

Tri-County Community Council, Inc.
Head Start

Nutrition Plan

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE 1304.23: To ensure that the nutritional needs of all Head Start children, including those with special dietary needs and/or disabilities, are met.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES: All Head Start children, families, and staff will have a better understanding of good nutrition and will establish eating habits that nurture healthy development and promote life-long well being.

APPROACH:

1. The height and weight of each child will be included in the required physical examination for enrollment. At least three times during the program year each child's height and weight will be measured. These measurements will be done in October, January, and April. The measurements will be done without shoes or excess clothing. Measurements will be sent to the Nutrition Coordinator who will calculate each child's BMI. Results and any necessary recommendations will then be discussed with the child's parent or guardian at the next home visit or parent teacher conference. The Nutrition Coordinator/RD will be available to counsel any parent/caregiver that has concerns regarding their child's weight. The Family Service Worker or Center Coordinator will enter the height and weight and BMI for each child into Galileo.
2. During the enrollment process, the family service worker will work with the parent to complete the menu survey and nutrition history for each child enrolled to determine likes and dislikes of food, as well as any food allergies or special dietary needs of the child. This information will be forwarded to the Nutrition Coordinator so any special needs can be accommodated.
3. Any specific community nutrition needs will be identified through the community assessment, Health Advisory Committee recommendations, and recommendations from health departments in the counties served by the Head Start program.
4. A variety of foods will be served which reflect the cultural and ethnic preferences of the children served by the program as well as allow opportunities for children to try new foods.
5. Head Start will contract with the USDA Child Care Food Program as the primary source of payment for meals. No more than 25% of the cost of the food program will come from Head Start funds.

6. The types and amounts of food served will conform to the USDA Child Care Food Program guidelines for meal patterns. Foods will be high in nutrients and low in fat, sugars, and salt. Meals will be served at the appropriate scheduled intervals per USDA guidelines.
7. Staff will promote effective dental hygiene in conjunction with meals. All children will brush their teeth at least once during the Head Start day. The time of tooth brushing will be determined by the daily classroom schedule with input from the Health Services Coordinator.
8. Parents, staff, and community representatives will have input into menu planning through the Child Nutrition History, two annual parent surveys, the Health Advisory Committee, and the Policy Council. The Nutrition Coordinator will review the recommendations of these groups and incorporate their recommendations when possible into menu planning.
9. Each child will be encouraged, but not forced, to taste food served. Food will never be used as reward or punishment in the Head Start program.
10. Ample time will be allowed for each child to complete their meal.
11. Nutritional Services will contribute to the development and socialization of each child through family style eating practices. All children and center staff will eat together and share the same menu. Children will serve themselves at least one food item and will learn to use utensils appropriately.
12. Medically based diets and special dietary needs of each child or adult will be accommodated after receipt of proper documentation from a physician or other medical professional. Parents of children who need these accommodations and adults who need these accommodations will be responsible for contacting the physician and obtaining written documentation of specific needs, including appropriate substitutions for any foods to be eliminated from a child's diet.
13. Children will be given the opportunity to participate in developmentally appropriate food activities.
14. Parents will have the opportunity to obtain nutrition training through referrals to other agencies, monthly newsletter articles, and parent meeting training opportunities. Specific requests for other topics not covered in these areas will be accommodated by contacting the Nutrition Coordinator.
15. Meals will be prepared using the USDA guidelines for safety and sanitation. Evidence of compliance with state food safety and sanitation regulations will be evident through routine inspections conducted at the centers. Reports of these inspections will be posted in the office of the center and copies will be sent to the Nutrition Coordinator.

16. Only licensed food vendors will be used to purchase food for the program. Copies of the vendor's licenses will be obtained as needed and can be located in the Head Start Administration office. All food served will be obtained from a licensed food vendor/retail store. No food will be served that has been prepared by a private citizen and donated to the program.
17. Menus will be developed by the Nutrition Coordinator/RD and approved by the USDA Child Care Food Program Consultant, the Health Advisory Committee, and the Policy Council.
18. All Head Start policies in regard to food, nutrition and wellness will be followed with no exceptions.

Tri-County Community Council, Inc. Head Start's Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, the Tri-County Community Council, Inc. Head Start Program is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Tri-County Community Council, Inc. Head Start Program that:

- The Head Start program will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing program-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

- All centers in our program will participate in available federal school meal programs (the Child and Adult Care Food Program).
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. Health Advisory Committee

The Head Start program will create, strengthen, or work within the existing Health Advisory Committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise the program's nutrition and physical activity policies. The Health Advisory Committee also will serve as resources to centers for implementing those policies.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Served at Centers

School Meals

Meals served through the Child and Adult Care Food Program will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;¹
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk² and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.^{3,3}

The Head Start program will engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and/or surveys, in selecting foods served through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, centers may share information about the nutritional content of meals

¹ To the extent possible, schools will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week.

