

1304.23 Nutritional Services

The emphasis on Head Start and Nutrition is to improve all aspects of the child's growth and development, and to identify the problem areas and needs that must be addressed related to nutrition. It is necessary to establish sound nutritional practices by providing food to program participants as well as bringing parents and staff to a level of understanding and involvement in the area of nutrition to enable them to meet their various appropriate responsibilities. Studies show that poor nutrition during early childhood has an effect not only on physical, but also on the mental functioning of the child.

The nutrition assessment data: height, weight, hemoglobin/hematocrit will be obtained on each child. Special provisions will be made for overweight, underweight, under-height and anemic children. Additional food will be served with follow up at home. Information regarding family eating habits and special dietary needs and feeding problems, especially of disabled children will be identified and resolved to the best of our ability.

The Health Service Specialist shall discuss the nutrition related problems obtained from the demographic characteristics of the target group such as family income, educational level, racial and ethnic composition, and from the quality of local food and water supply such as the availability of enriched food staples and fluoridated water.

Nutrition education shall be provided for staff, parents, and children. An organized program shall be based on identified needs and consist of planned activities to meet those needs. Families shall receive education and guidance in home and money management and help in consumer education so that they can fulfill their major role and responsibility for the nutritional health of the family. The Nutrition Plan shall make special provisions for the involvement of parents and appropriate community agencies in planning, implementing, and evaluating the nutrition services. Training services will be utilized through the University of Tennessee Agriculture Extension Services, Public School Nutritionist/Dietitians and the Health Department.

In an effort to promote parent involvement, copies of the menu shall be distributed for posting in the center each month. Menus shall be made available monthly for review by parents. The Health Service Specialist shall submit information for inclusion in the monthly Head Start newsletter focusing on the Health, Nutrition, and Disabilities/Mental Health Service Areas. Information shall also be distributed monthly for parent information. Miscellaneous nutritional information, (i.e., canning and preserving food, food assistance programs, sharing mealtimes with children) shall be made available for distribution to parents.

Information related food assistance programs, (i.e., food stamps, The Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Child Nutrition Program (CNP), Commodity Distribution) shall be made available for distribution to parents. The Health Services Specialist shall respond to questions and comments on these programs when attending the parent meeting and at other times as needed.

The Nutrition Program is designed to assist in meeting the daily nutritional needs of the children. Each child will receive enough food to contribute at least one half to two thirds of his/her daily nutritional needs. The quantities of food served to each child will vary according to his/her age. The amount will confirm recommended amounts as indicated by USDA.

The program will utilize the Special Food Service Program administered by USDA to cover food cost. An outside Dietary Consultant will be used to ensure proper balancing of menus.

Meals shall be designed to meet the food preferences of children and adjusted as necessary to accommodate for seasonal foods and provide exposure to a variety of foods throughout the year. The meals shall be planned to meet the needs of the children as nutritional assessment data warrants, (i.e., increasing the use of iron containing foods, increasing/decreasing the use of high calorie foods). Meals shall be modified on a “case-by-case” basis for children with special needs.

Every child in a full day program will receive snacks, lunch and other meals as appropriate which will provide one half to two thirds of the daily nutritional needs depending on the length of the program.

Meals shall be designed to meet one half to two thirds of the daily caloric need of children ages three to six years. Particular attention shall be given to each child's need for iron and vitamin C, vitamin A, low sugar, low sodium and low fat.

All children attending the Head Start Center shall receive breakfast. Children will be served breakfast upon arriving at the center.

The kinds of food served shall conform to minimum standards for meal patterns.

Meals are patterned after the USDA/CACFP meal pattern requirements with special attention given to appropriate combinations of foods.

Portion sizes are established in accordance with the ACF Head Start and USDA/CACFP Guidelines. These portions may be adjusted upward as necessary to meet the child's daily nutritional needs.

Standardized recipes are adjusted for portion sizes appropriate to the ACF Head Start and USDA/CACFP Guidelines.

Meal and snack periods are scheduled appropriately to meet the children's needs and are posted along with menus; (i.e., breakfast must be served at least two to three hours before lunch, and snacks must be served at least two to three hours after lunch.

The meal schedule shall be as follows in the Head Start Center:

Breakfast	8:15 a.m.
Lunch	11:15 a.m.
Snack	1:45 p.m.

Parents shall be encouraged to participate in the Nutrition Service Area by:

1. Helping to establish or update statements of philosophy or policies.
2. Participating in planning the menus within established guidelines.
3. Contributing recipes for foods their children particularly like.

4. Acting as chaperon for nutrition-related trips.
5. Working with groups of children on cooking activities.
6. Making materials for nutrition learning activities.
7. Collecting appropriate food packages and other props to be used in role-playing activities.
8. Being the supervising adult at meal tables.
9. Conferring with caregivers or teachers about feeding problems.
10. Participate in serving on Health Advisory addressing health and nutritional needs.

The nutrition services plan and its related policies shall be presented to the Multi-Services Advisory Committee and the Policy Council. Revisions shall be made as needed based upon comments and suggestions from members of the Multi-Advisory Committee and the Policy Council. Upon finishing the final draft, the plan and its related policies shall be presented to the Multi-Advisory Committee and the Policy Council for its approval.