

SECTION .0900 - NUTRITION STANDARDS

10A NCAC 09 .0901 GENERAL NUTRITION REQUIREMENTS

(a) Meals and snacks served to children in a child care center shall comply with the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care Programs from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which are based on the recommended nutrient intake judged by the National Research Council to be adequate for maintaining good nutrition. The types of food, number and size of servings shall be appropriate for the ages and developmental levels of the children in care. The Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care Programs are incorporated by reference and include subsequent amendments. A copy of the Meal Patterns for Children in Child Care Programs is available online at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>.

(b) When food is prepared by or provided by the center, menus for nutritious meals and snacks shall be planned at least one week in advance. At least one dated copy of the current week's menu shall be posted where it can be seen by parents and food preparation staff when food is prepared or provided by the center. A variety of food shall be included in meals and snacks. Any substitution shall be of comparable food value and shall be recorded on the menu prior to the meal or snack being served.

(c) When children bring their own food for meals or snacks to the center, if the food does not meet the nutritional requirements specified in Paragraph (a) of this Rule, the center must provide additional food necessary to meet those requirements.

(d) A child's parent may opt out of the supplemental food provided by the center as set forth in G.S. 110-91(2)h.1. When a child's parent opts out of the supplemental food provided by the center, the parent shall sign a statement acknowledging the parental decision shall be kept in the child's file at the center and a copy provided to the parent. A child's parent may opt out of the supplemental food provided by the center, subject to the following:

- (1) the center shall not provide any food or drink so long as the child's parent or guardian provides all meals, snacks, and drinks scheduled to be served at the center's designated times;
- (2) the ability to opt out of specific meals or days based on menu options is not available;
- (3) if a child requests specific foods being served to other children, but the parent has opted out, the center shall not serve supplemental food; and
- (4) if the child's parent or guardian has opted out, but does not provide all meals and snacks for the child, the center shall replace the missing meal or snack as if the child's parent or guardian had not opted out of the supplemental food program.

(e) Drinking water shall be freely available to children of all ages. Drinking fountains or individual drinking utensils shall be provided. When a private water supply is used, it must be tested by and meet the requirements of the Commission for Public Health as set forth in 15A NCAC 18A .2800.

(f) The child care provider shall serve only the following beverages:

- (1) breast milk, as specified in Paragraph (k) of this Rule;
- (2) formula;
- (3) water;
- (4) unflavored whole milk, for children ages 12-23 months;
- (5) unflavored skim or lowfat milk for children 24 months through five years;
- (6) unflavored skim milk, unflavored low-fat milk, or flavored skim milk for children six years and older; or
- (7) 100 percent fruit juice, limited to 6 ounces per day, for all ages.

(g) Children's special diets or food allergies shall be posted where they can be seen in the food preparation area and in the child's eating area.

(h) The food required by special diets for medical, religious, or cultural reasons, or parental preferences, may be provided by the center or may be brought to the center by the parents. If the diet is prescribed by a health care professional, a statement signed by the health care professional shall be on file at the center and written instructions shall be provided by the child's parent, health care professional, or a licensed dietitian/nutritionist. If the diet is not prescribed by a health care professional, written instructions shall be provided by the child's parent and shall be on file at the center.

(i) Food that does not meet the nutritional requirements specified in Paragraph (a) of this Rule, such as cupcakes, cakes, and donuts shall only be offered for special occasions such as holidays and birthdays.

(j) Staff shall role model appropriate eating behaviors by consuming only food or beverages that meet the nutritional requirements specified in Paragraph (a) of this Rule in the presence of children in care.

(k) Parents shall be allowed to provide breast milk for their children. Accommodations for breastfeeding mothers shall be provided that include seating and an electrical outlet in a place other than a bathroom that is shielded from view by staff and the public which may be used by mothers while they are breastfeeding or expressing milk.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 110-85; 110-91(2); 143B-168.3;
Eff. January 1, 1986;
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