

Lunch and Break Guidelines

Head Start/Early Head Start/ECEAP staff, including substitutes, who work more than 5 hours per day must take an unpaid meal period of at least 30 minutes. This meal break must commence no less than two hours, nor more than 5 hours from the beginning of the shift.

This means that if a staff member or substitute who is scheduled for exactly five hours cannot be asked to stay an extra amount of time unless they immediately take a meal break and come back after the 30 minute break to finish.

For example, if an employee is scheduled to work from 8:00 a.m. –1:00 p.m., they would not be required to take a meal break. If they are asked to stay another 15 minutes they would be required to take a 30 minute unpaid meal break then they could come back and work the 15 minutes.

If an employee works 4 hours they are allowed a 15 minute break. If they are scheduled to work 8 hours they would be allowed a 15 minute break during the second 4 hour period.