when the Swedish compulsory school transformed from an education platform into an arena for social reforms. Social engineers considered the school to be an efficient means of changing, improving and fostering a strong and successful nation with healthy citizens. This article's aim is to reveal and analyze the roots of, and the welfare concept of, the Swedish school meal.

Autonomy at mealtime: Building healthy food preferences and eating behaviours in young children

Mogharreban, C. and Nahikian-Nelms, M. (2006). *Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 24(1).

This article discusses family-style meal service as a means to building autonomy and healthy eating behaviors in young children. The authors discuss the development of food preferences, age-related developmental responses to food, and the importance of socially mediated exposure to food as a way to increased food acceptance. Guidelines for implementing family-style mealtimes in child care settings are outlined.

Pre-school staff attitudes toward foods in relation to the pedagogical meal

Sepp, H., Abrahamsson, L., and Fjellstrom, C. (2006). *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, Vol. 30(2).

The aim of this study, with the pedagogic meal in focus, was to identify pre-school staff members' attitudes to the role of food and meals as part of daily activities at pre-school. Interviews were carried out at 12 pre-schools and a total of 34 pre-school staff participated. The staff revealed strong opinions as well as ambivalence towards how food and meals should best be integrated into their daily work and pedagogic activities. The pre-school staffs' lack of or insufficient education and knowledge regarding food and nutrition resulted in an ambivalent and uncertain situation with respect to how they should see themselves as teachers in the meal situation. Nevertheless, most of the staff had a clear perception of what it meant to practice a pedagogic meal. It meant helping and encouraging the children to help themselves and serving as an adult model for the children at table, though this pedagogic activity was uncommon. While the staff were satisfied with the pre-schools' role of catering for the children, they expressed concern about or even mistrust towards the children's parents. Despite, or perhaps due to, their inadequate knowledge about food and nutrition and the lack of specific aims for the pedagogic meal, they assumed that the public sector was a better educational institution regarding foods and a better guarantor for children's food habits and dietary intake. As the teachers' identities have changed over the past years they have not yet found a solid ground for determining how food and meals could be integrated into their everyday work as pre-school teachers and childminders.

Children's interactions at preschool mealtime. Social aspects.

Noriko, T. (2000). *Japanese Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 48(2).

The present research examined young children's interactions at preschool mealtime. In Study 1, 4-to 5-year olds were observed at 1 preschool for 1 year 3 months. While eating, the children talked about family, food, and other general topics. Ritualized interactions, that is, interactions that were routine or that followed a set pattern, were identified. In the 4-year-olds' class, interactions that followed set patterns were longer than non-ritualized ones, and more children participated in such interactions than in the non-ritualized ones. However, these results were not observed in the 5-year-olds. Rather, in the 5-year-olds' class, non-ritualized interactions were longer and had more participants than those with an established pattern. In Study 2, observations were made of a class 4-year-olds who had just entered the school. At first, interactions following the set patterns used in that classroom were not found, but they appeared about 1 month later. As in the 4-year-olds' class in Study 1, longer interactions and more participation were found for interactions following set routines than for non-ritualized interactions.

Narratives and explanations during mealtime conversations in Norway and the U.S.

Snow, C. and Aukrust, V. (1998). *Language in Society*, Vol. 27.

Mealtimes reveal culturally specific ways of talking, and constitute opportunities for socialization of children into those ways. In 22 Norwegian families and 22 American families, matched for age and gender of preschool-aged child and for participant constellation, mealtimes were examined for the occurrence and type of narrative and explanatory talk. All indices suggested that the Norwegian families produced more narrative talk - in particular, talk about minor deviations from social scripts - whereas the American families produced more explanatory talk, particularly talk focused on explanations for physical events or for individual behaviors. When Norwegian families gave explanations, they were likely to be focused on social norms and deviations from them, like their narratives. The results are interpreted in relation to the Norwegian cultural values of mitigated collectivism, egalitarianism, homogeneity, and implicit social rules, in contrast to American values of individualism, diversity, and explicit formulation and transmission of civic values.

Making mealtime a developmentally appropriate curriculum activity for preschoolers

Fletcher, J. and Branen, L. (1994). *Day Care and Early Education*, Vol. 21(3).

To foster developmentally appropriate activities at mealtimes, child caregivers should let children serve themselves and eat until they are

full; resist forcing children to eat; supply child-sized utensils; offer foods that need to be spread; cut, broken or spooned from a bowl; let children prepare some foods; and be aware of cultural values.

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