

APPENDICES >

Proper handling and storage of breast milk in the child care center

Storage

- When breast milk is brought in, make sure the container is clearly labeled with the child's name and date
- Thawed breast milk should be used within 24 hours. Do not refreeze unused milk
- Human milk may separate into a milk layer and a cream layer when stored. This is normal. Swirl it gently to redistribute the cream before giving it to baby

Preparation and Feeding

- **Frozen milk:** Thaw in the refrigerator overnight or under cool running water. Gradually increase the temperature of the water to heat the milk to feeding temperature
- **Refrigerated milk:** Warm under warm running water for several minutes, or immerse the container in a pan of water that has been heated on the stove. Do not heat the milk directly on the stove. Some babies accept milk right from the refrigerator
- Do not thaw or heat bottles of breast milk in a microwave oven. Microwaves do not heat liquids evenly. The baby can be scalded or the milk damaged. Do not bring temperature of milk to boiling point
- If the infant does not finish the bottle of breast milk within one hour, throw out the rest. Bacteria from saliva can contaminate the milk and cause sickness

LOCATION OF STORAGE	TEMPERATURE	MAXIMUM RECOMMENDED STORAGE DURATION	COMMENTS
Room (not refrigerated)	60-85°F	3-4 hours	Containers should be covered and kept as cool as possible; covering the container with a cool towel may keep milk cooler
Insulated cooler bag	5-39°F	24 hours	Keep ice packs in contact with milk containers at all times, limit opening cooler bag
Refrigerator	≤ 41°F	72 hours (3 days)	Store milk in the back of main body of the refrigerator
Freezer	≤ 0°F	6 months	Store milk in the back of freezer where temperature is most constant. Milk stored for longer than recommended is safe, but some of the milk-fat breaks down and results in lower milk quality

CACFP meal pattern requirements: children ages 1-12

The meal must contain, at a minimum, each of the components listed in at least the amounts indicated for the specific age group in order to qualify for reimbursement.

BREAKFAST	AGE 1 & 2	AGE 3, 4 & 5	AGE 6 through 12 ⁱ
1. Milk, fluid^j	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
2. Juice^a, fruit or vegetable - or - Fruit(s) or vegetable(s)	1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1/2 cup 1/2 cup	1/2 cup 1/2 cup
3. Grains/Breads:^b Bread Cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc. ^b Cereal: Cold dry Cereal: Hot cooked Cooked pasta or noodle products	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/4 cup or 1/3 oz ^c 1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/3 cup or 1/2 oz ^c 1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1 slice 1 serving 3/4 cup or 1 oz ^c 1/2 cup 1/2 cup

LUNCH OR SUPPER	AGE 1 & 2	AGE 3, 4 & 5	AGE 6 through 12 ⁱ
1. Milk, fluid^j	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
2. Meat or meat alternate: Meat, poultry, fish, cheese Alternate protein products ^g Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened Egg Cooked dry beans or peas Peanut butter or other nut or seed butter Peanuts or soynuts or tree nuts or seeds	1 oz 1 oz 4 oz or 1/2 cup 1/2 egg 1/4 cup 2 Tbsp 1/2 oz = 50% ^d	1+1/2 oz 1+1/2 oz 6 oz or 3/4 cup 3/4 egg 3/8 cup 3 Tbsp 3/4 oz = 50% ^d	2 oz 2 oz 8 oz or 1 cup 1 egg 1/2 cup 4 Tbsp 1 oz = 50% ^d
3. Vegetable and/or fruit^e (at least two)	1/4 cup total	1/2 cup total	3/4 cup total
4. Grains/Breads:^b Bread Cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc. ^b Cereal: Cold dry Cereal: Hot cooked Cooked pasta or noodle products	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/4 cup or 1/3 oz ^c 1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/3 cup or 1/2 oz ^c 1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1 slice 1 serving 3/4 cup or 1 oz ^c 1/2 cup 1/2 cup

