Unit 017  The Role of the Carer at Meal Times

Level: Entry Level 3

Credit value: 3

Unit aims
This unit aims to help learners understand the responsibilities of carers in ensuring mealtimes enable individuals to be independent and enjoy their food. Learners will be introduced to the range of equipment that supports independence at mealtimes and they will learn about ways to support individuals in health and social care settings.

Learning outcomes
There are three learning outcomes to this unit. The learner will be able to:
• Know the responsibilities of the carer at meal times
• Be able to choose equipment which encourages independence at meal times for children and adults
• Know how to support individuals at meal times

Guided learning hours
It is recommended that 30 hours should be allocated for this unit. This may be on a full-time or part-time basis.

Details of the relationship between the unit and relevant national occupational standards
NOS: This unit may allow progression to the following unit in the National Occupational Standards for Health and Social Care:

HSC214: Help individuals to eat and drink.

Endorsement of the unit by a sector or other appropriate body
This unit is supported by Skills for Health and Skills for Care and Development

Mapping to Functional Skills
• English – Speaking and listening
• English – Writing
• ICT – Find and Select information

Assessment and grading
This unit will be assessed by a candidate portfolio.
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Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Outcome 1 Know the responsibilities of the carer at meal times
The learner can:
1.1 Describe the responsibilities of the carer at mealtimes

Outcome 2 Be able to choose equipment which encourages independence at meal times for children and adults
The learner can:
2.1 Select appropriate equipment to encourage independence at mealtimes for children
2.2 Select appropriate equipment to encourage independence at mealtimes for adults

Outcome 3 Know how to support individuals at meal times
The learner can:
3.1 Outline ways to support adults and children at meal times.

Outcome 4 Be able to assess own personal skills in supporting healthy eating activities
The learner can:
4.1 Assess own personal skills in supporting healthy eating activities
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Delivery
The content of this unit lends itself to providing the opportunity to use a wide range of techniques to build on the learner’s knowledge and skills with practical learning opportunities to enhance understanding.

Understanding the importance of mealtimes as a social activity as well as essential for maintaining health and well-being and the carer’s role in supporting these are crucial to this unit.

The role of the carer in demonstrating respect and offering choice will be essential as well as understanding the practical support that can be provided by carers at meal times. Learners may want to consider what good practice is and how to avoid poor practice (e.g. giving time, allowing choice, a supportive role not one that ‘takes over’ etc.) – this could be exemplified through the use of case studies/scenarios where learners are able to identify good or poor practice and where the latter is identified, ways in which support provided and what could have been better identified.

This unit provides opportunities for practical experience as well as learning from the experience of others; guest speakers could describe support provided in particular settings to assist in maintaining independence for those that need help. Similarly, workers from children’s settings can describe what equipment is used to encourage children to eat and feed themselves. Learners should be prepared for these sessions and have considered questions that will elicit information that will help them to prepare for achieving the respective assessment criteria.

Specialist support (e.g. for assisting people/children at meal times) can be considered – either through teaching and/or guest speakers (e.g. occupational therapists who might be able to bring along specialist equipment for learners to examine that are designed to meet the needs of both children and adults who may need help).

There are opportunities for learners to work in groups and carry out their own research which could be shared with other group members (e.g. presentation, displays, leaflets etc).

Learners could share experiences from their work placement where possible and appropriate – describing how the setting provides active support and encouragement to assist those who need assistance and/or encouragement at mealtimes.

Learners might have the opportunity of supporting an individual in the workplace – evidence of this could be provided to meet the final criterion if documented appropriately (e.g. Witness Testimony)

Potential assessment opportunities

On completion of a unit the learner should:

1.1 Describe the responsibilities of the carer at mealtimes
2.1 Select appropriate equipment to encourage independence at mealtimes for children
2.2 Select appropriate equipment to encourage independence at mealtimes for adults
3.1 Outline ways to support adults and children at mealtimes
Holistic approach: All assessment criteria could be met through an integrated assignment. For example, learners could produce a guide for a new staff member which included different sections linked to the assessment criteria; however as this may not be realistic in terms of addressing the support needs of both adults and children, this approach could be used with supplementary questions and answers for the individuals not covered in the guide.

There is also the potential for linking some assessment criteria from this unit to others (e.g. Units 4, 11 and 24, where the learner could integrate assignment work and relate to a specific workplace following completion of their work placement.

Individual Outcome approach: Please note, this list is indicative only, each assessment criterion could be approached on an individual basis and/or any combination of criteria and methodologies, and these could include:

- Learner accounts
- Poster
- Leaflet
- Question/answer
- Documented research
- Presentations (group and/or individual)
- Records of interviews (guest speakers)
- Case studies/Scenarios
- Witness Testimonies (work place)
- Observational reports

Regardless of the approach taken, learners’ evidence must include the following:

- Description of carer’s responsibilities at meal times (preparation, during and following)
- Identification of four pieces of equipment to encourage independence at mealtimes for children
- Identification of four pieces of equipment to encourage independence at mealtimes for adults
- Outline of two ways of supporting adults and children at mealtimes (this could be evidenced through practical activities but the record would need to ensure that two ways of support had been provided for both a child and an adult).

Potential Resources

- [www.independentliving.co.uk/eating-aids](http://www.independentliving.co.uk/eating-aids)
  Provides information on eating/drinking aids

- [www.healthvisitors.com](http://www.healthvisitors.com)
  Advice and information on the needs of children 0-5 years

General Social Care Council Code of Practice