

Nutrition



Intent Statement

In order to support the best possible growth and development and promote healthy lifestyles, healthy and nutritious foods will be served.

Procedure and Practice

Menu Planning

- A cycle of menus for both meals and snacks of at least four weeks that change with the seasons and contain minimal repetitions
- Menus are planned using good menu planning principles and include a variety of new and familiar healthy and appealing foods. Menus regularly include foods from different cultures
- Menus are planned and approved by a health professional with knowledge of nutrition and Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern for children
- The menu planning process includes input from staff members and family through menu surveys, discussions, meetings and other means
- Written menus are developed at least one month in advance and posted and shared with families and staff members

Nutrition Guidelines for Children

- Meals and snacks will be healthy and safe and will meet nutrition requirements by federal and state laws and regulations
- Menus are varied and nutritious consistent with the CACFP Meal Pattern for Children, dietary guidelines and Kentucky regulations
- Meals and snacks will emphasize nutrient-rich foods including: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or non-fat dairy, lean meats, skinless poultry, fish, eggs, legumes, nuts and seeds
- Healthy food preparations techniques are used

Nutrition Guidelines for Infants

- Creates an environment that encourages and supports breastfeeding mothers, including:
 - Refrigerated storage for breast milk
 - A comfortable, private area for mothers to breastfeed their infants or express milk
 - Sensitivity for breastfeeding mothers and their infants
 - Training for staff on proper handling of breast milk
- If a mother is breastfeeding exclusively, staff will feed the mother's breast milk to the infant and support the mother in breastfeeding her infant when visiting the center
- Breastfed infants will receive infant formula only if the mother requests it

- Support exclusive breastfeeding (preferred) or iron-fortified infant formulas for the first six months of life
- Support families who are breastfeeding beyond 12 months
- Work in consultation with families to gradually introduce solid foods from ages 4 to 6 months, based on each infant's developmental readiness. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommends waiting until infants are 6 months before serving any solid foods. All foods provided to infants will meet the CACFP requirements and Kentucky regulations
- Not serve infants any food or drink in a bottle other than breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula unless medically necessary and documented by a medical statement
- Following the AAP's recommendations, we encourage children ages 1 and older to use a cup exclusively, instead of a bottle

Special Dietary Needs

- State and federal requirements will be followed to accommodate children with special dietary needs
- With appropriate medical documentation, modified meals and snacks will be prepared for children (including infants) with food allergies or other special dietary needs
- Appropriate precautions will be taken to prepare and serve safe meals and snacks to children with food allergies. Procedures are in place to:
 - Develop a food allergy action plan for each child with a life-threatening food allergy
 - Check ingredients labels for all foods served to children with food allergies
 - Designate an area in the kitchen for allergy-free meals and use separate equipment and utensils during preparation, cooking and serving
 - Develop cleaning procedures that avoid cross-contamination
 - Provide ongoing staff training pertaining to children with food allergies

Parent-Provided Meals and Snacks

- When meals and snacks are provided from home for a child's consumption, families support safe and healthy eating by providing nutrient-rich choices that meet CACFP Meal Pattern for Children and Kentucky standards
 - Foods provided by parents are healthy choices from the CACFP meal components of grains and breads, meat and meat alternatives, and vegetables and fruits. They are low in fat, added sugar and sodium
- Beverages provided for children (age 1 and older) will consist only of:
 - Whole milk for children younger than 2
 - Low-fat (1%) or fat-free unflavored milk for children ages 2 and older
 - 100 % juice when it can be served in a cup
 - Water

- Beverages for infants (birth through 11 months) will consist only of:
 - Breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula
 - Water
- Families will provide safe foods for children by clearly labeling all foods with the child's name and date and type of food, and storing all foods at an appropriate temperature until eaten
- Children are not allowed to share lunches and snacks brought from home with other children
- Foods that do not meet the child care programs standards for nutrition and food safety will be returned home. The child care program supplements children's meals or snacks if food from home is deficient in meeting the child's nutrient needs

Celebrations

- If food and beverages are served at celebrations, they consist of healthy choices that meet Kentucky regulations
- Families support efforts by providing healthy foods for celebrations, holiday parties, and other events on site
- To protect food safety and guard against allergic reactions, all foods provided by families to be shared with other children must be either whole fruits (i.e., apples, oranges, pears) or commercially prepared packaged foods that are unopened
- Provide staff and family with party ideas, including an approved list of appropriate healthy food and beverages and nonfood activities for parties
- All food and beverages served at any function, event, or meeting on site, whether provided by the child care program or brought from home by families, meet Kentucky regulations

Vending Machines

- Vending machines are not located on site. If vending machines are available, they sell only beverages and foods that meet the Kentucky regulations

Access to Drinking Water

- Fresh drinking water will be clearly visible and available to children at all times indoors and outdoors, including during meals and snacks

Meal Schedules

- Food is offered at least every three hours so that children's hunger does not overwhelm their ability to self-regulate food intake
- Adequate time is provided to allow all children to eat and socialize. Scheduled mealtimes provide children with at least 20 minutes to eat breakfast or snack and at least 30 minutes to eat lunch or supper, after the children are sitting at the table

- Accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of all children, including those with special oral health needs

