
MODEL FAMILY HOME DAYCARE NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

To create the healthiest possible environment for the children in my care, I have instituted the following policies:

NUTRITION

Meals and Snacks

[For home daycares that provide food to children]

I provide all children with breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Children have 30 minutes to eat breakfast and lunch, and 20 minutes to eat snack.

All meals and snacks meet the current U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) requirements. I serve a variety of foods to broaden children's food experiences. Weekly menus are posted for parents. Meals and snacks emphasize nutrient-rich foods (e.g., fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or non-fat dairy and lean meats). All meals and snacks are trans-fat free, and are low in saturated fat, sugar, and sodium. Only low fat 1% or non-fat/skim milk is served. I use healthy food preparation techniques for our menus (e.g., we steam vegetables, bake chicken, etc.).

Foods that do not meet the Institute of Medicine- recommended CACFP standards, such as soda, sweetened tea, fruit drinks, full-fat (for children over 2) and flavored milk, candy, cookies, sugary cereals and French fries are not served in my home daycare.

Snacks include either whole fruits or vegetables at least once each day. One-hundred percent juice is served in place of fresh fruit or vegetables during no more than one snack time each week, and no more than 4 oz is provided to each child in one day.

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In order to model healthy habits, I consume the same food offered to children during meals and snacks, and do not consume other foods or beverages (with exceptions made for medical restrictions as they may arise).

[For home daycares in which parent send in all food for children]

Parents must pack meals and/or snack(s) that meet CACFP requirements.

No candy, soda, sweetened beverages, cookies or other desserts are to be sent in.

Parents are reminded to pack child-size portions. If children bring prohibited foods to school, I will return these foods home with a reminder, and I will provide the children with an alternative food on that day.

All food that is brought in from home must be clearly labeled by the family with the child's name and date and type of food and is stored at an appropriate temperature until eaten. If refrigerator space is not available, families are asked to put an ice pack in their child's lunch bag.

Mealtime Practices

[All home daycares]

I emphasize positive mealtime behaviors. Food is never used as a punishment or reward in our home daycare.

I use mealtime as an opportunity to teach nutrition and food concepts.

I eat with the children to encourage social interaction and conversation, and ask questions and talk about nutrition concepts related to the foods I serve.

I remind children to take small portions, and encourage, without forcing, each child to eat or taste their food.

I help children gauge level of fullness when requests for second helpings are made. Second helpings are not put on children's plate unless they ask for more or serve themselves. When second helpings are requested, I encourage fruits and vegetables before other meal components.

I support a social environment at mealtime where children wash their hands, eat family style, and learn how to pour beverages, serve themselves, make independent food choices, and practice good table manners. I offer water to children often during the day.

Safe, fresh drinking water is clearly visible and available to children at all times indoors and outdoors, including during meals and snacks.

Celebrations & Special Events: I take great pleasure in celebrating children's milestones. I have chosen to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions with activities that shift the focus away from food and to the child. This policy is consistent with the healthy environment I am promoting and the nutrition curriculum I am teaching to the children. Parents may choose a special activity to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions. I am happy to provide some suggestions and welcome additional creative ideas for celebrating.

DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

I provide all children with numerous opportunities for physical activity throughout the day.

Preschoolers have at least 60 minutes of structured physical activity and at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity daily.

All children are provided outdoor time at least twice daily, weather and air quality permitting.

In the case of severe weather similar activities are provided inside.

I provide equipment and materials for active play and movement that support the development of gross motor skills and are appropriate for all children. During outdoor play, children practice gross motor skills with a variety of activities, such as running, skipping, kicking and throwing balls.

Children with special needs have opportunities to participate in physical activity routinely with their peers.

My facility is regularly inspected to ensure the safety of all children. I ensure the outdoor environment is safe by discarding broken materials, cleaning contaminated areas, sweeping/raking areas regularly, and picking up large branches.

I participate in physical activity with the children to increase child participation and model healthy levels of activity.

Parents are instructed to dress their children for safe outdoor playtime. It is important that children have appropriate clothing according to the season.

Children have access to drinking water at all times. In the summer children must come to school wearing sunscreen for morning outdoor play, and I will reapply prior to afternoon outdoor activities. Parents must complete a Topical Medication form.

Extra physical activity may be used as a reward; I never use it or withhold it as a punishment.

Screen Time: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under two years old do not engage in any screen time at all and older children watch no more than 1-2 hours per day. Because children watch television and play on the computer outside my care, I do not offer any screen time in my home daycare.

EDUCATION

I offer a developmentally appropriate health education curriculum for children that includes lessons and activities on nutrition and physical activity. Nutrition education is also incorporated into other content areas, such as language and literacy development, mathematics, science and music. I incorporate nutrition themes into planned learning experiences, when appropriate, to reinforce and support health messages. Nutrition concepts are integrated into daily routines whenever possible, such as mealtimes and transitions.

I participate in annual training on nutrition and physical activity for children to further my own knowledge and expertise.

Throughout my home, healthful food and physical activities are promoted in posters, books, games and toys (e.g., kitchen equipment). All books, posters, and other educational materials are free of illustrations of unhealthy foods.

COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION

I actively promote positive verbal and nonverbal messages about healthy eating and physical activity. Food promotions and messages emphasize nutrient-rich foods only, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products.

I encourage family involvement to support and promote children's healthy eating and physical activity habits. I welcome family input; for example, families are encouraged to suggest items they would like to see on the menu. I communicate in ways that respect families' cultures and customs. Nutrition education and physical activity information is provided for parents through newsletters and relevant handouts. I will work with families to provide referrals to appropriate resources for families with children with special nutrition or health needs. I encourage parents to communicate any concerns about their child's eating or physical activity habits. I also encourage parents to contact me with any questions or suggestions about our nutrition and physical activity practices.

EVALUATION

Each year I carry out a self-assessment of progress on wellness goals, which includes soliciting written feedback from parents as well as measuring where we stand on specific aims.