

# Nutrition Education and Meal Planning for Center-Base Sites

## Policy

Nutritious meals and snacks will be provided at Head Start, helping children learn healthy eating habits.

## Procedure

- Arrowhead Head Start is a provider through the Minnesota Department of Education Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). All meals and snacks served in the classroom, at special events, and on field trips must conform to current meal patterns put forth by CACFP.
- Children in half-day classrooms receive meals and snacks that provide at least  $\frac{1}{3}$  of their daily nutritional requirements; while those in full-day classrooms receive meals and snacks that provide  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$  of their daily nutritional requirements.
- Staff intentionally plan to include a variety of foods that honor and celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity and preferences.
- Meal times are appropriately scheduled. Children are given sufficient time to eat.
- Food from sources outside the control of Arrowhead Head Start's sites or contracted and licensed food service vendors is not allowed.
- Children are involved in meal-related activities as much as possible.
- Food is not be used as a reward or punishment. Children are encouraged, but not forced, to try new foods.
- Meals and snacks are served family-style whenever possible. Guidelines to follow include:
  - The developmental level and needs of children will be considered when deciding which foods to pass.
  - An adult will sit at each table with children for the entire meal to model manners and ensure children are safe and their needs are being met.
  - Any food that an adult eats in the presence of children must be the same as what the children are being served.
  - Head Start will pay for the lunch of adults volunteering at the site for at least half the day. The meal will be the same as what is served to the class and shared family-style, not plated separately. Staff should order an "adult" lunch when calling in their count that day. If a volunteer wants a different or separate lunch from what is ordered, he or she must pay for it.
  - Lunches for adults such as PCAs and aides who are assigned to work with children will not be paid by Head Start, except when the site goes on a field trip where it is difficult to eat lunch away from the children.
  - Staff may choose, but are not required, to purchase their own lunch through the contracted vendor. Head Start does not pay for staff lunches, except on field trips as noted above. If staff do not purchase their own lunch, they are encouraged to participate in the meal by taking small amounts of each food after all children have been served. This modeling encourages children to sample foods new foods and reduces the amount of food waste that would otherwise be thrown in the garbage.

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

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