

Ensuring the Safety of Food Served at Head Start

Policy: Safeguards will be implemented to reduce the risk of choking and foodborne illnesses.

Procedure:

- Foods known to be choking hazards will not be served to infants or toddlers. If these foods are served to preschool-age children, they will be cut properly and children will be closely supervised.
- Children will wash their hands before eating and must remain sitting while chewing.
- Staff will wash their hands before preparing any food and also before sitting with the children to eat. Disposable gloves will be used and thrown away after handling any ready-to-eat foods.
- Unless produce is labeled “ready-to-eat,” “washed,” or “triple-washed,” it should be washed under running water before cutting and serving. If there are any signs of damage to the product, the affected areas should be cut away or the item thrown out.
- Tops of canned items will be washed before opening.
- Utensils and all food preparation items and surfaces will be sanitized according to current USDA guidelines.
- Perishable foods will be stored properly. They will not be kept at room temperature more than 2 hours; anything left out longer must be thrown away.
- Thermometers will be used to ensure temperatures in refrigerators are 32° - 41° and freezer temperatures are 0° or colder.
- Milk served outside its original container must be discarded, not returned to the refrigerator.
- All opened foods in the refrigerator must be clearly labeled with the date they were first opened and kept only for the recommended storage time. Staff will regularly check dates of food and throw away anything that has expired.
- Unless a batter is baked in a microwave or convection oven or pre-cooked foods reheated, cooking of raw or partially cooked foods is not allowed. Any pre-cooked foods that served must be rapidly reheated to an internal temperature of at least 165° and served immediately.
- Unpasteurized products will not be served.
- No hot plates, crock pots, electric skillets, or griddles are allowed at a Head Start site.
- Food from sources outside the control of Arrowhead Head Start’s sites or contracted and licensed food service vendors is not allowed.

This policy complies with Head Start Performance Standard 45CFR Section 1304.23

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