Seeds for Healthy Eating Habits
Wellness Policies in the Early Care and Education Setting
SECTION 1
Wellness Policy Training & Support
Outline

1. Why wellness policies?
2. How to create a wellness policy
3. Putting wellness policies into action
4. Sustaining wellness policies for the long-term
5. Links to wellness policy resources
Policy: What Does It Mean?

❖ Policies, in short, simply guide our actions
❖ Just one definition:

“A plan of action agreed to by a group of people with the power to carry it out and enforce it.”

- Julie Devon Dodd and Hébert Boyd, 2000
Why a Program Needs a Wellness Policy

- Communicate core values and principles to the program staff, current and future families served, and the community
- Help define or capture policies that may already exist for programs and fill in the gaps in other areas
- Set a standard that is clear and consistent
- Provide guidance to program staff about the importance of teaching healthy habits
It’s easier to influence children’s food and physical activity choices when they are young, before habits are formed.

- Establishing healthy habits for physical activity in early childhood influences activity levels as children grow.
- Both a healthy diet and physical activity are positively associated with some measures of cognitive development.
- Young children who are overweight in kindergarten are 4 times more likely to have obesity by 8th grade than those not overweight.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:
Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity
www.cdc.gov/obesity/strategies/childcareece.html
60% of 3-to 5-year-olds are cared for in an ECE facility at least once a week.*

The ECE setting can **directly influence what children eat and drink and how active they are**, and build a foundation for healthy habits.

*These facilities include childcare centers, family care homes, Head Start programs, preschool, and pre-kindergarten programs.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:**
Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity
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Wellness Policy Success Story

“Our wellness policy helped us get rid of juice… and gave us the confidence to deal with birthday celebrations.”

-Director, Progreso Excellence Academy
Wellness Policy Success Story

“...We were inspired by the creation of the wellness policy to convert a large space in our lobby into a formal gross motor area.”

- CEO, The Children’s Workshop
Components of a Wellness Policy

- Goals and Standards for:
  - Nutrition practices
  - Physical activity practices and education,
  - Other program-based activities

- Evaluation Plan
  - Self-monitoring and measuring effectiveness
Components of a Wellness Policy - Nutrition

- Infant Feeding
- Meals & Snacks
- Beverages
- Other Foods Served
- Formal & informal activities
- Nutrition Standards
- Eating environment
- Nutrition education
- Family Style Meals
- Modeling Behaviors
- Food Rewards
Components of a Wellness Policy - Physical activity

- Active play time
- Play environment
- Outdoor time
- Screen time limits
- Types of programming
- Formal & informal activities
- Physical activity education
- Active Play
- Screen Time
Steps to Developing & Implementing Wellness Policies

1. **Assess.** Where are you at?
2. **Prioritize.** Choose 10-15 key policies to adopt.
3. **Communicate.** Share your new wellness policy with staff, families, and the community.
4. **Implement.** Create an action plan.
5. **Evaluate.** Review your wellness policy and action plan on an annual basis, or as needed.
Step 1. Assess - GO NAPSACC

- Breastfeeding & Infant Feeding
- Child Nutrition
- Infant & Child Physical Activity
- Outdoor Play & Learning
- Screen Time
- Oral Health

★ Available at https://gonapsacc.org/
Step 2. Prioritize - GO NAPSACC

- Best practices can be rewritten as policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeding Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. <strong>Meals and snacks are served to preschool children in the following way:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Meals and snacks come to classrooms pre-plated with set portions of each food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers portion out servings to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Children serve some foods themselves, while other foods are pre-plated or served by teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Children* always choose and serve most or all foods themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* This refers to preschool children who are developmentally ready to choose and serve foods themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. <strong>Television or videos are on during meal or snack times:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. <strong>When in classrooms during meal and snack times, teachers and staff eat and drink the same foods and beverages as children:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rarely or never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. <strong>Teachers and staff eat or drink unhealthy foods or beverages in front of children:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rarely or never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. <em><em>Teachers enthusiastically role model</em> eating healthy foods served at meal and snack times:</em>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rarely or never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Every meal and snack time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The best practice is listed in the right hand column.
Step 2. Prioritize - GO NAPSACC

❖ Best practices can be rewritten as policies

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<tr>
<td>□ Always</td>
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</table>

**Policy:** When in classrooms during meal and snack times, teachers and staff **always** eat and drink the same foods and beverages as children.
Step 2. Prioritize - *Healthy Way to Grow* Wellness Policy Workbook

- Includes lists of best practices & potential policies to consider
- Also can be used for self-assessment

★ Available as part of URI SNAP-Ed training sessions
Step 2. Prioritize - URI SNAP-Ed Wellness Policy Checklist for Home Daycares

- Quick & easy to use
- Includes sample policy language
- Available in English & Spanish

★ Available in Toolkit:
https://www.ride.ri.gov/cnp/NutritionPrograms/USDATeamNutrition.aspx
Step 3. Communicate

❖ Share your new wellness policy with staff, families, and the community
❖ Share multiple ways
  ➢ Staff/family handbooks
  ➢ Website
  ➢ Bulletin boards
  ➢ Newsletters
Step 4. Action Plans!

1. Select one policy to implement.
2. Identify the steps necessary to accomplish the goal.
3. Identify who is responsible for each step.
4. Establish a timeline.
Sample Action Plan

Wellness Policy Goal:

Nutrition lessons include fun, hands on activities tailored to the children’s developmental stage at least once per month. Examples include contests, taste tests, farm visits, work in school gardens and cooking activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan Steps</th>
<th>Persons Responsible or Involved</th>
<th>Target Date for Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director to coordinate meeting with staff/ including cook to discuss strategies for including instruction and activities about healthy eating</td>
<td>Director, staff</td>
<td>Meeting on March 15th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director to identify date for training on Healthy Habits for Life toolkits</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Select date by April 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train provider and staff on Healthy Habits for Life Tool kit</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director work on supporting staff and children on hands on nutritional activities</td>
<td>Director, staff</td>
<td>At quarterly staff meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Sample Action Plan

## Wellness Policy Goal:
Celebrations that have food include fruits, vegetables and other healthy snacks. Families are provided with a list of approved healthy foods and beverages as well as suggestions for non food activities.

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<th>Action Plan Steps</th>
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<th>Target Date for Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate new policy with staff</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Staff meeting Feb 21st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainstorm idea of nonfood treats to bring in for birthdays and other celebrations with staff</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Staff meeting Feb 21st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask children to develop a list of healthy foods and activities they would enjoy at celebrations and parties.</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Week Feb 25th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage parents to share with staff their child’s favorite nonfood items or activities that can be included in the celebration.</td>
<td>All staff</td>
<td>Week March 4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create list of healthy food items and non-food items for celebrations</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Draft by April 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate policy to parents. Give parents ideas for nonfood treats to bring in for birthdays and other celebrations as well a new center traditions to celebrate their child’s b-day</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>May newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share healthy recipe ideas with parents around celebratory times</td>
<td>Center</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post healthy sign-up sheets outside of each classroom</td>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 5. Evaluate

- Evaluate annually, or as needed
- Celebrate what you’ve done, plan for what you still need to do
- Great task for a wellness team!
Sustaining Wellness Policies

- Use a team approach
- Add it to someone’s job description
- Integrate it into staff manuals and staff training
- Engage families
Want more?

Visit the RIDE Child Nutrition Program website to access the *Seeds for Healthy Eating Habits* Toolkit and supplementary resources.

Go to [https://www.ride.ri.gov/cnp/](https://www.ride.ri.gov/cnp/) and click on "USDA Team Nutrition" tile.
Thank you!

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