

# Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Development in Child Care Programs Participant Guide

## Components of a Healthy Child Care Environment



## Links/Resources

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Color Me Healthy                               | <a href="http://www.colormehealthy.com/">http://www.colormehealthy.com/</a>   |
| Sesame Street: Healthy Habits for Life         | <a href="https://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/healthyhabits">https://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/healthyhabits</a>                           |
| Model Health!                                  | <a href="https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/hsmrs/Maryland/MODELHealth.pdf">https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/hsmrs/Maryland/MODELHealth.pdf</a> |
| USDA Team Nutrition: Grow It, Try It, Like It! | <a href="https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it">https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it</a>   |
| Potter the Otter: A Tale about Water           | <a href="https://www.pottertheotter.com/">https://www.pottertheotter.com/</a>   |
| Growing Minds: ASAP's Farm to School Program   | <a href="https://growing-minds.org/lesson-plans-landing-page/">https://growing-minds.org/lesson-plans-landing-page/</a>                         |
| CDC Milestones                                 | <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html">https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html</a>               |
| Be Active Kids                                 | <a href="http://www.beactivekids.org/resources/handouts">http://www.beactivekids.org/resources/handouts</a>                                     |
| Zero to Three – Power of Play                  | <a href="https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/311-the-power-of-play">https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/311-the-power-of-play</a>           |

## Supporting Healthy Eating for Young Children at Child Care

### *Food and Beverage Provisions*

| <b>Best Practice</b>   | <b>Why is this important?</b>  |
|--|--|
| Fruit that is fresh, frozen, or canned in its own juice is offered every time fruit is served.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit canned in syrup is high in added sugars, which adds empty calories to the fruit being served to children.</li> <li>• Fruit that is fresh, frozen or canned in juice or water supplies the most nutrients to children without all of the added sugar of fruit canned in syrup.</li> </ul>  |
| Children are offered dark green, orange, red, or deep yellow vegetables (not including white potatoes or corn) 1 time per day or more. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetables that are dark green, orange, red, or deep yellow are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber, more so than other vegetables.</li> <li>• They should be offered at least once a day, since these vegetables are such great sources of nutrients needed for children to build healthy bones, immune system, and eyesight, along with other systems.</li> </ul> |
| Vegetables are rarely or never prepared with meat fat, margarine, or butter.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding meat fat, margarine, or butter to vegetables adds unhealthy fats, especially saturated fat and cholesterol, to the dish without adding many other micronutrients. While okay once and a while, these should not be added to vegetables regularly.</li> </ul>   |
| Beverages are always offered in an open, child-sized cup to children ages 1 year and older who are developmentally ready.              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving beverages to children in an open, child-sized cup helps them to transition from using sippy cups to regular cups. This takes time and patience, so it's important to allow children time to practice drinking from an open cup as often as possible.</li> </ul>   |

### *Practices – Preschoolers*

| <b>Best Practice</b>   | <b>Why is this important?</b>   |
|--|---|
| Preschool children are allowed to choose and serve all foods themselves at meal and snack times. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This type of serving is called family style. Family style dining allows children to learn about serving themselves appropriate-sized portions, practice social skills at mealtimes (e.g. manners, taking turns), and develop fine motor skills as they serve themselves.</li> <li>• Family style dining can also help a child accept new foods, particularly fruits and vegetables, that they see their peers and child care teachers</li> </ul> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | eating and enjoying these new foods.   |
| Teachers always praise children for trying new or less preferred foods.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When children receive praise for trying new foods, they will likely have positive associations with eating those foods and be willing to eat them again. Offering praise to children can help them accept new foods more easily.</li> </ul>   |
| When children eat less than half of a meal or snack, teachers always ask them if they are full before removing their plates. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When either of these scenarios happen, it is important to help children figure out whether or not they are still full before either removing their plates or serving them seconds. Helping children listen to their internal hunger and fullness cues is important as children develop healthy eating habits during childhood.</li> </ul> |
| When children request seconds, teachers always ask them if they are still hungry before serving more food.                   |  |
| Teachers remind children to drink water at least 1 time during each indoor or outdoor play period.                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying hydrated, especially during active playtime, is important for young children. They may forget about this or not recognize that they are thirsty because they are distracted play, so it is important for teachers to remind children to drink water.</li> </ul>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Teachers rarely or never use food to calm upset children or encourage appropriate behavior.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using food to calm upset children or to encourage good behavior can promote the development of unhealthy eating behaviors, as children may learn to link being upset or acting a certain way with food. Children should learn to cope with their emotions or act appropriately without relying on food.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Teachers use an authoritative feeding style during every meal and snack time.</p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An authoritative feeding style strikes a balance between encouraging children to eat healthy foods and allowing children to make their own food choices. To encourage children to eat their vegetables, caregivers may reason with them and talk about the importance of eating vegetables, rather than using bribes or threats.</li> <li>Using an authoritative feeding style can help children decide for themselves that they want to eat healthy foods, which allows them to develop lasting healthy eating behaviors.</li> </ul> |

| <p><b>Practices – Infants and Toddlers</b></p>   |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Best Practice</b></p>  | <p><b>Why is this important?</b></p>  |
| <p>Teachers always feed infants on a flexible schedule, when they show they are hungry.</p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whenever possible and with permission from parents, teachers should only feed infants on a flexible schedule, where infants give physical signs that they are hungry instead of on a set schedule. This prevents overeating and promotes healthy eating behaviors and child growth.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Teachers decide to end infant feedings based on infants showing signs that they are full.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers should stop feeding infants when the infant shows signs that they are full, as this also prevents an infant from overeating and promotes healthy eating behaviors.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Teachers always use responsive feeding techniques when feeding infants.</p>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsive feeding techniques include making eye contact, talking, responding to infants’ reactions during feedings or their signs of hunger and fullness, not propping feeding bottles, and feeding only one infant at a time.</li> <li>Using responsive feeding techniques allows providers to feed infants enough so that they are not hungry anymore but not so much that they overeat.</li> </ul> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>During meal and snack times, teachers always praise and give hands-on help to guide toddlers as they learn to feed themselves.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not only do infants and toddlers need praise, but they also will need hands-on help as they develop the physical skills to feed themselves. Offering this help allows children to naturally transition to feeding themselves more easily.</li></ul> |
| <p>At meal times, teachers always praise and give hands- on help to guide older infants as they learn to feed themselves.</p>         |   |