

## **Mealtimes At Childcare**

A quality child care program will provide the children with well-balanced, nutritious meals. Mealtimes are important times for kids and they benefit in many ways. When enrolling your child in child care, find out what meal times are like.

•Well-balanced meals provide the food to help children grow, think, and have energy.

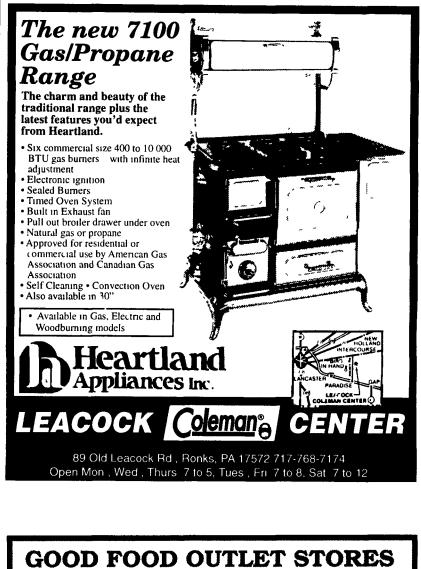
•Mealtime routines help children feel secure when they know what to expect.

•Children learn language and social skills during mealtimes by conversing with the caregiver and each other. It is a good time to model table manners and correct behavior. •While feeding themselves, children use fine motor skills. They also learn about counting, colors, shapes, amounts, smells, temperatures, and tastes.

•Self-help skills are learned as they help set the table, pour liquids, and serve food. Being able to do these things helps build-self-esteem in children.

•When hand washing and cleaning routines are modeled, the children learn good health and safety practices.

Free educational materials are available for child care providers in Pennsylvania from Penn State Cooperative Extension's Better Kid Care Project by calling 1-800-452-9108.





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