



Rationale:

One of the core responsibilities of every early care and education center is to provide nourishing food daily that is clean, safe, and developmentally appropriate for children. Current research shows that children need a variety of nutrient-dense foods that include protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals, with an amount of calories that prevents hunger, fosters healthy growth, supports learning, and prevents obesity. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) regulations on meal requirements provide the basic guidelines for sound nutrition practices and ensure that the nutritional needs of infants and children are met based on current scientific knowledge.

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References:

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- Arizona Department of Health Services. Empower Guidebook: Ten Ways to Empower Children to Live Healthy Lives, 2nd Edition. <http://azdhs.gov/empower-program/documents/resources-policies/empower-guidebook.pdf>
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Child Nutrition Policy

{Name of Early Care and Education Center} is committed to implementing the following policies regarding child nutrition:

- ★ All meals and snacks will meet the requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- ★ Children in care for 8 or fewer hours in one day should be offered at least one meal and two snacks or two meals and one snack.
- ★ Children in care more than 8 hours in one day should be offered at least two meals and two snacks or three snacks and one meal.
- ★ Children will be allowed time to eat their food and not be rushed during meals.
- ★ Food is not offered as a reward or denied as punishment.
- ★ Special occasions and holidays will be celebrated with activities, non-food items, and foods that meet healthy requirements.

Foods

- ★ High-fat products (containing >35% of calories from fat), high-sugar products (containing >35% of calories from sugar), and salty foods are avoided.
- ★ Whole-grain breads, pastas, and grains are served when available.
- ★ Developmentally-appropriate servings of protein such as lean meat, skinless poultry, fish, cooked beans or peas, nut butters, eggs, yogurt, or cheese are recommended.
- ★ Staff members will encourage children to try developmentally-appropriate servings of a wide-variety of fruits and vegetables, with no added fat.

Beverages

- ★ Drinking water is available throughout the day indoors and outdoors.
- ★ Children younger than 12 months do not receive cow's milk unless the child's health care professional gives a written exception and direction to do so.
- ★ Children between 12 and 24 months of age are provided whole milk or reduced fat (2%) milk, unless they are consuming breast milk or a prescribed formula.
- ★ Children 2 years and older are served nonfat (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.
- ★ Children younger than 12 months do not receive juice.
- ★ Children between 1 and 6 years of age receive no more than a total of 4 to 6 ounces of 100% juice per day, including juice given at home.

Nutrition Education

- ★ Teachers incorporate planned nutrition education into their classroom routines at least once per week.
- ★ Staff receives professional development on child nutrition at least twice per year.
- ★ Families are offered education on child nutrition two or more times per year.