SNACK <i>Select two of the following four components:</i>	AGE 1 & 2	AGE 3, 4 & 5	AGE 6 through 12ⁱ
1. Milk, fluid^j	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1 cup
2. Juice,^{a, f} fruit or vegetable - or - Fruit(s) or vegetable(s)	1/2 cup 1/2 cup	1/2 cup 1/2 cup	3/4 cup 3/4 cup
3. Grains/Breads:^b Bread Cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc. ^b Cereal: Cold dry Cereal: Hot cooked	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/4 cup or 1/3 oz ^c 1/4 cup	1/2 slice 1/2 serving 1/3 cup or 1/2 oz ^c 1/4 cup	1 slice 1 serving 3/4 cup or 1 oz ^c 1/2 cup
4. Meat or meat alternate: Meat, poultry, fish, cheese Alternate protein products ^g Egg, Large ^h Cooked dry beans or peas Peanut butter or other nut or seed butter Peanuts or soy nuts or tree nuts or seeds Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	1/2 oz 1/2 oz 1/2 egg 1/8 cup 1 Tbsp 1/2 oz 2 oz or 1/4 cup	1/2 oz 1/2 oz 1/2 egg 1/8 cup 1 Tbsp 1/2 oz 2 oz or 1/4 cup	1 oz 1 oz 1/2 egg 1/4 cup 2 Tbsp 1 oz 4 oz or 1/2 cup

a Must be full strength fruit or vegetable juice

b Bread, pasta or noodle products, and cereal grains shall be whole grain or enriched, cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc., shall be made with whole grain or enriched meal or flour

c Either volume (cup) or weight (oz), whichever is less

d No more than 50% of the requirement shall be met with tree nuts or seeds. Tree nuts and seeds shall be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the requirement. For purpose of determining combinations, 1 oz. of nuts or seeds is equal to 1 oz. of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish

e Serve 2 or more kinds of vegetable(s) and/or fruit(s). Full strength vegetable or fruit juice may be counted to meet not more than one-half of this requirement

f Juice may not be served when milk is the only other component

g Alternate protein products may be used as acceptable meat alternates if they meet CACFP requirements

h One-half egg meets the required minimum amount (one-ounce or less) of meat alternate

i Youth ages 13-18 must be served minimum or larger portion sizes than those specified for ages 6-12

j Fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk

CACFP infant meal pattern: birth through 11 months

To comply with the Child and Adult Care Food Program regulations, it is the responsibility of child care centers caring for infants to purchase all required meal components on the Infant Meal Pattern according to the different age groups in care. The Infant Meal Pattern lists the minimum amount of food to be offered to infants from birth through 11 months. The infant meal must contain each of the following components in at least the amounts indicated for the appropriate age group in order to qualify for reimbursement. Food within the meal pattern should be the texture and consistency appropriate for the development of the infant and may be served during a span of

time consistent with the infant's eating habits; for example, the food items for lunch might be served at two feedings between noon and 2 p.m. Solid food should be introduced gradually to infants when developmentally ready and instructed by the parent.

Items on the following meal chart with a "•" indicate the items are required and must be provided to the infant in order to claim reimbursement for that meal. Items listed under "When developmentally ready" are required only when the infant is developmentally ready to accept them.

	Birth through 3 months	4 through 7 months	8 through 11 months
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 – 6 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 – 8 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} <p>When developmentally ready: 0-3 T infant cereal¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 – 8 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} and • 1 – 4 T fruit or vegetable or both and • 2 – 4 T infant cereal¹
Lunch / Supper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 – 6 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 – 8 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} <p>When developmentally ready: 0-3 T infant cereal¹ and 0-3 T fruit or vegetable or both</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 – 8 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} and • 1 – 4 T fruit or vegetable or both and • 2 – 4 T infant cereal¹ <p>or in place of infant cereal you may serve a meat/meat alternate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 1 – 4 T meat, fish, poultry, egg yolk, cooked dry beans or peas; - or 1/2 – 2 oz cheese; or 1 – 4 oz (volume) cottage cheese; - or 1 – 4 oz (weight) cheese food, cheese spread <p>or you may also serve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o both the infant cereal and meat/meat alternate
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 – 6 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 – 6 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-4 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} or fruit juice⁴ <p>When developmentally ready: 0 – 1/2 slice crusty bread⁵ or 0 – 2 crackers⁵</p>

1 Infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified

2 Breast milk or formula, or portions of both, may be served; however, it is recommended breast milk be served in place of formula from birth through 11 months

3 For some breastfed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breast milk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breast milk may be offered with additional breast milk offered if the infant is still hungry

4 Fruit juice must be full-strength

5 A serving of this component must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour

Healthy Bites self-assessment

Please answer the following questions based on your child care program's practices in the last month. Remember that it is important to honestly assess your child care program to best identify its strengths and areas that need improvement. This will allow you to set goals to improve your nutrition environment, policies, and practices. When answering the questions, please keep in mind what your center does the majority of the time, as your practices may fall into more than one category. If applicable, be sure to involve any key staff members that may help in answering questions accurately. If you do not have staff, please reflect on your own behavior as the owner of a family child care home when responding to the questions in the "Staff" section of this assessment.

