

UPDATED NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICIES

02/2022

In an effort to continue to provide the best possible nutrition and physical activity environment for the children in our facility, we have adopted the following policies. The administration and staff appreciate support from the parents in promoting the health of our children.

Food Program

The MCCDC Child Development Center provides our children with two healthy meals daily. Often, our staff will create lively activities and conversations with our children about nutritious food options, encouraging them to try new foods, the importance of physical activity (at least an hour a day), "screen" time (no more than 30 min. for a

preschool age child) and the positive effects on our bodies.

We highly encourage our families to continue these healthy standards at home. There is plenty of information about Healthy Food Choices and Physical Activity in the lobby. You can always request more information from our Family Services Coordinator, our staff or cook

- Morning program: Children will be served a snack and lunch daily.
- Afternoon Program: Children will be served lunch and a snack daily.

These meals are prepared from scratch and onsite by a trained cook according to the Federal Food Program guidelines for balanced nutritional meals. The menus are planned to include foods of various cultures. We appreciate your suggestions and recipes. If you would be interested in helping to prepare a special meal, please let us know!

New foods will be presented to the children to expand their knowledge of nutritious foods. Trying a small amount of each food is encouraged before second helpings are offered.

Fruits and Vegetables

- We offer fruit to children at least 2 times a day.
- We only offer fresh fruit, and occasionally canned in its own juice (no syrups).
- We offer fresh vegetables to children at least 2 times a day.
- We only offer vegetables steamed, boiled, roasted, or lightly stir-fried with little added fat.

Meats, Fats, and Grains

- We offer lightly fried chicken at the most every other week or longer.
- We offer fried potatoes at the most every other week or longer.
- We do not offer high fat meats like sausage, bacon, hot dogs, or bologna.
- We offer beans or lean meats (chicken and turkey meat) at least once a day.
- We offer high fiber, whole grain foods at least 2X a day.
- We do-not offer sweets or salty foods as part of the food program.

Beverages

- We make drinking water freely available so children can serve themselves both inside and outdoors.
- We Never offer sweetened drinks.
- We serve only 1% or skim milk to our children.

Menus and Variety

We have 3-week (or greater) cycle menu that allows for seasonal changes. Our menus include healthy items from a variety of cultures. Our menus include a combination of new and familiar foods.

Feeding Practices

- Our staff help children determine if they are full before removing their plate.
- Our staff help children determine if they are still hungry before serving additional food.

- Our staff gently and positively encourage children to try a new or less favorite food.
- We do not use food to encourage positive behavior.

Foods Offered Outside of Regular Meals and Snacks

- We provide and enforce written guidelines for healthier food brought in and served for holidays and celebrations.
- We celebrate holidays with mostly healthy foods or non-food treats.
- Our center encourages healthy eating habits, and acknowledges that there are special occasions where children are allowed some less healthy treat options, but always with quantity control and guidance from our staff.

Supporting Healthy Eating

Our meals are usually served “family style”. For safety reasons due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, our meals may look different in order to maintain meal times safe; only the teachers will be the ones handling the food, and serving. Conversation is encouraged at meals. Children who do not want to eat may leave the table to quietly read a book, when excused by the teacher. Teachers or other responsible adults will sit with the children at meal times.

- Our staff always consume the same food and drink as the children.
- Our staff have their home food and drinks in the break staff rooms, away from the classrooms.
- We provide visible support for good nutrition in our classrooms, and common areas through use of posters, pictures, and displayed books.
- Our staff often talk informally with the children about trying and enjoying healthy foods.

Nutrition Education for Staff, Children, and Parents

- We make provide training opportunities and information for staff on nutrition (other than food safety and food program guidelines) 2X per year or more.
- We provide teacher-directed nutrition education/activities to the children, in our planned curriculum, 1X per week or more.
- We provide nutrition education to parents 2X per year or more through flyers, written information in our information windows, lobby, our Facebook page and Website. We are planning on providing in-person as soon as is possible.

Physical Activity

Active Play and Inactive Time

- We provide at least 120 minutes of active play time to all children each day.
- We provide opportunities for outdoor play 60 minutes or more.
- We ensure that children are rarely seated for periods of more than 30 minutes.
- We do not withhold active play time for children who misbehave. Instead, we use active play as a re-direction technique.
- We show videos no longer than 10 min. in special occasion as part of a specific part of a curriculum activity.

Play Environment

- We provide fixed play equipment (tunnels, climbing and balancing equipment) that is extensive and varied for all children.
- We provide portable play equipment (wheeled toys, balls, hoops, ribbons) that is diverse and available for children to use at the same time.

- We make outdoor portable play equipment freely available to all children all of the time.
- Outdoor play space includes an open, grassy area and a track/path for wheeled toys.
- Indoor play space is available for all activities, including running, jumping or dancing when weather does not permit outdoor play.

Supporting Physical Activity

- Our staff often encourages children to be active and often join children in active play.
- We provide visible support for physical activity in our classrooms and common areas through use of posters, pictures, and displayed books.

Physical Activity Education

- We often provide learning opportunities for staff on physical activity (other than playground safety) 2X per year or more.
- We provide teacher-directed physical activity education for children, through a standardized curriculum, 1X per week or more.
- We offer physical activity education to parents 2X per year or more.

Healthy Guidelines for Celebrations

Children's birthdays are celebrated mostly on Fridays when a child's birthday lands on that week. Winter and Summer babies' birthdays are celebrated before the school breaks.

Our birthday's celebrations are considered a special occasion. Our teachers read books, sing songs and provide other activities about birthdays. The birthday child decorates his/her own crown, and all the children are encouraged to make cards for their celebrated friend. This is an amazing opportunity for our staff to enhance friendship and kindness.

At lunch (AM program) or Snack (PM) all children are treated with a mini-ice cream sandwich.

We encourage parents to join us for their child's birthday or other special occasion. The teachers will contact you to plan this.

Parents are welcome to come to our facility's kitchen to bake muffins for their child's class.

Due to allergies on many children and our Nutrition policies, our center does not permit food of any kind in the preschool during school's hours. (Feb.2022 This will come back into effect when the Covid-19 Pandemic health restrictions are lifted).

Other things parents can do to collaborate to their children's celebration is share balloons and goody bags (with no candy) with all the children the class, or bring decorative plates and cups.

Please note that neither baking muffins, bringing goodie bags nor decorative plates/cups are an obligation; To do this is optional.

Often the most important thing to your child is that you took the time to help plan something special. Please talk with the Director if you have questions or need ideas.