Feeding Young Children in Group Settings

Scenario
As food is served, children put their fingers in the rimless bowls as they pass them. What can be done?
Mary is three years old. Her mother is very impressed when you suggest that children can serve themselves at mealtimes. She is also impressed when you talk about the Ellyn Satter’s Division of Responsibility in Feeding where adults decide what, when and where food is presented and the child decides how much or whether to eat.

Mary sits down to eat with her family. When the bowl is passed, she takes four large portions of mashed potatoes. Mom tells you this stuff just won’t work. What do you suggest?
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Scenario

Brannan sits down at the lunch table. The lunch includes makings for a turkey sandwich. There are bowls of bread, cheese, turkey, lettuce, tomato, and mustard or mayonnaise. He takes one look at the makings for the turkey sandwiches and says, “I don’t like it. I don’t want any.” What can the adult at the table do?
Feeding Young Children in Group Settings
Scenario

Smitty, a two year old, serves himself some food and then doesn’t eat any. What should happen next?
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Scenario

Roberto reports that Marty, a twenty-month-old, eats most of the food on his plate, but leaves some of it. His grandmother told Roberto that he should make him eat everything on his plate. He asks the child care provider to make sure Marty eats everything on his plate. What can the child care provider do?
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Scenario

A parent tells you that he and his wife are discussing how to get children to try new foods. His wife suggested a “no-thank-you bite.” He explained the rule. Everybody has to take at least one bite, though they do not have to eat it all. Why would you agree or disagree with this strategy?
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Scenario

Four year old David is always the last to leave the table. He eats and eats and eats. He is not overweight. He just keeps eating, though he slows considerably. He sometimes stays as long as 15 minutes beyond the time everyone else finishes. What strategies should the program staff use in this case?
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Scenario

A four year old girl is new to your program. She smiles gleefully as she serves herself. She is quickly becoming competent in serving herself. The ketchup and mustard, and salad dressing are presented to the children in squeeze bottles. She takes way more than is reasonable to eat. Suggestions?
As the tables are being set for snack, a parent volunteer says, “Isn’t it time to wash hands?” A staff member says, “We don’t have to wash because the children didn’t play outside today.” What do you do?
The children wash their hands just before the meal. Two of them make detours before they get to the table. One crawls under the table to pick up a pencil under the floor. The other makes a circle around the room, dragging his hand across all the counter tops as he moves through the room. As the food is served, the two immediately come to the table.
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Scenario

It is the third week that three year old Paola has attended the program. She still refuses to come to the table at lunch time, though she comes to snack and eats. At lunch time she says she wants her mommy. What do you suggest?
Scenario

When Sarah serves herself at lunchtime, she takes only bread and milk. She eats several pieces of bread. She usually eats cereal and bananas for breakfast. Where do you start to help Sarah expand her menu?
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Scenario

Children in your center eat in a cafeteria. The cook says it is not possible for the children to serve themselves at this school. To help children learn to judge amounts and to develop self-regulation skills, you must come up with some other strategies for this class. What will you suggest?