Section I: Nutrition for Children Ages 1-12

Fruits and Vegetables				
Fruit (not juice) and vegetables (not including French fries, hash browns or tater tots) are offered at <i>snack</i>:	1 time per week or less	2 times per week	3-4 times per week	5 or more times per week
Fruit (not juice) is offered at <i>breakfast</i>:	1 time per week or less	2 times per week	3-4 times per week	5 or more times per week
Different varieties of fruits and vegetables (e.g., dark green, orange, red, and legumes) are offered:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Fried or pre-fried potatoes (including French Fries, hash browns, and tater tots) are offered:	3 or more times per week	2 times per week	1 time per week	Less than once a week or never
Grains and Breads				
Whole grain foods are offered:	1 time per week or less	2-4 times per week	1 time per day	2 or more times per day
Low sugar cereals (sugar not listed as the first, second or third ingredient) are offered:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Sweetened grains/baked goods (e.g., cookies, cakes, muffins, donuts, Danishes) are offered:	1 or more times per day	3-4 times per week	1-2 times per week	Less than once a week or never

Meat & Meat Alternate				
Processed and high-fat meats (bacon, bologna, hot dogs, sausage, pepperoni, ground beef - 75%-85% lean) are offered:	3 or more times per week	2 times per week	1 time per week	Less than once a week or never
Fried or pre-fried meats (chicken nuggets, chicken patties, corn dogs, fish sticks) are offered:	3 or more times per week	2 times per week	1 time per week	Less than once a week or never
Seafood (not processed fish sticks) is offered:	Less than once a month or never	1-2 times per month	3 times per month	1-2 times per week
Vegetarian meals are offered:	Less than once a month or never	1-2 times per month	3 times per month	1 time per week
Beverages				
Drinking water is:	Not visible	Visible, but only available during designated water breaks	Easily visible and available on request	Easily visible and available for self-serve
100% juice is offered at <i>breakfast</i> :	3 or more times per week	2 times per week	1 time per week	Less than once a week or never
100% juice is offered at <i>snack</i> :	3 or more times per week	2 times per week	1 time per week	Less than once a week or never
Milk served to children over age 2 is:	No milk	Whole milk	2% reduced fat	1% (low-fat) or skim (non-fat)

Section II: Nutrition for Infants

Infant Feeding and Feeding Practices				
Sweets (cookies, muffins, puddings) or sugar foods (including baby food desserts) are given:	3 or more times per week	2 times per week	1 time per week	Less than once a week or never
Fried or pre-fried (frozen and breaded) vegetables and meats and high fat meats (sausage, bacon, hot dogs, bologna, salami) are offered:	3 or more times per week	2 times per week	1 time per week	Less than once a week or never
100% fruit juice is served to infants less than 12 months:	All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely or never
The texture of foods progresses (pureed to ground to finely mashed to finely chopped) as an infant develops:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Child care providers determine the best time to introduce solid foods by working with parents and:	Based on age alone	Based on age with some developmental readiness	Based on age, but mostly developmental readiness	Based on age and developmental readiness
Breastfeeding Support				
Training opportunities are available for staff on supporting breastfeeding:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
A designated area is provided for mothers to breastfeed their infants:	Not available	Sometimes available	Available, but not always private and quiet	A private and quiet area is always available

Section III: Nutrition Environment and Policy

Menu Planning (cycle menus, special dietary needs and locally grown foods)				
Cycle menus are used:	Rarely or never	1-3- week cycles	4-week cycles without seasonal change	4-week cycles with seasonal change
Menus include a combination of both new & familiar foods:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Copies of menus are provided to parents:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Children are provided with opportunities to taste test new foods:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Menus are flexible to include foods for special dietary needs:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Menus include locally grown fruits and vegetables (farmers' markets, garden, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), etc):	Rarely or never	Some of the time, but only in the summer	Some of the time, both during summer and winter	Most of the time
Mealtime Environment, Role Modeling and Staff and Work Place Wellness				
Mealtime routines, such as washing hands, assisting with setting and cleaning up plates and utensils happen:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Meals are served family style (children serve themselves from shared plates/bowls):	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
The following ages of children participate in family style meals:	4 years and older	3 years and older	2 years and older	1 year and older
Mealtime routines are the same for all children, even if some eat different foods or have other needs due to special diets or disabilities:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time or not applicable for this program
Staff join children at the table for meals:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Staff drink or eat less healthy foods (especially soda and fast food) in front of the children:	All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Rarely or never
Resources and support for staff wellness are offered and promoted:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time

