

# Self-Assessment for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies

This tool is intended to help child care programs assess their current nutrition and physical activity practices and identify areas in need of improvement, based on the policy recommendations of the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*. This document is the first of six self-assessment tools, available on the CSDE Web site at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=322596>.

**Step 1 — Assessment.** Check the appropriate box to indicate whether each policy recommendation is fully implemented, partially implemented or not implemented by the child care program. If a policy recommendation does not apply, check “NA” (not applicable). For example, the policy recommendations for infants do not apply to an afterschool program serving school-age children.

NUTRITION STANDARDS — CACFP Meals and Snacks	IMPLEMENTATION			
Menu Planning	Full	Partial	None	NA
▶ The child care program uses a cycle menu of at least four weeks that changes with the seasons and contains minimal repetition.				
▶ Menus are planned using good menu planning principles and include a variety of new and familiar healthy and appealing foods. Menus regularly include foods from different cultures.				
▶ Menus are planned and approved by a health professional with knowledge of nutrition and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) requirements.				
▶ The menu planning process includes input from families and staff members through menu surveys, discussions, meetings and other means.				
▶ Written menus are developed at least one month in advance and are posted and shared with families and staff members.				
Nutrition Guidelines for Children	Full	Partial	None	NA
▶ The child care program provides healthy and safe meals and snacks that meet the nutrition requirements established by federal and state laws and regulations. Agreements with food or vending companies ensure that contractors follow these requirements.				
▶ Menus offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with the CACFP Meal Pattern for Children, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards.* Meals and snacks emphasize nutrient-rich foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or nonfat dairy, lean meats, skinless poultry, fish, eggs, legumes, nuts and seeds.				
▶ Healthy food preparation techniques are used.				
Nutrition Guidelines for Infants	Full	Partial	None	NA
▶ The child care program creates an environment that encourages and supports mothers who are breastfeeding their infants, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refrigerated storage for breast milk;</li> <li>• a comfortable, private area for mothers to breastfeed their infants or express milk;</li> <li>• sensitivity for breastfeeding mothers and their infants; and</li> <li>• training for staff members on proper handling of breast milk.</li> </ul>				
▶ If a mother is breastfeeding exclusively, staff members will feed the mother’s expressed breast milk to the infant and support the mother in breastfeeding her infant when visiting the facility.				
▶ Breastfed infants will receive infant formula only if the mother requests it.				
▶ The child care program supports exclusive breastfeeding (preferred) or iron-fortified infant formula for the first six months of life.				
▶ The child care program supports families who are breastfeeding beyond 12 months.				
▶ The child care program works in consultation with families to gradually introduce solid foods from ages 4 to 6 months, based on each infant’s developmental readiness. All foods provided to infants will meet the CACFP requirements and the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards.* <i>Note: The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommends waiting until 6 months before serving any solid food.</i>				
▶ The child care program will not serve infants any food or drink in a bottle other than breast milk or iron-fortified infant formula unless medically necessary and documented by a medical statement.				
▶ Following the American Academy of Pediatrics’ recommendations, the child care program encourages children ages 1 and older to use a cup exclusively, instead of a bottle.				

\*The Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards are in appendix C of the CSDE’s *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=322562>.