² As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*.

³ A whole grain is one labeled as a "whole" grain product or with a whole grain listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include "whole" wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, and oatmeal.

with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus or the Tri-County Head Start website.

Breakfast. To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- Centers will serve breakfast according to the guidelines of the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Centers will notify parents of breakfast service times and reinforce the importance of the child arriving on time to participate.
- Schools will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children on non-school days through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Meal Times and Scheduling. Centers:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- will schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch will be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- will not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will schedule lunch periods to follow outdoor play periods;
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- will take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of Food Service Staff. Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the Head Start program's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for the Nutrition Coordinator. Staff development programs will include appropriate certification and/or training programs for the Nutrition Coordinator, cooks, center assistants and volunteers, according to their levels of responsibility.⁴

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Staff will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

⁴ School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

Foods and Beverages Served Outside of Reimbursable School Meals (i.e., foods served at parent meetings, employee trainings, etc.)

Beverages

- Allowed (children and adults): water or seltzer water⁵ without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices that contain 100% juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA); beverages indicated as healthy by presence of “Smart Spot” or similar notation on package.
- Allowed (adults only): iced tea, coffee, zero calorie flavored beverages (i.e., Crystal Light)

Foods

- A food item served outside of reimbursable meal service:
 - will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
 - will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;⁶
 - will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.
 - Foods indicated as healthy by presence of “Smart Spot” or similar notation on package will be allowable.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered at any location on the center site where foods are served. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).⁷

⁵ Surprisingly, seltzer water may not be sold during meal times in areas of the school where food is sold or eaten because it is considered a “Food of Minimal Nutritional Value” (Appendix B of 7 CFR Part 210).

⁶ If a food manufacturer fails to provide the *added* sugars content of a food item, use the percentage of weight from *total* sugars (in place of the percentage of weight from *added* sugars), and exempt fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods from this total sugars limit.

⁷ Schools that have vending machines are encouraged to include refrigerated snack vending machines, which can accommodate fruits, vegetables, yogurts, and other perishable items.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. A list of healthful snack items will be made available to teachers, center coordinators, and parents upon request.

- One afternoon snack will be served daily according to Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. An additional snack will be provided to children participating in VPK or extended care.

Rewards. Centers will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior,⁸ and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations. Centers should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each center is allowed to serve birthday cake made according to USDA recipes one time per month. Parents wishing to provide treats for their child's class must first obtain approval from the Center Coordinator and Nutrition Coordinator. Parents are encouraged to provide non-food treats only, but food treats may be approved only if they conform to the guidelines listed above. Upon request the Nutrition Coordinator will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Foods and beverages offered at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion

Last year Tri-County Community Council, Inc. piloted I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL) in two of our four centers. This year all four centers will be participating in IMIL, a comprehensive health promotion and obesity prevention enhancement for Head Start staff, children, their families, and their communities.

Three goals of IMIL include:

1. Promote healthy food choices every day
2. MVPA (Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity) every day.
3. Quality Structured Movement – improve quality of structured movement activities intentionally facilitated by adults.

Nutrition Education and Promotion. The Tri-County Community Council, Inc. Head Start program aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Centers should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each age level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide

⁸ Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).

students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;

- is part of classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, and language arts.
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents. The Head Start program/centers will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school may offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and/or provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Upon request the Nutrition Coordinator will provide parents a list of foods that meet the program's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and other activities

The Head Start program will provide information about physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a

website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Staff Wellness. The Tri-County Community Council, Inc. Head Start program highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The Head Start program will establish and maintain a staff wellness committee composed of at least one staff member from each center, Health Advisory Committee member, local hospital representative, and a dietitian or other health professional. (The staff wellness committee could be a subcommittee of the Health Advisory Committee.) The committee should develop, promote, and oversee multifaceted activities to promote staff health and wellness. This should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities

Daily Recess. All students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which centers should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Centers should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When situations such as bad weather make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, centers should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers and other center and community personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) as punishment.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The Nutrition Coordinator will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each center, the Center Coordinator will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the Nutrition Coordinator.

School food service staff, at the center level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Nutrition Coordinator.

Policy Review.

Assessments will be conducted every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the Head Start program will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The Head Start program will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.