Nutrition Education for Staff, Children and Parents				
Nutrition education in addition to food safety and food program guidelines are provided for staff:	Rarely or never	Less than 1 time per year	1 time per year	2 times per year or more
<i>Formal</i> nutrition education is provided for children (e.g., using a nutrition curriculum):	Rarely or never	1 time per month	2-3 times per month	1 time per week or more
<i>Informal</i> nutrition education is provided for children (e.g., staff talking informally about nutrition):	Rarely or never	1 time per month	2-3 times per month	1 time per week or more
Nutrition education is offered to parents (workshops, activities and take home materials):	Rarely or never	Less than 1 time per year	1 time per year	2 times per year or more
An on-site or off-site garden is available and children participate in gardening activities:	No, a garden is not available	No, a garden is available but children do not participate	Yes, a garden is available and children sometimes participate	Yes, a garden is available and children are actively involved
Foods Brought From Home (offered outside of regular meals/snacks, celebrations and fundraising)				
Foods brought in from home:	Are allowed with no guidelines	Are allowed with loose guidelines with healthier options encouraged	Are allowed with written guidelines for healthier options that are not always enforced	Are not allowed or are allowed with written guidelines for healthier options that are always enforced
Holidays and special events are celebrated with healthy foods or non-food items:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Fundraising consists of selling only non-food items or healthy foods and beverages:	Rarely or never	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time
Nutrition Program Policy				
A written program policy on nutrition and food that covers at least one of the above topics:	Does not exist	Exists informally, but is not written or followed	Is written, but not always followed	Is written, available and followed

Each question has four possible answers representing a continuum of practice from minimal practice on the far left through best practice on the far right. After the self-assessment is complete, identify questions that scored low (the ones you answered in one of the two left columns), choose those you want to improve and prioritize for your Quality Improvement Plan.

Healthy Bites quality improvement plan

Directions: Using the results of the self-assessment, prioritize the areas that need improvement. Not all areas need to be addressed immediately. It is recommended that your program chooses two to three aim/desired outcomes. Once your aims have been selected, complete the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) on the next page. Include written program policies to support and sustain improvements you want to make. Refer to page 7 for a sample QIP and page 9 for information on writing program policies.

Quality Improvement Plan Definitions:

Quality Improvement Area: What area(s) does your program want to address?
Examples: Fruits/Vegetables, Grain/Bread, Celebrations, Gardening, etc.

Aim/Desired Outcome: What are you intending to change?
What do you hope to achieve with your plan?

Potential Barriers: Who or what may prevent you from achieving your aim/desired outcome?

Tasks: What steps will you take to achieve your aim/desired outcome?

Responsible Party(ies): Person(s) assigned to the tasks?

Resources On-hand/Resources Needed: What resources (people, time, materials, and know-how) do you currently have and need to help you achieve your aim/desired outcome?

Measurement – How will the team know if the aim is achieved?
How will you measure your progress toward your goal?

Timeline: When will the task(s) be completed? (Day/Month)

Benchmarks: Steps along the way that will let a program know it is on track toward achieving its desired outcome.

Test of Plan:

- **Is this plan worth doing?**
Yes means you believe achieving your aim/desired outcome will have positive results for children, families, staff or your business.
- **Is this plan concrete, specific and measurable?**
Yes means that when you look back at the aim, you will be able to show clear results through your measurement.
- **Will the result of this plan improve outcomes for children, families, staff or your program?**
Yes means there is a high likelihood that changes will be positive.
- **Are the outcomes inclusive of all children, culturally competent and developmentally appropriate?**
Yes means these positive changes are good for ALL children and families, including those with disabilities and other special needs. Individualizing learning experiences and environments accommodate optimal development for all children in care; for families with a variety of points of view, life experiences, and cultural and language differences; and make sense for each age and stage of child development.

Dates:

Record the original date the QIP was completed and the date(s) it was reviewed for ongoing assessment.

Original QIP Date:

Date of QIP Review:

Quality Improvement Area	Aim/ Desired Outcome	Potential Barriers	Tasks	Responsible Party(ies)	Resources On-hand Resources Needed	Measurement	Timeline/ Benchmarks	Test of Plan
								Worth doing? Y or N Measurable? Y or N Improve Outcomes? Y or N Inclusive? Y or N Culturally Competent? Y or N
Sample program policy:								
								Worth doing? Y or N Measurable? Y or N Improve Outcomes? Y or N Inclusive? Y or N Culturally Competent? Y or N
Sample program policy:								
								Worth doing? Y or N Measurable? Y or N Improve Outcomes? Y or N Inclusive? Y or N Culturally Competent? Y or N
Sample program policy:								

How to buy and prepare fruits & vegetables for taste-testing



Avocados: A ripe avocado will yield slightly to the touch. Avocados will ripen in a few days in a paper bag or on the counter. Do not refrigerate avocados. To prepare, wash and cut in half lengthwise going around the pit. Twist the two halves gently to separate. Wedge a knife in the pit and gently pull to remove it. Pull off the skin with your fingers and slice.



Brussels Sprouts: Look for firm, fresh, bright green sprouts with tight-fitting outer leaves free from black spots. Buy young, small sprouts (about 1 inch in diameter). Do not wash or trim sprouts before storing them. To prepare, trim stem ends without cutting the base of leaves or the sprouts will come apart during cooking. The easiest way to cook is in the microwave but they can also be steamed, sautéed or boiled.



Sweet potatoes / Yams: Choose sweet potatoes that are firm with no cracks or bruises. To keep them fresh, store them in a dry, cool place. Do not store in the refrigerator. If stored properly, sweet potatoes will keep for a month or longer. At room temperature, they should be used within a week of purchase. Sweet potatoes can be eaten raw, e.g., sweet potato sticks, but are usually cooked or baked. They can be prepared like regular potatoes.



Spinach: Look for fresh, green leaves that are not limp, damaged or spotted. Leaves should be dull green on top and bright green on the underside. Wash under clean, running water. Serve raw or cooked, e.g., steamed, boiled, microwaved, sautéed or stir-fried.



Kiwi: Kiwi is ripe when slightly soft to the touch and has a fragrant smell. Ripe kiwi can be stored in the refrigerator for up to seven days. If they need to be stored longer, put kiwis in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. To peel, cut off the top and bottom ends, and then peel down the sides with a vegetable peeler or knife.



Mangoes: Should smell sweet and be soft when pressed. Color is not a reliable indicator of ripeness. To prepare, hold them upright and cut down along one of the flat sides, curving your knife to avoid the large oval pit. Repeat on the other side. Score-cut chunks of fruit from the peel. Trim the rest of the fruit off the pit and peel.



Pomegranates: Choose fruit that is brightly colored, plump and heavy. A pomegranate should not be firm but not too soft either. The skin should not have any blemishes or cracks. To prepare, cut off the crown (top) of the pomegranate. Score the rind in several places, but do not cut all the way through. Soak in cold water, upside down for 5-10 minutes. Break apart the rind under water and remove seeds. Strain the seeds from the water. Store seeds in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to two days.



Beets: Fresh beets should be firm, round and smooth with no soft spots. To prepare, cut off the stem and root, wash and scrub thoroughly. The red stain from beets is permanent, so cover work surfaces with wax paper. Beets can be boiled, roasted or steamed. If you roast them unpeeled they can be eaten like a baked potato.



Jicama: Buy jicama with the root attached and when it is firm and skin is unblemished. Large jicama are usually not as flavorful as smaller ones. To prepare, peel the light brown skin with a vegetable peeler. Do not eat any of the skin or the flesh right under the skin; both are tough and inedible. Cut the jicama in half. With cut side down, cut thin sheets or sticks. Jicama can be eaten raw, or cooked, e.g., steam, roast, bake, broil, or mash.



Kohlrabi: Look for small bulbs of kohlrabi — about 3 inches in diameter or less — for a sweeter, more tender flavor. Larger kohlrabi bulbs tend to be woody. To prepare, cut off the leafy stalks and scrub kohlrabi bulbs clean. Wash and peel before slicing. Kohlrabi can be cut into wedges and served raw, or cooked by steaming or boiling.



Asparagus: Look for smooth skin, bright green color, compact heads and freshly cut ends. Thickness in no way indicates a lack of tenderness. Poorly or long-stored thin asparagus can be tough and flavorless; fresh, fat spears can be remarkably sweet and tender. To prepare, trim off stem ends. Asparagus can be roasted, grilled, steamed, boiled or pan-roasted.



Eggplant: Select eggplants that are relatively heavy for their size, with skins that are smooth, taut, and shiny. Tan patches, scars, or bruises on the skin are signs of decay underneath. When you press an eggplant with your thumb, it should feel firm and bounce back. The fuzzy caps and stems should be green and free of decay and mold. Eggplant is usually not eaten raw; instead it is best when fully cooked; e.g., grill or roast.



Squash: Choose squash that are firm and fairly heavy for their size, otherwise they may be dry and cottony inside. Look for squash that have bright, glossy exteriors and do not buy when they have nicks or bruises on their skins or soft spots.

Summer squash varieties are immature squashes, usually small in size, with a soft skin, white flesh and crunchy texture. They are 100% edible, seeds and all. Zucchini is the most popular variety. Summer squashes have high water content so when you prepare them do not overcook or they will turn to mush. Overcooking is probably why so many kids hate squash!



Winter squash varieties are fully mature squashes, usually larger in size, with a hard outer shell and a long shelf life. They are always eaten cooked and are best prepared baked or roasted. Acorn, spaghetti and butternut squash are the most popular variety.

Nutrition education ideas for children

Here are some examples of nutrition curriculum for child care programs:

1. *More Than Mud Pies*

by National Food Service Management Institute

Fifty-four nutrition education lessons built around the seasons of the year.

<http://nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=247>

2. *Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables*

by USDA Team Nutrition

A garden-themed nutrition education kit for child care center staff that introduces children to: three fruits - peaches, strawberries, and cantaloupe, and three vegetables - spinach, sweet potatoes, and crookneck squash.

<http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/growit.html>

3. *Healthy Habits for Life Child Care Resource Kit*

by Sesame Workshop

Nutrition and physical activity hands-on resource kit to help you and your children find ways to get moving and make healthy food choices along with Sesame Street friends. Find tons of activities, games, poems and songs, dances, and ways to include learning about healthy choices into your everyday routines.

www.sesameworkshop.org/initiatives/health/healthyhabits

4. *Model Health! Promoting Nutrition and Physical Activity in Children*

by Maryland State Department of Education

A collection of supplementary lessons on nutrition and physical activity with an emphasis on role modeling. Intended as a teacher resource in the early childhood classroom, the Kit is most appropriate for use with children ages 3 to 5.

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/Maryland/MODELHealth.pdf>

5. *Color Me Healthy*

by North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension

A program developed to reach children ages 4 and 5 with fun, interactive learning opportunities on physical activity and healthy eating. It is designed to stimulate all of the senses of young children: touch, smell, sight, sound, and, of course, taste.

Through the use of color, music, and exploration of the senses, Color Me Healthy teaches children that healthy food and physical activity are fun.

www.colormehealthy.com

6. *The Power of Choice: Helping Youth Make Healthy Eating and Fitness Decisions*

by USDA Team Nutrition

Intended for after-school program leaders working with young adolescents.

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/power_of_choice.html

Integrating Nutrition into Your Curriculum

Nutrition can be tied into all aspects of the curriculum. Active, hands-on lessons not only promote healthy habits, but they can also improve attention spans, engage children in learning and increase understanding of key concepts. Listed below are suggestions for fun and engaging activities promoting healthy behaviors and can be incorporated into any curriculum. This section was adapted from *First Years in the First State: Improving Nutrition & Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care*.

“A Salad for One, Please”: Assign each child to be a salad ingredient and have children stand in a circle to create the “salad bowl.” Tell children to jump into the middle of the bowl and follow directions when their vegetable is called (e.g., jumping carrots). When a few of the children are in the middle, ask the “bowl” to stir the salad before starting over.

Show and Tell Salad: Ask children to bring in a favorite fruit to share at group time. Have children tell the class about the fruit they brought and why they like it. Then, cut up the various fruits and make a delicious fruit salad.

“Old MacDonald Had a Farm”: Sing the song *Old MacDonald* but replace each animal with a fruit or vegetable and each animal sound with “yum.” Each child can take a turn using his/her favorite fruit or vegetable.