# Self-Assessment for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies

NUTRITION STANDARDS — CACFP Meals and Snacks, continued	IMPLEMENTATION			
<i>Special Dietary Needs**</i>	Full	Partial	None	NA
▶ The child care program follows state and federal requirements for accommodating children with special dietary needs.				
▶ With appropriate medical documentation, the child care program prepares modified meals for children (including infants) with food allergies or other special dietary needs.				
▶ Parents must provide the appropriate medical statement before the child care program can make any dietary accommodations. This statement must be signed by a licensed physician if the child is considered disabled or by a recognized medical authority (i.e., physician, physician assistant, doctor of osteopathy or advanced practice registered nurse) if the child is not disabled but has medical or other special dietary needs.				
▶ The child care program takes appropriate precautions to prepare and serve safe meals and snacks for children with food allergies. Procedures are in place to:				
• develop a food allergy action plan for each child with life-threatening food allergies;				
• check ingredients labels for all foods served to children with food allergies;				
• designate an area in the kitchen for allergy-free meals and use separate equipment and utensils during preparation, cooking and serving;				
• develop cleaning procedures that avoid cross-contamination; and				
• provide ongoing training for staff members.				
NUTRITION STANDARDS — Other Foods and Beverages	IMPLEMENTATION			
<i>Parent-Provided Meals and Snacks</i>	Full	Partial	None	NA
▶ When meals and snacks are provided from home for an individual child’s consumption, families support safe and healthy eating by providing nutrient-rich choices that meet the CACFP Meal Pattern for Children and the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards.*				
• Foods provided by parents are healthy choices from the CACFP meal components of grains and breads, meat and meat alternates and vegetables and fruits. They are low in fat, added sugars and sodium.				
▶ Beverages provided for children (ages 1 and older) will consist only of:				
• whole milk for children younger than 2;				
• low-fat (1%) or fat-free unflavored milk for children ages 2 and older;				
• 100 percent juice when it can be served in a cup (limit of ¼ cup or 2 fluid ounces per day for ages 12 to 23 months and ½ cup or 4 fluid ounces per day for ages 2 and older); and				
• water without added ingredients, e.g., flavors, sugars, sweeteners (natural, artificial and nonnutritive), sugar alcohols and caffeine.				
▶ Beverages for infants (birth through 11 months) will consist only of:				
• breast milk (preferred) or iron-fortified infant formula; and				
• water without added ingredients for infants ages 7 months and older when it can be served in a cup.				
▶ Families will provide safe foods for children by clearly labeling all foods with the child’s name and date and type of food and storing all foods at an appropriate temperature until they are eaten.				
▶ Children are not allowed to share lunches and snacks brought from home with other children.				
▶ Foods that do not meet the child care program’s standards for nutrition and food safety will be returned home with the children. The child care program supplements children’s meals or snacks if food from home is deficient in meeting the child’s nutrient needs.				

\* The Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards are in appendix C of the CSDE’s *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=322562>.

\*\* For more information on the requirements for special dietary accommodations, see *Nutrition Policies and Guidance for the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Accommodating Special Dietary Needs* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322326>.

# Self-Assessment for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies

NUTRITION STANDARDS — Other Foods and Beverages, continued	IMPLEMENTATION			
<i>Celebrations</i>	Full	Partial	None	NA
▶ The child care program promotes nonfood celebrations. If foods and beverages are served at celebrations, they consist only of healthy choices that meet the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards.*				
▶ Families support the child care program’s efforts by providing only nonfood items or healthy foods that meet the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards for celebrations, holiday parties and other events on site.*				
▶ To protect food safety and guard against allergic reactions, all food provided by families to be shared with other children must be either whole fruits (e.g., apples, oranges or pears) or commercially prepared packaged foods that are unopened and, when possible, individually wrapped.				
▶ The child care program provides staff members and families with party ideas, including an approved list of appropriate healthy foods and beverages and nonfood activities for parties.				
▶ Foods and beverages that do not meet the child care program’s standards for nutrition and food safety are not accepted.				
<i>Functions, Events and Meetings</i>	Full	Partial	None	NA
▶ All foods and beverages served at any functions, events and meetings on site, whether provided by the child care program or brought from home by families, meet the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards.*				
<i>Fundraising</i>	Full	Partial	None	NA
▶ Fundraising activities do not involve food or beverages or only use foods and beverages that meet the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards.*				
▶ The child care program encourages fundraising activities that promote physical activity, as developmentally appropriate.				
▶ The child care program provides a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities, such as nonfood items or healthy foods and beverages.				
▶ Vending machines are not located on site. If vending machines are available, they sell only beverages and foods that meet the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards.*				
<i>Access to Drinking Water</i>	Full	Partial	None	NA
▶ Safe, fresh drinking water will be clearly visible and available to children at all times indoors and outdoors, including during meals and snacks.				
▶ Water will not be offered as a choice to replace the CACFP meal pattern components of milk or juice.				

\*The Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards are in appendix C of the CSDE’s *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=322562>.

**Step 2 — Prioritize Areas for Change.** Review the areas rated “none” or “partial” and identify the priority areas for change in your child care program. For implementation strategies and resources, see the CSDE’s *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=322562>.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457

*The State of Connecticut Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons and does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. Inquiries regarding the Department of Education’s nondiscrimination policies should be directed to the Equal Employment Opportunity Manager, State of Connecticut Department of Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457, 860-807-2101.*