

ABC Child Care Nutrition Guidelines

As a commitment to your child's health, **ABC CHILD CARE** follows 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 after two years of age.
- We plan menus to include a variety of healthy foods with emphasis on plenty of whole grain bread and cereals, fresh fruits and vegetables, and protein from both animal and vegetable sources (like beans and nuts).
- We do not serve foods that are common choking hazards for children (like grapes, hot dogs, and popcorn).
- We serve foods of high nutrient value 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 to children at least every 2-3 hours to ensure their small tummies do not get too hungry.
- Infants are **always** fed on demand. Infants are fed expressed breastmilk or an iron-fortified formula for the entire first year. When developmentally ready – and with parental approval – solids will be introduced.
- We strive to make mealtime pleasant. Staff sits and eats with the children as often as possible to provide 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. We acknowledge that 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 will gain confidence in eating as they learn to eat successfully on their own.
- Hands – both big and little ones – are always washed before all 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 nutritious as possible, we ask that you support these policies by leaving all sweets at home, unless special arrangements have been made in advance.

Signature of Owner/ Director
ABC Child Care

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MSDE and USDA are equal opportunity providers.