Five Senses: Have children close their eyes and guess mystery fruits or vegetables. Ask the children to describe the mystery fruit or vegetable using their other four senses: “It smells like...it tastes like...it sounds like (when biting)...it feels like...”

Chef of the Day: Have children help with meal/snack prep. Each day, allow a different child to help a staff member (if applicable) prepare a meal or snack. She/he can be a “special helper” and wear an apron and chef’s hat. The “helper” should also explain to the other children what was prepared, why it is tasty and what makes it good for them.

Stone Soup: Read the story *Stone Soup* as a class. The next day, have each child bring in a bag of his/her favorite vegetable that can be used to make a big pot of soup for the class.

Serving Sizes: Demonstrate serving sizes to children using measuring cups, and teach them how to serve themselves. Then talk about how to identify hunger and fullness cues. At lunch and snack time, children can use their understanding of serving sizes and hunger and fullness cues to decide if they would like more or less food.

Sorting Foods: Use either plastic models or real fruits and vegetables for children to sort by size, length and color. As a group, have children count the number of objects in different categories and compare the weights of foods.

Apples: Start the lesson by asking children to help you wash red, green and yellow apples. Slice the apples and have each child taste one slice of every color. Then, ask the class which they preferred and graph everyone’s preferences on a large poster (e.g., as a pie chart). Talk with the children about the graph. Ask the class for their favorite. How do they know?

Water Station: Provide a water station where children can practice pouring water into containers of various sizes. As a class, talk about the importance of drinking water to quench thirst during the day instead of sugary drinks, such as soda and sports drinks. Help them sense if their bodies are thirsty.

Funny Fruit Faces: Use an assortment of fruits of different shapes and colors to design paper plate fruit faces. As a group, identify the shape and color of all fruits used.

Creative Learning: Encourage children to express their idea about healthy eating and physical activity through paint, clay, sculpture, collages, plays, songs or stories.

Pick Fruits and Vegetables: Visit an orchard or farm and allow children to pick fruits and vegetables. Take the fruits/veggies back to the center or home and show children how nutritious meals/snacks can be made from the foods picked.

Take a Tour: Tour a dairy farm, supermarket, farmers’ market or factory that produces healthy foods. Provide hands-on activities at these locations, such as a scavenger hunt or milking a cow.

Let children help with menu planning by giving them choices. For example, “You can have two of the following: peas, carrots, applesauce or pears.” Allow children to choose individually or vote. Encourage discussion about why certain options were chosen and why it is important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Get Creative: Provide coloring books, stickers, activity books and activity pages that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Healthy celebration ideas

Unhealthy foods such as cake, cookies or candy do not have to be served to make an event a celebration. Below are ideas for activities to make a day special.

Celebration Activities

- For general celebrations, create a sign-up sheet that includes only approved and healthy foods. Parents can sign up for specific items
- Ask families to purchase a book in the birthday child's name. It can be read to the children, or invite the parents to read it on their child's birthday
- Create a special birthday package (e.g., the birthday child wears a sash, pin or crown, sits in a special chair and gets a special birthday surprise, such as a pencil, sticker or card)
- Let the birthday child be an assistant for the day to help with special tasks, e.g., leading the line, starting an activity or choosing a game or story
- Plan one party each month to celebrate all the birthdays in that month instead of hosting a separate celebration for each child
- Encourage parents to visit the program to help celebrate their child's birthday

Non-Food Celebration Items

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Stickers | Glow-in-the-dark items |
| Little toys | Slap bracelets |
| Stamps | Whistles |
| Army men | Party hats |
| Plastic rings | Silly bands |
| Decorative pencils | Fake tattoos |
| Erasers | Bubbles |
| Holiday theme items | Chalk |
| Crayons | |

Healthy Foods for Celebrations

- Low-fat cheese cubes or hummus with whole grain crackers
- Parfait with low-fat yogurt, fruit and granola served in a waffle cone or decorated cup
- Trail mix (whole-grain, low-sugar cereals mixed with dried fruit, pretzels, etc.)
- Seasonal beverages (e.g., warm cider in fall or a fruit smoothie in summer)
- Bananas dipped in yogurt, rolled in crushed cereal and frozen
- 100% fruit juice freezer pops
- Fruit pizzas using whole grain tortillas topped with low-fat whipped topping and fruit
- Fruit salad or apples with caramel dip

Here is a sample *Birthday Request Form* for parents who want to do something special for their child's birthday. Go to the following website for a downloadable copy: <http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/cacfpwellness.html>

Name of Program

Birthday Request

I would like to come and celebrate my child's birthday. Activities will be planned with the teacher. I understand that I may do so in one of the following ways: (please check all that apply).

