



# Mealtime Memo

## for Child Care

### Got Time? Online Courses for Professional Development

Training and professional development are essential resources for success in a child care setting. Not only does it help everyone to succeed in their day-to-day roles and responsibilities, but training and professional development also increases confidence among staff. However, finding time to attend training can be a challenge for some child care professionals. Fortunately, online courses may be a great resource for meeting your training and professional development needs.



First, why should you consider online courses? Online courses are excellent sources for meeting your professional development needs when you have limited time to attend face-to-face training. Self-paced online courses, in particular, allow you to complete the course at your leisure. Additionally, enrolling in online courses can provide you valuable information to create positive and supportive environments for the children in your care.

There are many sources for online courses, such as the Institute of Child Nutrition (ICN). ICN has over 50 self-paced online courses designed to support the professional development and training needs of all child nutrition professionals. All courses are categorized into the following child nutrition areas: child care, food safety, school nutrition, and wellness. Additionally, each category has a variety of courses, such as the child care category has the online course, *Serving Adequate Foods in Child Care* and the food safety category has the online course, *Serving Safe Food in Child Care*. Each course has a brief description, the number of hours each course is likely to require to complete, and a link to a more detailed description, as well as a link to register for the course.



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There are several ways ICN's online courses can be used to meet your professional development needs and requirements. First, they can be used to answer questions you have regarding child nutrition needs of young children, such as the *MyPlate* series. Secondly, online courses may be used to meet professional development training requirements. For example, some state and local regulatory agencies allow for ICN's online courses to be used to meet the training needs to maintain or obtain child care licensure. Thirdly, each course description in the ICN Course Catalog lists a number of instructional hours an online course offers. Many organizations use instructional hours to calculate the number of Continuing Education Unit's (CEU's) that will be

awarded. Remember, check with your state agency or your CEU granting organization to determine the number of CEU's awarded for all ICN online courses.

Above all, ICN's online courses are free, self-paced, designed for multiple learning intelligences, and are accompanied with a certificate of completion. It is important to note that online courses are not ideal sources of training for everyone; however, they can be a great tool for those who have limited time. For more information on registering, check out the Online Course Catalog at <http://www.nfsmi.org/Templates/TemplateDefault.aspx?qs=cELEPTM=>.

## References

Institute of Child Nutrition (2015). *Online course catalog*. Retrieved from <http://www.nfsmi.org/Templates/TemplateDefault.aspx?qs=cELEPTM=>.

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