



# Nutrition Standards for Child Care

## Provide healthy foods and beverages for meals and snacks

- ◆ Meals and snacks must comply with the Meal Patterns in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- ◆ When planning meals and snacks, providers should:
  - \* Increase whole grains and limit the number of grains containing added sugars.
  - \* Limit foods high in fat and salt.
  - \* Never serve sweetened beverages.
- ◆ Specific guidance for choosing healthy options in each meal component category includes:

### Grains & Breads

- ◆ Half of grains served are whole grains.
- ◆ Breakfast cereals contain no more than 6 grams of added sugar per dry ounce (see WIC approved cereals list).
- ◆ Sweet breads/grains (e.g. doughnuts, cookies, danishes, French toast) are limited to once per week or less.

### Fruits & Vegetables

- ◆ Whole fruits and vegetables are served more often than juice.
- ◆ Any variety of unsweetened fresh or frozen fruit is offered.
- ◆ Any variety of canned fruit packed in juice or water (no syrups) is offered.
- ◆ A variety of vegetables are served during the week. Dark green vegetables are offered at least twice per week and orange vegetables at least twice per week.
- ◆ Fried or pre-fried vegetables (e.g. French fries, tater tots, hash browns) are not served.
- ◆ When juice is served:
  - \* It is only served to children 1 year of age and older (no juice before 12 months of age).
  - \* Only 100% fruit juice with no added sugars is provided.
  - \* Age-appropriate serving sizes are given only once per day:
    - 1–2 years (2 oz)
    - 3–5 years (4 oz)
    - 6+ years (4–6 oz)
  - \* It is never served in a bottle.

### Meats & Meat Alternates

- ◆ Processed meats (e.g. bologna, hot dogs, sausage) and fried or pre-fried meats (e.g. chicken nuggets, fish sticks) are limited to once per week or less.
- ◆ Dried or canned beans, lentils or peas are served once or more per week.
- ◆ When using canned beans, low sodium options are offered and/or beans are rinsed before serving.
- ◆ Skin from chicken and turkey is removed before serving.
- ◆ Only extra-lean ground beef (93% lean or higher) is served.
- ◆ Only canned tuna packed in water is served.
- ◆ Only natural cheeses that are low in fat (e.g. cheddar or Colby-jack made from 2% milk, 50% reduced-fat cheese) are offered.
- ◆ Low-fat (1%) or non-fat yogurt and cottage cheese are served. Yogurt contains no more than 40 grams of total carbohydrate per 8-oz serving.

### Milk

- ◆ For infants 0–11 months, offer only breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula.
- ◆ For toddlers 12–23 months, offer breast milk or whole cow's milk.
- ◆ For children 2 years and older, offer low-fat (1%) or non-fat/skim milk.
- ◆ Flavored milk is not recommended for any age.

## Create mealtimes that are enjoyable and used as an opportunity for learning.

- ◆ Caregivers sit at the table and eat the same healthy meals and snacks as the children.
- ◆ Older infants and toddlers are encouraged to feed themselves.
- ◆ Meals for children 3 years and older are served family-style.
- ◆ Caregivers encourage, but do not force, children to try all food components offered at the meal or snack.
- ◆ Caregivers encourage social interaction and conversation, using vocabulary related to the concepts of color, shape, size, quantity, temperature of food, and events of the day.

## Additional Recommendations for Infants

- ◆ **The facility encourages, provides arrangements for, and supports breastfeeding:**
  - \* Staff receive training on the importance of breastfeeding, how to handle and store breast milk, and how to support breastfeeding mothers in the facility.
  - \* The facility has a designated place set aside for breastfeeding mothers who want to come during work to breastfeed as well as a private area with an outlet (not a bathroom) for mothers to pump their breast milk.
- ◆ **Caregivers use appropriate techniques for bottle feeding:**
  - \* Caregivers do not bottle feed more than one infant at a time.
  - \* Infants are always held for bottle feeding.
  - \* Bottles are never propped.
  - \* Infants are never given bottles in the crib or allowed to carry a bottle while standing, walking or running around.
  - \* Only breast milk, iron-fortified infant formula or water are given in a bottle.

## Serve small-sized, age-appropriate portions.

- ◆ Using the CACFP Meal Patterns, prepare the age-appropriate amount of food to be served for each child.
- ◆ Include a reasonable amount of additional food to respond to a child or children requesting a second serving.

## Teach children and parents about the importance of good nutrition.

- ◆ Nutrition concepts are incorporated into the daily curriculum using resources such as *Color Me Healthy* and *Be Active Kids*.
- ◆ Nutrition concepts are included in parent newsletters using resources such as *Nibbles for Health* and *Parenting for Health*.



- ◆ **Infants are fed on cue rather than a strict schedule:**
  - \* Infants are fed when they show early signs of hunger (e.g. makes smacking sounds, sucks on hands, roots around for nipple). Crying is a late sign that an infant is hungry.
  - \* Caregivers slow down and stop the feeding when infants show signs that they are full (e.g. turns away from the bottle, increases attention to surroundings, keeps mouth closed, pushes bottle away).
- ◆ Age-appropriate solid foods are introduced no sooner than 4 months, but preferably at 6 months.



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