

Pathway To A Healthy Environment

Wellness Policies for a Healthy Environment

Nutrition

Policy Area: Feeding Practices

A supportive mealtime environment is important for nurturing healthy eating habits in children. Family Style Meal Service is a style of meal service which fosters healthy eating habits and positive attitudes toward food and eating. Family Style Meal Service allows children to identify and be introduced to new foods and new tastes. Children also learn to share in group situations, practice communication skills, and build motor skills. Family Style Meal Service is an opportunity for all these skills to be practiced while children are also able to enjoy their food.

Teachers and children each have their own responsibilities in the mealtime relationship. When teachers take responsibility for their mealtime tasks and children take their own responsibilities, children are encouraged to learn the skills and behaviors for successful eating. The Division of Responsibility in Feeding is a trust model: we support the children by setting the environment and trust the child can learn skills and choose.

The Division of Responsibility in Feeding

<u>Adult's Role:</u>	What food is served	When food is served	Where food is served
<u>Child's Role:</u>	How much to eat	Whether or not to eat	

1. Meals and snacks are served family style with a staff member present at the table.
2. Staff members allow children to decide how much to eat and whether or not they will eat. Children are never forced to eat or try new foods, instead children encouraged to try new foods and foods they don't like.
3. Staff members never use food as a reward or punishment for a child's behavior.
4. Staff members participating in meal time need to consume the same food and drinks as the children. Staff should only take a child size serving of the food offered.
5. Age appropriate serving bowls, utensils, pitchers, dishes and cups are to be used during meals and snacks.
6. Meals and snacks should be served at regular times each day.



Policy Area: Food Served

A healthy nutrition environment is supported in our programs by serving a variety of nutritious foods during meals and snacks throughout each child's day. Meals and snacks contain, as a minimum, food components and quantities established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines. Foods purchased and prepared at the center promote healthy choices that include the reduction of salt, sugar, and fats, and the increase of whole grains, fresh fruits and fresh vegetables. Beverages have no added sugar and are low fat. Juice is limited to no more than three servings per week and always 100% fruit juice.

Children with special needs and food allergies are accommodated in the program. Proper documentation is required when providing different food.

Food brought from outside the center for celebrations and special occasions, meetings and trainings, family events and fundraisers are mostly nutritious with plenty of healthy choices made available to children, staff, and parents.

1. The menu cycle is followed daily for all meals and snacks to ensure a balance of nutrients and variety foods.
2. Portion sizes meet at least the USDA Meal Pattern minimum requirements.
3. 1% milk is served to children ages 2 years and older. Whole milk is served to children ages 1 – 2 years old.
4. Drinking water is available at all times for self-serve, both indoors and outdoors.
5. Children with special needs have their nutrition needs taken into account.
6. Food brought from home must follow the nutrition guidelines.
7. Soda, candy, or other store-bought sweets are not to be served in the center.
8. During cooking experiences with the children, the majority of food used must be nutritious.
9. Special occasions and holidays are celebrated with mostly healthy foods and non-food treats.
10. Staff, parent and community activities and events encourage healthy food choices by offering mostly nutritious foods.
11. Fundraising activities consist of selling healthy food items or non-food items only.



Physical Activity



Policy Area: Active Play

Current recommendations from American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) suggest all children should be physically active every day. Children get the same benefits from being physically active as adults. Benefits of physical activity include: reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, stronger bones and muscles, improved endurance and strength, good mental health and cognition, and increased self esteem. Children should have an opportunity for active play 120 minutes per day which includes structured (teacher-guided) and unstructured (child-guided) playtime.

Just as in the feeding relationship between adult and child, encouraging physical activity in a child's life is much the same. Adults should plan a place and time for active play throughout a child's day and participate with the child as a role model. Active play time should include a variety of activities for children to choose from and enjoy. Young children will naturally tend to be active, but if children learn to be active regularly and enjoy it, then it is believed that they will continue to be active adults as well.

1. Children have at least 30 minutes cumulative (half day program) and 60 minutes cumulative (full day program) of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily.
2. Children participate in structured (teacher-guided) active play daily.
3. Children participate in unstructured (child-guided) active play daily.
4. Daily play and planned movement experiences both indoors and outdoors are provided to children.
5. Staff members encourage children to be active and participate in physical activities with the children.

Policy Area: Play Environment

According to research children tend to pattern their play based on their environment. Children should have safe appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces that encourage large muscle activities and enhance the development of a wide range of motor skills. A wide variety of play equipment increases the opportunities for children to explore and challenge themselves physically. Climbing, balancing, swinging, hanging, and sliding are just a few of the skills children can develop. When playing with portable equipment that require skills like throwing, catching, and hitting, children also build and expand a variety of other motor skills requiring eye-hand coordination and eye-foot coordination.

1. Activities, equipment and outside play areas are developmentally appropriate and safe.
2. A wide variety of portable play equipment is available for children to use at the same time.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Education

Policy Area: Curriculum

Good nutrition and regular physical activity are crucial to a child's health and well being. In the child care environment it is the responsibility of the child care staff to ensure children get their basic needs met daily by eating healthy foods and having regular opportunities to be physically active, As part of emergent curriculum and during meal conversations staff can educate children about health, nutrition, and the importance of being active by integrating these topics into weekly activity planning. Nutrition education can be integrated into subjects such as math, science, language and literacy.

1. Basic Nutrition concepts are integrated into weekly activity planning.
2. Children are involved in planned cooking experiences to teach basic food preparation skills and/or expose children to new foods.
3. Physical activity indoors and/or outdoors is integrated daily into planning.
4. Physical activity is designed so all can participate with an emphasis on fun instead of competition.



Policy Area: Trainings and Resources

The Nutrition Services Team is a valuable resource to staff and parents. Nutritionists are available to provide trainings to staff and parents on how to integrate nutrition and physical activity in the center and into their lives. In each region there is a resource library with resources and books relating to health, nutrition, and physical activity that is available to all staff.

1. Staff members receive training and resources on basic nutrition topics and support in integrating it into the center environment.
2. Staff members receive training and resources on physical activity opportunities for the children.
3. Parents are provided information on child nutrition and healthy eating habits through workshops and newsletters.
4. Parents are provided information that encourages physical activity at home.