CAO Mealtime Philosophy

- Always have children and adults wash their hands with soap and water before eating.
- Make some time to relax before the meal is served.
- Have some finger foods on hand for children eating in high chairs if they are hungry before the meal is served.
- Serve food family style, with children serving themselves.
- Let children decide how much and what types of food they wish to eat.
- Understand and accept day-to-day variations in appetite.
- Encourage children and adults to try new foods.
- Serve all foods at the same time rather than withholding milk, fruit, etc. until they have eaten other foods.
- Food is not to be used as a reward or punishment.
- Have teachers sit with the children and eat the same food the children are eating.
- Encourage children and adults to eat by saying positive comments about the meal served.
- Plan to serve some snacks that the children can make themselves.
- Use mealtime to work in some nutrition education, for example: “Carrots can help us see,” “Milk has calcium and that helps our bones get strong.”
- Incorporate multi-cultural foods in the menu as often as possible.
- For great information on Adult Nutrition, see the NYS Office for the Aging website (www.aging.state.ny.us). Click on Aging Well then Eating Well.