

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: A Policy for Child Care



A healthy diet and adequate physical activity are essential for a child’s learning, growth, development, overall health and happiness. Childcare providers are encouraged to follow these policy recommendations to assure healthy environments for all children.

Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

- Serve meals and snacks that meet or exceed the requirements of the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program (attached).
- Do not serve candy, chips or otherwise unhealthy foods.
- Serve small-sized, age appropriate portions and allow for additional servings of nutritious foods.
- Act as role models by sitting down to eat with children and eating healthy foods.

Limit recreational screen time to two hours or less.

- Do not allow children under age 2 to watch TV.
- For children over age 2, limit TV time to no more than 30 minutes per week of educational or physical activity programming.
- Do not use TV during meal or snack time.
- Limit computer time to 15-minute increments.

Get one hour or more of physical activity every day.

- Allow 60 to 90 minutes of active play per day for children ages 1 to 6.
- Encourage activities such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping and jumping.
- Include both indoor and outdoor active play and provide 2 structured activities per day.
- Model active behavior for children by participating in active play both indoors and outdoors.

Drink zero sugary drinks, more water and low fat milk.

- Provide fresh drinking water to children indoors and outdoors throughout the day and serve water between meals.
- Do not serve soda, diet soda, fruit-flavored drinks or otherwise unhealthy beverages. Do not serve fruit juice to children under age 1.
- If juice is served to children over age 1, serve 100% fruit juice only at meal times. Limit 100% fruit juice to 4 ounces per day, including juice served to children at home.

For more information or to download this policy, please visit www.OurCommunityOurKids.org

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: A Policy for Child Care



More Healthy Eating Policies

- Serve meals and snacks that meet the minimum requirements of the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Ensure that menu items are selected from the **Preferred Choice* column the majority of the time. (See attachment.)
- Use serving and eating utensils, plates, and cups that are child-sized.
 - Encourage children to eat with utensils and not their hands when appropriate.
- Offer meals and snacks at scheduled regular times.
 - For children ages 1-5: Offer food at least 2 hours apart and not more than 3 hours apart.
 - For children under age 1: Feed on cue and as often as possible by a consistent caregiver.
- Encourage children to sit at the table when eating meals and snacks.
- Allow children to decide how much of a child-sized portion of food they will eat.
 - Never force or punish children for not eating.
- Do not offer food as a reward or deny food as a punishment.
- Talk with children about different types of healthy foods, healthy eating and foods of different cultures.
- Ask parents to follow the nutritional guidelines outlined in the CACFP attachment when food is brought from home.

Portion Size Equivalents		
1 Cup =		Baseball
3/4 Cup =		Tennis Ball
1/2 Cup =		Computer Mouse
1/4 Cup =		Egg
3 Oz. =		Deck of Cards
2 Teaspoons =		Ping-Pong Ball

- Give menus to parents at least 2 weeks in advance.
- Allow parents to only bring healthy celebratory food for special occasions such as parties or celebrations.



Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: A Policy for Child Care



More Physical Activity Policies

- Encourage active play every day.
- Allow children to be active outdoors twice a day.
- Provide 2 structured physical activities throughout the day.



Other Health Policies

- Support breastfeeding in your facility.
 - Coordinate child care feeding schedules with the mother’s schedule.
 - Accept expressed breast milk and use within 48 hours of being expressed.
 - Store breast milk in the refrigerator in a bottle labeled with the baby’s name and date the milk was expressed.
 - Provide mothers who want to breastfeed a clean, private location in the facility.
 - Never deny children entry into the facility because they are breastfeeding.
- Promote physical activity and good nutrition by using toys, posters, and lesson plans, etc.
- Include parents in healthy eating and physical activity planning.
- Seek continuing education for child care employees about how to make the facility a healthy place.
- Assure that children brush their teeth once during the day to prevent cavities.

As the center director or owner, I will:

- Train my staff on the above policies and have them sign a copy to be kept in their personnel files.
- Provide all parents with a copy of this policy and keep them updated on health-related activities.
- Review these policies every 12 months or more often, as needed.
- Follow these policies every day there are children in my care.

Signed by:

_____ Director/Owner

_____ Staff member

_____ Staff member

_____ Health Consultant (if applicable)

Effective Date: This policy is effective _____ (MM/DD/YYYY)

Post this policy so that it is available to parents and visitors at all times.

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: A Policy for Child Care



Healthy Beverage Guidelines

Beverage	Infant 0-12 months	Toddler 12-24 months	Child 2+ years
Milk	Breast milk 24-28 ounces/day on demand*	Whole milk or breast milk approximately 16 ounces/day	1% or Skim 16-24 ounces/day
Juice	No juice needed	4 ounces of 100% juice	4-6 ounces of 100% juice
Water	No water needed	As needed	As needed

* Amount may decrease as solids increase, breast milk is recommended, same amounts apply to formula fed infants. Breastfeeding may continue as long as desired.

USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program Requirements

Child Meal Pattern Breakfast Select All Three Components for a Reimbursable Meal				*Preferred Choice
Food Components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Age 6-12 ¹	
1 milk Fluid Milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1% or skim milk for children 2 and older
1 fruit/vegetable Juice ² , fruit and/or vegetable	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	Whole fresh fruit or fresh vegetable
1 grains/bread³ Bread or Cornbread or biscuit roll or muffin or Cold dry cereal or Hot cooked cereal or Pasta or noodles or grains	½ slice ½ serving ¼ cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	½ slice ½ serving 1/3 cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	1 slice 1 serving ¾ cup ½ cup ½ cup	Whole grains Choose foods that name one of the following whole-grain ingredients <i>first</i> on the label's ingredient list: "brown rice" "whole oats" "bulgur" "whole rye" "graham flour" "whole wheat" "oatmeal" "wild rice" "whole-grain corn"

¹ Children aged 12 and older may be served larger portions based on their greater food needs. They may not be served less than the minimum quantities listed in this column.
² Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength.
³ Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Cereal must be whole-grain or enriched or fortified
⁴ A serving consists of the edible portion of cooked lean meat or poultry of fish.
⁵ Nuts and seeds may meet only one-half of the total meat/meat alternate serving and must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the lunch or supper requirement.
⁶ Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened.

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: A Policy for Child Care



USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program Requirements (continued)

Child Meal Pattern Lunch or Supper Select All Three Components for a Reimbursable Meal				*Preferred Choice
Food Components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Age 6-12 ¹	
1 milk Fluid Milk	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1% or Skim Milk for children 2 and older
2 fruits/vegetables Juice ² , fruit and/or vegetable	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	Whole fresh fruit or fresh vegetable
1 grains/bread³ Bread or Cornbread or biscuit roll or muffin or Cold dry cereal or Hot cooked cereal or Pasta or noodles or grains	½ slice ½ serving ¼ cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	½ slice ½ serving ⅓ cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	1 slice 1 serving ¾ cup ½ cup ½ cup	Whole grains Choose foods that name one of the following whole-grain ingredients <i>first</i> on the label's ingredient list: "brown rice" "whole oats" "bulgur" "whole rye" "graham flour" "whole wheat" "oatmeal" "wild rice" "whole-grain corn"
1 meat/meat alternate Meat or poultry or fish ⁴ or Alternate protein product or Cheese or Egg or Cooked dry beans or peas or Peanut or other nut or seed butters or Nuts and/or seeds ⁵ or Yogurt ⁶	1 ounce 1 ounce 1 ounce ½ egg ¼ cup 2 Tbsp. ½ ounce 4 ounces	1½ ounces 1½ ounces 1½ ounces ¾ egg ⅜ cup 3 Tbsp. ¾ ounce 6 ounces	2 ounces 2 ounces 2 ounces 1 egg ½ cup 4 Tbsp. 1 ounce 8 ounces	Choose lean protein such as chicken breast, turkey, fish, low fat/part skim cheese, non fat plain yogurt. If selecting red meat select lean red meat such as 85% lean ground beef.

¹ Children aged 12 and older may be served larger portions based on their greater food needs. They may not be served less than the minimum quantities listed in this column.

² Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength.

³ Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Cereal must be whole-grain or enriched or fortified.

⁴ A serving consists of the edible portion of cooked lean meat or poultry of fish.

⁵ Nuts and seeds may meet only one-half of the total meat/meat alternate serving and must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the lunch or supper requirement.

⁶ Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened.

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: A Policy for Child Care



USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program Requirements (continued)

Child Meal Pattern Snack Select Two of the Four Components for a Reimbursable Meal				*Preferred Choice
Food Components	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Age 6-12 ¹	
1 milk Fluid Milk	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1% or Skim Milk for children 2 and older
1 fruit/vegetable Juice ² , fruit and/or vegetable	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	Whole fresh fruit or fresh vegetable
1 grains/bread³ Bread or Cornbread or biscuit roll or muffin or Cold dry cereal or Hot cooked cereal or Pasta or noodles or grains	½ slice ½ serving ¼ cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	½ slice ½ serving ⅓ cup ¼ cup ¼ cup	1 slice 1 serving ¾ cup ½ cup ½ cup	Whole grains Choose foods that name one of the following whole-grain ingredients <i>first</i> on the label's ingredient list: "brown rice" "whole oats" "bulgur" "whole rye" "graham flour" "whole wheat" "oatmeal" "wild rice" "whole-grain corn"
1 meat/meat alternate Meat or poultry or fish ⁴ or Alternate protein product or Cheese or Egg or Cooked dry beans or peas or Peanut or other nut or seed butters or Nuts and/or seeds ⁵ or Yogurt ⁶	½ ounce ½ ounce ½ ounce ½ egg ⅛ cup 1 Tbsp. ½ ounce 2 ounces	½ ounce ½ ounce ½ ounce ½ egg ⅛ cup 1 Tbsp. ½ ounce 2 ounces	1 ounce 1 ounce 1 ounce ½ egg ¼ cup 2 Tbsp. 1 ounce 4 ounces	Choose lean protein such as chicken breast, turkey, fish, low fat/part skim cheese, non fat plain yogurt. If selecting red meat select lean red meat such as 85% lean ground beef.

¹ Children aged 12 and older may be served larger portions based on their greater food needs. They may not be served less than the minimum quantities listed in this column.

² Fruit or vegetable juice must be full-strength.

³ Breads and grains must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Cereal must be whole-grain or enriched or fortified.

⁴ A serving consists of the edible portion of cooked lean meat or poultry of fish.

⁵ Nuts and seeds may meet only one-half of the total meat/meat alternate serving and must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the lunch or supper requirement.

⁶ Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened.

Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: A Policy for Child Care



Daily meal schedule:

Structured active play activities:

Lesson plan topics that support healthy eating and physical activity:

Private location for breastfeeding moms:

Healthy foods allowed for celebrations and parties:

