

Outside Foods at Head Start

Policy

All food offered to children at Head Start will be safe and nutritious.

Procedure

- During the enrollment process, staff will explain to parents that Head Start does not allow families to bring in food to the classroom. Only foods that the Head Start sites purchase or that are provided by a licensed food vendor is allowed in classrooms or at any Head Start event, including socializations, field trips, or parent meetings.
- Reasons for this policy and steps staff will take include:
 - **Ensuring Children are Kept Safe**
 - If a child at a site has an allergy, he or she may feel left out if the food brought in contains a potential allergen.
 - Residue or crumbs left by a food may trigger an allergic reaction.
 - Food bought at a store might not have been stored or refrigerated properly and could cause a food borne illness.
 - **Promoting Healthy Eating Habits**
 - Food served at Head Start must meet nutrition standards put forth by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Outside foods may prevent a child from eating a balanced diet during the class day.
 - Head Start sites will limit celebrations that involve food to no more than one time each month. All foods served at these special events must be provided by Head Start and meet CACFP nutrition standards.
 - Staff will teach children that special events can be celebrated in ways that do not involve food.
 - **Removing Families Feeling Pressure to Bring Items**
 - Head Start cannot require parents to provide anything to a site. If a parent brings in a treat, others may feel pressure to do the same.

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

Approved by Policy Council on March 14, 2016.