



CHILD NUTRITION POLICY

We are committed to providing healthy foods and beverages to all children in our care. We do our best to promote positive meal and snack time experiences, to give children the tools they need to develop good eating habits and remain healthy and strong.

Dining Style and Environment

We follow a family-style dining model. This model is recommended in childcare settings because it encourages independence and social/emotional development in children. Family-style dining gives childcare providers opportunities to model healthy eating behaviors, while facilitating positive dialogue about food, table manners, cultural diversity, etc.

Key features of the family-style dining model:

- Children help set and clear the table(s)
- Child-sized tables, utensils and serving dishes are used
- Food is passed around the table in small bowls or containers to allow children to self-serve
- Milk is served in child-sized pitchers to help children learn to pour into their own cups
- The provider models healthy eating by sitting with children during meals and snacks. By observing the provider, children can learn to practice good table manners (scooping, passing, etc.)
- The provider practices “responsive feeding” principles by helping children learn to recognize cues from their own bodies when deciding if they are full or still hungry
** COVID19 Note: To remain in compliance with current social distancing guidelines, family-style dining has been temporarily suspended. We will revisit this style of dining when health and safety guidelines are updated to say it is safe to do so. Until then, children are safely distanced during meal and snack times, all food is served on disposable plates, and utensils and cups are cleaned and sanitized after each use**
- Television and other devices are turned off during mealtimes. The provider creates a pleasant dining experience by speaking positively about the foods being served.
- Children are not forced or bribed to eat foods they don’t want to eat. Children are not required to eat all of the food from their plates. Foods and beverages are never used as punishment or rewards.

Nutrition Education & Training

- The childcare provider participates in nutrition training at least once each year
- Children learn about healthy eating and nutrition through activities, games, books, toys and hands-on cooking experiences.

Menu Planning

We provide families with written menus, showing all foods that will be served each week. Sharing a weekly menu keeps families informed about which foods their child is eating during the day. Menu sharing facilitates communication between families and the provider, as they work together to address “picky eating” behaviors or food texture sensitivities/allergies in children.

Foods and Beverages

- A fruit or vegetable is served with every meal
- Milk is served with all meals and most snacks
- Juice is not served at daycare *
- At least 50% of the grains served to children are whole grains
- Water is visible and available to children throughout the day
- We limit the serving of fried or pre-fried foods to once per month
- We limit the serving of processed meats (hot dogs, deli meats, etc.) to once per month
- We are a peanut-free facility, and do not serve any foods or beverages that contain peanuts

* Note: 100% juice or 100% juice freeze pops may be brought in by parents for special celebrations and holidays *

Celebrations & Holidays

We love celebrations of all kinds, and we're committed to making them as healthy as they are fun! We focus on providing healthy snack options, and believe children can enjoy them just as much as cake, cupcakes, candy or cookies.

You are welcomed to bring in food to help your child celebrate his or her birthday at daycare. However, we ask that you do not bring cake, cupcakes, candy, cookies, or anything containing peanuts. Alternate ideas for healthy snacks include:

- Whole grain crackers
- Animal crackers
- Fig bars
- Bran muffins
- Zucchini or pumpkin bread or muffins
- Fruit salad (edible fruit arrangements are always fun!)
- Vegetable tray w/dip
- Low-fat yogurt
- Low-fat pudding cups
- 100% juice boxes or 100% fruit juice freezer pops

Non-food treat ideas include:

- Bubbles
- Stickers
- Scented pencils
- Sidewalk chalk
- Coloring books
- Books to read
- Stuffed animals
- Small toys
- Puzzles