



Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines for Childcare

Overview

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS), Bureau of Community Food and Nutrition Assistance established an interdisciplinary workgroup to create the Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines for Child Care (for children ages 2-12 years). The overarching dietary recommendations of the Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines challenge child care facilities to make nutrient-dense foods available and to embrace policies that support a healthy nutrition environment. The guidelines make nutrition recommendations at three levels: minimum, intermediate and advanced. The standard for each level increases in healthfulness as the levels progress. Recommendations are included for breakfast, lunch and dinner menus, and snacks. In addition, environmental factors that relate to nutrition and meal delivery are addressed. These factors identify best practices supporting consistent nutrition messages to children, parents and facility staff while supporting development of healthy nutrition habits. In support of these guidelines, the Model Policies for Creating a Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment in Child Care Settings was developed.

Eat Smart Guidelines Content and Structure

The guidelines make nutrition recommendations at three levels:

- Minimum
- Intermediate
- Advanced

The standard for each level increases in healthfulness as the levels progress. The guidelines address:

- Breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks
- The overall meal pattern which includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner
- The nutrition environment

Model Policies for Creating a Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment in Child Care Settings

- Based on North Carolina's Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAPSACC)
- Includes model policies and how to develop and implement them. Also includes parent handouts for healthy celebration foods, non food fundraising etc.

Target Audience

The guidelines were written for both center and family child care homes but outreach has only focused on centers so far. They are meant to be simple and realistic.

The Players

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MDHSS), Bureau of Community Food and Nutrition Assistance established an interdisciplinary workgroup to create the Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines for Child Care (for children ages 2-12 years). The workgroup included representatives from:

- The MDHSS
- University of Missouri Extension Service
- Missouri Head Start Collaboration Office
- A non-profit Child Care Center
- Child Care Health Consultation Program
- Section for Child Care Regulation
- Missouri Council on Activity and Nutrition

Funding

Funding for the guideline development came from the Department of Health and Senior Services Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Future

- Quality improvement funds will allow centers that implement guidelines to apply for mini grants for resources, equipment, nutrition education, consultation with a registered dietitian, etc.
- Applying for a USDA Team Nutrition Grant to expand the Eat Smart Guidelines concept
 - Proposing to pilot a program in 20 to 30 child care centers to train childcare staff, directors and cooks on nutrition. An RD will be provided for one on one work to help develop menus, provide training to staff and nutrition education for children and parents. .
 - Recognition campaign where centers apply to be an Eat Smart Childcare Center based on menu submission and onsite review. Those certified will receive a certificate and banner with the Eat Smart logo, a letter sent home to parents to explain the center's accomplishments, and will be showcased in newsletter articles and the local newspaper.
- If they don't receive the grant they will continue to do group staff training and distribute the Model Policies for Creating a Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment in Child Care Settings

Resources

For a copy of the Missouri Eat Smart Guidelines – Child Care (for ages 2-12) go to:

http://www.frac.org/pdf/mo_eat_smart_guidelines_child_care.pdf

For a copy of “Model Policies for Creating a Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity Environment in Child Care Settings” go to:

http://www.dhss.mo.gov/dnhs_pdfs/ChildCareModelPoliciesforFoodandNutritionEnvironment.pdf

For more information contact:

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