Policy Recommendations for Infants

- Feed infants according to the written feeding plan provided by parents. Infants are fed on demand following cues for hunger and fullness
- Infant's teeth and gums are wiped with a disposable tissue or gauze after each feeding
- Follow best practices for feeding infants, as defined by the AAP and the CACFP. Infants are provided a safe, clean and uninterrupted feeding environment
- Staff hold infants while they are being fed and never lay them down to sleep or propped in a bouncy chair or high chair with a bottle
- Whenever possible, infants are fed by a single caregiver to develop familiarity, encourage bonding and make mealtime an enjoyable experience

Policy Recommendations for Children

- Serve meals and snacks in clean and pleasant settings, and develop an eating environment that provides children with a relaxed, enjoyable climate. The eating environment is a place where children have:
 - Adequate space to eat
 - Clean and pleasant surroundings
 - Appropriate and culturally relevant eating dishes and utensils
 - Convenient access to hand washing facilities before and after meals
- Mealtimes include predictable routines, such as washing hands before coming to the table
- Meals are served in family style, where children serve themselves from common platters of food with assistance from supervising adults who sit and eat with the children. Use mealtime as an opportunity to teach nutrition and food concepts. Adults eating with the children encourages social interaction and conversation and provides the opportunity to talk with the children about nutrition concepts related to the food being served
- New foods will be introduced to children 10–15 times
- To support development of healthy eating habits, staff members observe children's hunger and fullness cues and implement strategies that support children's self-regulation of food intake
- Staff encourage children to try new food but never force, coax or bribe children to eat
- Staff do not praise children for finishing food or cleaning their plates
- Mealtime is never used to discipline or scold children

Modeling Healthy Behavior

- Recognize the importance of staff members as positive role models for children as they learn to live healthy lives. Staff model behaviors for healthy eating and positive body image in the presence of children. They do not consume unhealthy foods and beverages such as candy and soda in front of children
- Encourage parents to reinforce these positive messages by serving as role models for their children at home

Food Rewards and Punishments

- Staff do not use foods or beverages as rewards for performance or good behavior
- Staff never withhold food or beverages (including food served through CACFP meals) as a punishment
- Use alternative nonfood reinforcements for appropriate behavior
- Educate parents to reinforce these practices at home

Food Service Personnel Qualifications and Training

- Qualified nutrition professionals administer the CACFP. Provide adequate training and continuing professional development for all nutrition and food service personnel
- Food service personnel regularly participate in professional development activities that address all applicable areas of food service operations, including planning, preparing and serving nutritious safe and appealing meals, and snacks that meet the required CACFP meal pattern components and serving sizes
- Food service personnel regularly participate in professional development activities that address other appropriate topics, such as nutrition, strategies for promoting healthy eating behaviors and accommodating special dietary needs

Food Safety

- All food and beverages made available in the child care program comply with federal, state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. This includes foods and beverages served for CACFP meals and snacks, nutrition education activities (such as cooking and taste testing), celebrations and other events on site
- Take appropriate precautions during food preparations to eliminate foods that are high risk for choking and use preparation methods to make all foods safe to eat

Standards-Based Nutrition Education

- Nutrition education is offered at least once per week as part of a planned comprehensive health education program designed to provide children with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health

- Nutrition education activities are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and emphasize the appealing aspects of healthy eating. They promote nutrient-rich foods, healthy food preparation methods, good nutrition practice and include enjoyable, developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant participatory activities (i.e., cooking and taste testing)
- Nutrition education is offered to parents to support best possible growth and development for their children

Appropriateness of Nutrition Materials

- Review all nutrition education lessons and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance, cultural relevancy and consistency with the state and child care program's educational goals and curriculum standards

Connecting with Planned Learning Experiences

- Nutrition education is a part of comprehensive health education and is included in other content areas, such as language and literacy development, mathematics, science and music
- Nutrition concepts are integrated into daily routines whenever possible, such as mealtimes and transitions
- After school programs integrate nutrition activities throughout the learning environment

Nutrition Promotion

- Conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve children, families and the community
- The nutrition education program is coordinated with CACFP meals and snacks and other food and beverages available in the child care environment, such as parties, meetings and other events
- Whenever possible, nutrition education activities involve the entire child care program and are linked to health-related community initiatives, services and programs
- Collaborate with agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent health messages to children and their families

Professional Development

- Staff members responsible for nutrition education are adequately prepared and regularly participate in professional development activities to effectively deliver the nutrition education program as planned. Include relevant nutrition training at least twice a year for teachers, assistant teachers and other staff members, as appropriate
- Professional development includes orientation to appropriate state standards and curriculum frameworks

Applicable

This policy applies to all staff, substitute, parents and volunteers in the child care setting.

Communication

This policy will be reviewed with parents upon application and a copy will be included in the staff and parent handbooks. The policy will be reviewed with staff at orientation and annual staff training.

References

American Academy of Pediatrics, PA Chapter, (2002). *Model Child Care Health Policies*. 4th Ed.
<http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org>

APHA & AAP (American Public Health Association & American Academy of Pediatrics). 1992. *Caring for our children-National health and safety performance: Guidelines for out-of-home child care programs*. Washington DC: APHA. <http://nrc.uchsc.edu>

Kentucky Child Care Health Consultation Program <http://www.cchckentucky.org>

Connecticut State Department of Education. June 2010. *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies-Best Practices for Creating a Healthy Child Care Environment*.
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Student/NutritionEd/CCAG_ActionGuide.pdf

Reviewed by:

Director/Owner

Board Member

CCHC/Health Professional

Staff Member/Teacher

Parent/Guardian

Effective Date/Review Date

This policy is effective immediately. It will be reviewed annually by the center director.