

## Birth-5 Nutrition and Feeding Procedure

### Regulations

EHS/HS: 1302.44, 1302

ECEAP: ENV-15 ENV-16

WAC: 110-300-0275 110-300-0196

### Purpose

Eating healthy foods helps children get the nutrients their bodies need to stay healthy, active, and strong.

### Guidance

The early years are a critical time for children's growth and development. The early care and education setting may be offering most of a child's nutrition intake.

Food is more than just something to eat -it has the power to comfort, revive and heal. Foods selected:

- Maintain healthy bodies
- Broaden tastes
- Encourage variety
- Develop skills
- Share cultural and ethnic diversity
- Promote good oral health
- Support individual development, medical, cultural, religious, and family preferences

Food preparation must be completed at the site or by the contracted meal provider. Foods (except for formula and breast milk) may not be brought from home by either families or staff due to the potential for contamination through improper handling, storage, and preparation of food items.

Meals, breakfast/snack foods, and beverages provided to children in the Early Learning Program comply with the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) standards, or the USDA National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program standards and are the primary source of payment for meal services.

- In part day preschool programs, children are offered breakfast/lunch (a.m. classes) and lunch/snack (p.m. classes), providing at least 1/3 of their daily nutritional needs.
- An additional snack is provided as needed for children who are hungry.
- In full day programs, children in care for 6 hours or more receive the equivalent of 2/3 of their daily nutritional needs through breakfast, lunch, and/or snacks offered every 2—2½ hours.
- Socializations (Play and Learn groups) provide meals/snacks to children and parents/guardians.

Accommodations are made for children with medically based diets or other dietary requirements. See *Nutrition Substitution Procedure*. A Nutrition Consultant is available to assist parents/guardians who have concerns regarding their child's nutrition. See *Nutrition Referral Procedure*.

## Procedure

### Foods Selected

Foods selected follow the USDA CACFP infant and child meal patterns.

Foods purchased with program funds for use in the Early Learning Program meet the following Early Head Start/Head Start/ECEAP/criteria:

- High in Nutrients
- Low in fat
- Low in sugar
- Low in salt

### Infant and Toddler Nutrition and Feeding

Infants and toddlers are fed when hungry according to their nutritional and developmental needs unless medically directed (documentation required from primary health care provider).

#### Nutrition

- [CACFP Infant Meal Pattern](#)
- Serve only breast milk or infant formula to an infant, unless the child's health care provider offers a written order stating otherwise.
- Whole milk is offered only after one year of age and through the child's 24th month.
- 1% milk is offered after 24 months through the child's 36th month.
- Approved milk substitute (request for Fluid Milk Substitution or Request for Special Dietary Accommodations must be on file) [CACFP Approved Non-Dairy Milk Substitutes](#)
- No fluid other than breast milk or formula will be offered to infants under 6 months unless there is written direction from both parent and health care provider.
- For infants over 6 months, parent/guardian and caregiver develop a feeding plan that considers the guidelines for appropriate feeding in relation to the child's developmental stage.
- Until 12 months, when a baby can eat a variety, no new food will be offered in care until it's been tried at home.
- EHS Caregivers track child's intake of foods including types, when eaten, and amounts on the *EHS Daily Activity Record and the CACFP Daily Infant Meal Record*.

#### Feeding

- Infants, and when developmentally appropriate toddlers, are always held for bottle feedings to prevent choking and to promote attachment.
- Stop feeding the infant or toddler when he or she shows signs of fullness.
- Not allow infants or toddlers to be propped with bottles or given a bottle or cup when lying down.

- Appropriate utensils and cups are introduced when infants are offered solids no earlier than 6 months of age.
- Appropriate strained, mashed, and soft table foods are introduced (when tried at home first) around 8 months of age if developmentally appropriate for the infant.
- Classrooms/centers/play and learn groups follow *Serving Family Style Meal Procedures*.

## **Child Meal Pattern Ages 1-5**

### **Nutrition**

- [CACFP Child Meal Pattern Ages 1-5](#)
- Unflavored whole milk is offered only after one year of age and through the child's 24th month.
- Unflavored low fat (1%) milk or fat-free (skim) milk is offered after 24 months and older.
- Approved milk substitute (request for Fluid Milk Substitution or Request for Special Dietary Accommodations must be on file) [CACFP Approved Non-Dairy Milk Substitutes](#)
- Menus are posted and individual child substitutions noted.

### **Feeding**

- Classrooms/centers/play and learn groups follow *Serving Family Style Meal Procedures*.

### **Drinking Water**

Must be available to children throughout the program day. See *Drinking Water Procedure*.