

Family Style Meal Service at Rock Springs 4-H Center

Family has been the center stone for the Kansas 4-H program - youth and parents working and learning together to “make the best better”. Over sixty years ago Rock Springs 4-H Center stressed the importance of family by instituting family-style service for meal time. The traditional value of sharing and eating together has become a founding quality of Rock Springs’ charm.

Today, the importance of the family tradition is more evident than ever in our fast-paced, drive-thru culture as a means for creating a learning environment for youth to learn. Many youth do not experience the family gathering to share a meal and discuss the day’s events. By setting and sharing a meal together the campers learn about each other and can develop friendships. However, beyond building friendships, the campers learn the value of serving others through their participation in setting the table, serving food and cleaning the tables. The citizenship gained through a simple kind act builds character for tomorrow’s citizens.

Family style meals provide the opportunity for campers to learn table manners. Important table manners to learn include:

1. Sit up and do not lean over your plate. The wrists or forearms may rest on the table but not put your elbows on the table.
2. If you don’t like a food say no thank-you and resist from saying negative comments about the food.
3. Use Please and Thank You when passing food.
4. If the meal is family style wait until everyone is served before eating as this demonstrates consideration and respect for your cabin mates.
5. Eat your vegetables, meat, salad and dessert with a fork or spoon.
6. Do not stuff your mouth full of food. Chew with your mouth closed and DO NOT talk with food in your mouth.
7. When passing food, pass to the left and always use serving spoon provided.
8. Don't reach over someone's plate for something. Politely ask that the item be passed to you.
9. Do not play with your food.
10. Always use a napkin to wipe your mouth, which should be on your lap when not in use.

Last but not least...save dessert until the end of the meal! And drink plenty of water!!!

The family style learning process does not begin and end at the dinner bell. The learning process begins in the preparation and does not end until the cleaning is done. Tips for a successful dining experience while at Rock Springs include:

- 1) Allow 30 minutes for KP before and after the meal. Allow 30 – 45 minutes for eating. Meal time minimum of 1 hour 15 minutes from the start of eating until clean-up or 1 and 45 minutes from KP set-up to clean-up.
- 2) Arrive for KP on time; be ready for KP by washing hands before entering the dining area.
- 3) Listen and follow instructions carefully.
- 4) Encourage camp counselors to assist their campers with setting tables, carrying trays, and cleaning.
- 5) Appoint an agent/adult volunteer as the Dining Room Supervisor.
- 6) Encourage agents/adult volunteers to assist with KP. Appoint three or four agents/adult volunteers per meal.
- 7) Ask Rock Springs AOD for the menu before scheduled camp to assist with scheduling. Remember breakfast meals have the most paper products to clear.
- 8) Remember taking pictures during the meal adds time. Remember clean-up needs minimum of 30 minutes.
- 9) Encourage campers to be respectful of their KP person – do not create messes for fun!
- 10) Remain flexible and encouraging – large groups can be challenging.