

Food and Nutrition Policy

Reason this policy is important: One of the main responsibilities of parents and caregivers is to provide healthy, safe and age appropriate food to infants and children. Food provides energy and nutrients needed during a critical period of rapid development and growth of infants and children. Meal time also provides the opportunity for the development of social, psychological, motor coordination and communication skills needed for integration

Procedure and Practices, including responsible person(s):

For all infants and children within the care of the facility:

_____ (staff title/name) shall provide nourishing and attractive food according to a written plan based on the standards in the National Health and Safety Performance Standards for Out-of-Home Child Care manual set forth by the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (See Child Care Meal Pattern for sample age appropriate requirements).

_____ (staff title/name) shall ensure the nutritional plan includes steps to take when emergency situations occur, including child care staff designated roles involving events such as choking of a child during mealtime. The completed nutrition plan shall be on file and dated, updated when revised and accessible to staff at all times.

_____ (staff title/name) will ensure that all snacks and meals, including preparations, serving, and storage, shall follow the nutritional requirements for the child care component of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). (See Food Safety Policy and Child Care Meal Pattern).

_____ (staff title/name) will ensure that the following meal pattern is followed by all child care staff:

- Children in care for 8 and fewer hours shall be offered at least one meal and two snacks or two meals and one snack;
- Children in care for more than 8 hours shall be offered at least two meals and two snacks or three snacks and one meal;
- A nutritious snack shall be offered to all children once in midmorning and again in mid-afternoon.
- Children shall be offered food at intervals of at least 2 hours apart and no more than 3 hours apart unless the child is asleep. Meal pattern is dependent on the nutritional needs of the infant or child and may need to be increased to meet such needs.

_____ (staff title/name), shall ensure that all children be offered, but not forced, to eat a variety of foods from the major food groups including:

- At least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables
- Grains (such as cereal, pasta, bread)
- Meat and meat substitutes
- Fluid milk and milk products

All products used shall be pasteurized and USDA certified. Home canned foods are not allowed. (See Child Care Meal Pattern for example food types and serving size).

_____ (staff title/name) shall ensure that all children with special dietary needs obtain the necessary nutrients described in the child's written instructions provided by the parent or guardian. These written instructions should include:

- The child's special needs;
- Any dietary restrictions based on the special needs;
- Any foods to be omitted or substituted due to special needs;
- Limitation of life activities;
- Any other special needs information; including specific food allergies (see Food Allergy Policy).

_____ (staff title/name) shall ensure that food is age appropriate and foods that can easily cause choking, including but not limited to hot dogs, grapes, cherry tomatoes, and raw carrots, are cut into small pieces and are limited to children above the age of four (4) years.

_____ (staff title/name) shall ensure that all children are provided with the necessary foods to meet nutritional needs for growth and development. Children whose parents provide food from home may be given additional food, with respect to special dietary needs, if the food provided by the parent does not meet the child's nutritional needs.

When the policy applies: When programs provide food for children and/or staff..

Communication plan for staff and parents:

Staff and volunteers will receive a written copy of this policy in their orientation packets before beginning work at the child care.

Parents and guardians will meet with child care providers at the facility to review any dietary modifications, including modifications due to food allergies, special feeding events, nutritional deficiencies, and other documented medical needs.

_____ (staff title/name) will share Food Allergy Action Plan with caregivers and provide training (if necessary).

References:

CARING FOR OUR CHILDREN, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs. 2nd Edition. American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and U.S Department of Health and Human Services. 2002 <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/CFOC/>

Reviewed by: _____ Director/Owner
_____ Health Professional (physician, nurse, dietician, health department, EMS, Health consultant)
_____ Staff member
_____ Other (parent, advisory committee)

Effective Date and Review Date:

This policy is effective _____ (date) and reviewed annually _____ (date) or as needed

*This format is adapted from and used with permission of: National Training Institute for Child Care Health Consultants, UNC, 2000.