



Nutrition for Early Learning and Child Care

Tips to Stretch Your Food Budget

1. Take advantage of sale prices

- Check store flyers for sales and coupons and adjust your menu to include sale items
- Stock up on sale items (if you have storage space)

2. Minimize food waste

- Buy only what you will use (for perishable items)
- Try not to choose recipes that include ingredients you will only use one time (i.e. an obscure spice)
- Be creative with leftovers
 - turn spaghetti sauce into pizza sauce or lasagna
 - use leftover vegetables or meat in a soup, casserole or wrap

3. Use canned or frozen vegetables and fruit (especially when fresh is not in season)

- Look for areas in your menu where you can switch to canned or frozen vegetables and fruit
 - Use frozen vegetables in soups, stir-fry, sauces, etc.
 - Use frozen or canned fruit in smoothies, on pancakes or yogurt, or just on its own
- *Rinse canned vegetables before using and choose fruit canned in juice*

4. Cut back on costly meat

- Replace meat with alternatives like – beans, lentils, split peas, chick peas, or eggs
- Stretch your meat budget by adding beans or lentils and using half the amount of meat
- Choose more economical cuts of meat and less deli meat

5. Other ideas to save money

- Make meals/snacks from scratch using ‘whole’ foods and basic ingredients
- Join your grocery store’s reward program to collect points for free groceries or discounts
- Discuss with your local grocer, the possibility of receiving an incentive for your business (ie. a discount or free delivery)
- Get together with other facilities in your area to start a buying club. When you buy larger amounts of food, you can often get a better price