Nutrition Checklist
in Early Care and Education

From *Preventing Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs*
Selected Standards from *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards*

**National Resource Center
for Health and Safety in
Child Care and Early Education**

Do you see the following practices carried out?

✔
checklist

🍎 Infant Feeding

_____ Infants (babies less than 12 months of age) are fed only human milk or formula, never cow's milk.

_____ Infants are fed when hungry and are allowed to stop a feeding, when they show signs of fullness.

_____ Caregivers and teachers always hold infants for bottle-feeding of human milk or formula (the <u>same</u> formula that is used at home).

_____ Mothers are encouraged to breastfeed on-site, if possible, and breastfeeding families are welcomed.

_____ Infants are not fed solid foods in a bottle or infant feeder unless the feeding is written in the infant's care plan by the child's primary care provider.

_____ Infants are offered solid food no sooner than four months of age, and preferably around six months of age, as agreed upon with their families.

🍎 Specific Foods and Drinks

_____ Children (youngsters over 12 months of age) are served 100% full strength fruit juice in small amounts, 4-6 ounces; <u>none</u> is given to infants.

_____ Children are not served concentrated sweetened foods or drinks (e.g., candy, soft drinks, or fruit punch).

_____ Menus provide age-appropriate whole grains, vegetables, fruits, chicken, fish, and beans, and avoid salty and fried foods as well as trans and saturated fats.

_____ From the age of two, children are served skim or 1% pasteurized milk unless whole milk is written in the child's care plan by the child's primary care provider.

_____ Clean and sanitary drinking water is readily available throughout the day and children are encouraged to drink it.

🍎 Nutrition Plans and Policies

_____ Written menus and food guidelines are in place for the nutritional requirements of the children.

_____ Children are served age-appropriate portions that meet national requirements* for children in early care and education. *Child and Adult Care Food Program, US Department of Agriculture

_____ Toddlers and older infants are encouraged to feed themselves. Caregivers sit with them and supervise their use of child-sized cups, spoons, forks, and fingers.

🍎 Behavior and Socialization

_____ Mealtime is relaxed and enjoyable – a time when adults and children talk together and share conversation and learning opportunities with each other.

_____ Older children are involved in serving food as well as setting and cleaning tables.

_____ Children are not forced or bribed to eat (food is not used as a reward or a punishment) and eat only when seated.

Teaching opportunities for children 2 and over

Caregivers and teachers promote good nutrition by regularly including
nutrition topics in the curriculum such as:
Eating healthy foods,
What foods have vitamins and what they do for us,
How and where fruits and vegetables grow, and
What is a food pyramid?

Please see: http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/TwoBiteClub.pdf

How families can help caregivers and teachers promote good nutrition:

• Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle, even just water. It is a hard habit to unlearn and makes it more difficult for a caregiver who isn't giving your child a bottle in the crib.

• Serve nutritious foods at home; you can set an example and build good habits by eating healthy foods.

• Encourage young children to try new foods by being eager to taste and making mealtime fun. Plan meals and snacks, grocery shop, and cook with older kids.

• Ask your child's primary care provider if s/he would be willing to speak at a family meeting about the importance of healthy eating.

• To celebrate your child's special occasions, check with your child's caregiver or teacher about what is appropriate and appreciated - fresh whole fruit? Or non-food items like books, CDs, or a washable birthday cape and crown?

• Consider a slow cooker as a gift for a caregiver or teacher; it can reduce kitchen time for caregivers and teachers.

Additional Resources

Bright Futures in Practice: Nutrition
http://www.brightfutures.org/nutrition/pdf/index.html

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Care/default.htm

Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010
http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2010/DietaryGuidelines2010.pdf

Making Food Healthy and Safe for Children, 2nd Ed. *(note: this may take some time to load if you don't have broadband Internet service)*
http://nti.unc.edu/course_files/curriculum/nutrition/making_food_healthy_and_safe.pdf

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2010. Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education: Selected Standards from Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Edition.
http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/PDFVersion/preventing_obesity.pdf

Additional Organizations

The Child Care Nutrition Resource System:
http://www.nal.usda.gov/childcare/

The Food and Nutrition Information Center
http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/

Family Checklist for Nutrition in Early Care and Education is based on *Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs - Selected Standards from "Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards, 3rd Ed."* (*Caring for Our Children, 3rd Ed.* is to be published in 2011) American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.