

Nutrition Guidelines

As a commitment to your child's health, we follow the Maryland State Department of Education Nutrition Guidelines for Children selected below:

- The meals and snacks we serve to children meet the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements, which are available upon request. This ensures adequate calorie and nutrient content.
- To reduce the amount of unhealthy saturated fat in their diets, we serve only low-fat (1%) or nonfat milk to children over two years.
- We plan menus to include a variety of healthy foods including whole grain bread and cereals, fresh fruits and vegetables, and protein from both animal and vegetable sources (like beans and nuts).
- Our center is cautious about foods that may present a choking hazard. Foods such as grapes and meat are cut into small pieces when served to young children.
- We serve nutrient-rich foods and limit high-fat, high-sugar, and high-sodium foods (like chips, fried foods, and fruit punch).
- 100% fruit juice is served in child-size servings and no more than once a day. Children always have access to drinking water.
- Meals and snacks are offered at least every 2 to 3 hours to ensure small tummies do not get too hungry.
- We strive to make mealtime pleasant. Staff sit and eat with the children as often as possible, providing an opportunity for positive social interaction and role modeling.
- We serve family-style whenever possible to help children learn to serve themselves.
- We never force, trick, or coerce a child into eating. We provide; they decide. Our role is to provide nourishing food, while the child's role is to decide how much or even whether to eat.
- Our child care setting uses size-appropriate furniture, utensils, and dishes at mealtime. Children gain confidence in eating as they learn to eat successfully on their own.
- We serve foods that are baked, broiled, or sautéed in place of fried foods.
- Hands – both big and little ones – are always washed before meals and snacks.
- We share newsletters, healthy recipes, and other nutrition education materials with parents on a regular basis.

As we try to make meals and snacks as healthy as possible, we ask that you support these policies by leaving sweets at home, unless special arrangements have been made in advance.

Signature of Owner/ Director

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*Content Courtesy of Contra Costa Child Care Council.
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