How Much Should You Serve?

Offer toddlers and preschoolers small, easy-to-eat amounts to make eating easy and more enjoyable.

- **Use smaller bowls, plates, and utensils** for the children in your care.

- **Avoid Clean Plate Clubs!** Don’t insist that children finish all the food on their plate. Let them know it’s okay to only eat as much as they want at that time.

- **As children are able, allow them to serve themselves.**
  
  ⇒ Even a 3 to 5 year old can practice serving from small bowls that you hold for them. They’ll learn new skills and feel “all grown up.”

  ⇒ Teach them to take small amounts at first. Tell them they can get more if they are still hungry.

  ⇒ Serve foods that are “too hot” for the children to serve themselves safely (for example, soups). Ask each child how much they want. Make sure food isn’t too hot for them to eat.

  ⇒ It is a good idea to have water available so that children can serve themselves when they are thirsty. This helps them recognize the difference between hunger and thirst.