



What you will learn about Nutrition and Feeding Young Children

QRIS Indicator for Step 3 Health and Safety: Items from the Nutrition and Active Physical Play Checklist are observed in practice.

Each Classroom completes a Vision and Action Plan for Food and Nutrition annually.

The center/home-based provider completes a Vision and Action Plan for Nutrition and Active Physical Play annually.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE: CHILDREN ARE BORN WITH THE ABILITY TO KNOW WHEN THEY ARE HUNGRY AND WHEN THEY ARE FULL; CHILDREN EAT TO SATISFY HUNGER, AND FOR FUN AND ENJOYMENT; THE ADULT'S JOB IS TO TRUST AND REINFORCE CHILDREN'S INBORN CUES BY FEEDING RESPONSIVELY

Ensure that children are provided with caregivers who interact in consistent and caring ways.

Have access to nutritious foods and feeding strategies that promote children's optimal health and development. (Early Learning eGuidelines, ELeG Essential Practice, Health and Safety)

What does this look like in practice?

- Infants are fed on demand, rather than on a schedule.
- Enough food is available to satisfy individual children's hunger needs.
- Adults support children as they learn how to choose portion sizes to match how much they can eat.
- Children are not required to eat either a set amount of food or a particular good.
- Food is offered at least every three hours so that children's hunger does not overwhelm their ability to self-regulate intake.
- Adults sit at the table with children.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE: CHILDREN NEED A VARIETY OF FOODS TO SUPPORT AND MAINTAIN HEALTHY WEIGHT AND HEALTHY NUTRITIONAL STATUS; MANY FOODS ARE UNFAMILIAR, NOVEL, OR EVEN REFUSED BY YOUNG CHILDREN. MENUS SHOULD REFLECT OFFERING OF UNFAMILIAR FOODS AND REPEATED EXPOSURES TO A VARIETY OF FOODS

Have access to nutritious foods and feeding strategies that promote children's optimal health and development. (ELeG Essential Practice, Health and Safety)

Provide multiple strategies to include the senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste). (ELeG Essential Practice, Interaction and Activities)

What does this look like in practice?

- Provision is made to store expressed milk, and for the caregiver to feed expressed milk to support breastfeeding mothers and their babies.
- At least two weeks of cycle menus are used.
- Menus include a variety of foods.
- Menus are posted for staff and parents.
- Menu planning is based on a nutritionally sound meal pattern, such as the USDA Child Care Meal Pattern Guidelines or MyPlate.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE: THE MEALTIME ENVIRONMENT IMPACTS CHILDREN'S EATING SKILLS:

ADULTS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO PLAN, PREPARE, AND OBSERVE ENVIRONMENTS TO HELP CHILDREN BE SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL AS THEY BECOME HEALTHY EATERS AND MAINTAIN HEALTHY WEIGHT;

THE MEALTIME ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES SOUNDS IN THE ROOM, THE FURNITURE IN THE ROOM, THE DISHES, PITCHERS, SERVING BOWLS AND UTENSILS, AND THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ADULTS AND CHILDREN, AND RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CHILDREN AND CHILDREN, SCHEDULING AND POLICIES

Provide adult supervision and guidance for children's health and safety.

Promote trust, security, and exploration through nurturing relationships and safe, consistent, and stimulating environments.

Have access to nutritious foods and feeding strategies that promote children's optimal health and development. (ELeG Essential Practice, Health and Safety)

What does this look like in practice?

- A program policy exists to accept and support breastfeeding mothers and babies.
- Serving dishes are available for children to pass food.
- Serving utensils are provided for all foods.

L.J. Branen, J.W. Fletcher, S.C. Matthews, E. Price. Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships: An Inventory for Feeding Young Children in Group Settings.
<http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/feeding/pdfs/BMER.pdf>

United States Department of Agriculture; www.choosemyplate.gov