Purchase a book for the program

Come and participate in an activity or a meal

Bring food(s) from program list

Bring in non-food items for all children (see list) _____

Today's date: _____

Child's Name: _____

Child's Room: _____

Date of event: _____

Time of event: _____

Please submit at least 2 days in advance.

Thank you!

Sample letter to parents with celebration ideas

Dear Parent/Guardian:

At (*enter center name here*) we feel we have a responsibility to help your child establish lifelong habits of healthy eating patterns and regular physical activity.

By establishing healthy habits early in life, children can dramatically reduce their health risks and increase their chances for longer, healthier lives. You love your child and you want the best for them, so please join us in creating opportunities for them to make healthy choices.

The goal is not to cut out all treats, but to make sure treats are eaten in moderation and do not become the primary focus of parties or celebrations. The focus should be on fun, not food. The list below provides healthy suggestions for celebrations.

Healthier Options

- 100% juice instead of punch
- Low-fat cheese cubes or hummus with whole grain crackers
- Parfait with low-fat yogurt, fruit and granola. They could be served in a waffle cone
- Trail mix (whole-grain, low-sugar cereals mixed with dried fruit, pretzels, etc.)
- Seasonal beverages (e.g., warm cider in fall or a fruit smoothie in summer)
- Bananas dipped in yogurt, rolled in crushed cereal and frozen
- 100% fruit juice freezer pops
- Fruit pizzas using whole grain tortillas topped with low-fat whipped topping and fruit
- Fruit salad or apples with caramel dip

We encourage parents to use the above list as a guide in providing healthy snacks. You may also choose to bring in non-food items to give to each child on your child's birthday. Below is a list of ideas:

Stickers	Glow-in-the-dark items
Little toys	Slap bracelets
Stamps	Whistles
Army men	Party hats
Plastic rings	Silly bands
Decorative pencils	Fake tattoos
Erasers	Bubbles
Holiday theme items	Chalk
Crayons	

You may purchase a book for the program in your child's name. It could be read to the children on your child's birthday. You also may join your child for an activity or a meal.

Please complete the *Birthday Request Form* and return it at least two days before the event. Thank you for helping to provide healthier options for your children.

Sincerely,

(Name)

Nutrition & physical activity program policy

Our center _____
(insert name of your center)

has adopted the following nutrition and physical activity program policies in an effort to provide the best possible environment for children in our facility. The administration and staff appreciate support from parents in promoting the children's health.

Nutrition Policy(ies):

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Physical Activity Policy(ies):

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Parent communication

Keep parents informed about positive nutrition-related changes being made in your program and encourage them to support the changes by becoming involved with activities and decision-making. Also encourage parents to make similar changes at home so children receive positive health messages from more than one source.

1. Reach out to parents
 - a. Add nutrition information to newsletters or feature on bulletin boards to help families incorporate health and wellness into their daily lives (for ideas refer to Nibbles for Health www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/nibbles.html)
 - b. Use an email list or website to provide information about the program's policies
 - c. Send home a list of healthy snacks
 - d. Serve healthy foods at parent nights/open house nights
 - e. Invite parents to eat lunch with their child
2. Involve parents in party/activity planning. Have parents talk to children about specific interests or their profession. Examples include dancing, sports or nutrition
3. Discuss healthy menu options with parents to help support a healthier environment and to get them to incorporate healthier choices at home. Maintain open communication when parents have suggestions about improving menus
4. Encourage parents to take part in activities with their children at home. Examples include gardening, cooking a family meal, menu planning, grocery shopping, family fitness night
5. Talk to parents about modeling healthy eating habits:
 - Be enthusiastic about eating a variety of foods
 - Introduce new foods several times and in different ways
 - Have a variety of nutritious foods readily available for snacks instead of high-calorie, low-nutrient foods
 - Allow the child to refuse a food item
 - Model healthy eating behaviors: "Talk the Talk" and "Walk the Walk"
 - Practice family-style dining at mealtimes
 - Drink more water
 - Avoid using dessert as a reward or punishment
 - Eat when hungry, and stop eating when full

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