Healthier CACFP Award Resource Book

Recognizing Excellence in
Nutrition and Physical Activity in Child Care

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General Information

What is it?

The Healthier Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Award is a recognition system that supports the wellness efforts of child care centers participating in CACFP. Child care centers taking steps to improve the nutrition, physical activity, nutrition education and/or environment for children in their care can apply to win an award in one or more of these categories. Three award levels are offered: Honors, High Honors and Highest Honors

Why is it important?

With one in five children being overweight or obese by the age of 6, child care centers play an essential role in the prevention of childhood obesity. Child caregivers have an opportunity to positively impact children's healthy development by encouraging children to develop healthy habits at a young age.

Am I eligible to apply?

Participation in the CACFP and compliance with CACFP regulations is required to be eligible for the award. Meeting the award criteria and winning an award does not replace CACFP requirements. Applicants are required to be in good standing with the CACFP, defined as having completed and implemented all corrective actions from the previous compliance review and having not been seriously deficient in the past two years, at the time of application.

How do I apply?

Interested applicants can obtain a Healthier CACFP Award Application from the State agency with which they have a CACFP agreement. The application includes criteria in four categories: Menus, Physical Activity, Nutrition Education, and Environment. Applicants can choose which categories they would like to apply for and at which level, and then submit the application with required supporting documents to the State agency. This resource book, which explains "why" and "how to" for each criterion listed in the application, will assist applicants by providing valuable resources and instructions on implementing the criteria.

What do I win?

Winners are recognized with awards issued jointly by the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, and State agency that showcase the child care center's achievement in the community. Specific awards are based on the award level achieved and include banners, certificates, letters to parents, and logo stickers that can be posted to announce the high wellness priority of the center. At the highest award level, USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, officials will send an individualized congratulatory award presentation to the winners. Contact your State Agency to find out more about the specific awards being offered to Healthier CACFP Award winners.

Menus Criteria

Criterion	Different fruits and different vegetables every day of the week at lunch Good, better, best source of vitamin A three or more times per week Good, better, best source of vitamin C each day Fresh and/or frozen fruit or vegetables must be served each week Fried, breaded or high fat vegetables (i.e., tater tots, French Fries) are limited
Why	Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables ensures that a broad range of vitamins and minerals are consumed. The body cannot make or store vitamin C, so a good source is needed each day. Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables tend to have less sugar and/or sodium than canned, and may provide more nutrients. Fried vegetables provide extra sodium and calories.
How To/Resources	Fruit may be fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Dried fruit must have no added sweetener; canned fruit must be packed in juice or light syrup. Fruits and vegetables must be of appropriate texture based on the child's development to prevent choking. Vitamin A & C fruits and vegetables identified as good, better and best sources in Appendix B of Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals (http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/buildingblocks.html .

Criterion	Only low-fat (1% or less) and/or fat-free (skim) milk are served to participants over age two. Only whole milk is served to participants between the ages 1 and 2.
Why	Whole and 2% milk provide extra calories and saturated fat for children over the age of 2. It is recommended that children ages 1-2 receive whole milk to supply adequate fat and calories for the rapid brain development that occurs during this age.
How To/Resources	Feeding Infants guide: http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/feeding_infants.pdf

Criterion	Water is served as an extra item when two non-beverage creditable food items are served at snack. (Water itself is not a creditable item, it is always an extra.)
Why	Water provides fluids without adding calories. Children benefit from learning that water is an acceptable beverage.
How To/Resources	Serve water with snacks when no other beverage is being served, at other mealtimes and throughout the day. Young children should not be served too much water before and during meal times since excess water may lead to meal displacement, reducing the amount of food and milk consumed by children.

Criterion	Cooked dry beans or split peas must be served each week; snacks count (includes canned beans and canned split peas).
Why	Dry beans are a low cost source of many nutrients that are lacking in children's diets.
How To/Resources	Includes but is not limited to black beans, kidney beans, lentils, refried beans, pinto beans, navy beans, and great northern beans. Does not include green beans and green peas.

Criterion	100% fruit juice is limited.
Why	Too much fruit juice can crowd out other foods and provide extra sugar and calories. Children tend to fill up on juice and may not eat much during meals or snacks. Drinking juice throughout the day has been associated with dental caries.
How To/Resources	Offer the whole fruits and vegetables which provide more fiber and less sugar than 100% fruit juice. When children are thirsty, the best drink to offer them is plain, fresh water.

Criterion	Whole grain foods are served each week (not the same each day). Dry cereal is served at least once each week. Whole grain cereal may be counted toward the weekly whole grain servings. Sweet grain/breads are limited.
Why	Whole grain foods provide more fiber and other nutrients than refined grains. Eating more whole grains is associated with reduced risk of several chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, stroke and obesity.
How To/Resources	A serving of whole grain food is equal to a serving of Grains/Breads as defined in the Food Buying Guide (http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/foodbuyingguide.html), pages 3.15-3.16 according to the child's age. To count as a whole grain, the food products served must have whole grain listed first on the ingredient statement. Scratch recipes must have whole grain as the primary ingredient by weight or measure. Sweet grains and breads are noted with a footnote of 3 or 4 as defined on the grains/breads chart in the Food Buying Guide, pages 3.15-3.16

Criterion	Processed, preserved and higher fat meats and entrees (hot dogs, lunch meat, breaded commercially-prepared meats such as fish sticks and chicken nuggets, purchased prepared entrees) are limited.

Why	Processed and preserved meats and entrees provide extra sodium and cured meats provide nitrates. Too much sodium is associated with high blood pressure, stroke and heart disease. Higher fat meat and entrees usually provide extra saturated fat and calories.
How To/Resources	This category includes fried meats, hot dogs, bologna, commercially prepared combination foods, sausages, salami, and breaded commercially-prepared meats such as fish sticks and chicken nuggets.

Criterion	Locally grown and/or in-season foods are purchased.
Why	Purchasing locally grown foods supports the local economy. In-season foods are usually fresh and often cost less than when purchased out of season.
How To/Resources	http://www.foodroutes.org/

Physical Activity Criteria

Criterion	Television, DVD and video watching and computer use is prohibited for children under the age of 2.
Why	Children's brains and bodies grow at an amazing rate in the first few years of life. When a young child is watching a screen, he/she is missing out on other important neural stimulation as well as fine and gross motor development skills. In addition, watching television in infancy and toddlerhood can lead to a shortened attention span.
How To/Resources	"Active Bodies, Active Minds; Minimize Screen Time, Maximize Health" screen time reduction resources for Early Childhood Professionals: http://depts.washington.edu/tvhealth/resources_prof.htm

Criterion	Screen time of educational/movement material is limited to no more than 30-60 minutes/day.
Why	Limited educational screen use can be constructive in child development. However, excessive use can inhibit physical movement and the development of social or cognitive skills.
How To/Resources	"Active Bodies, Active Minds; Minimize Screen Time, Maximize Health" screen time reduction resources for Early Childhood Professionals: http://depts.washington.edu/tvhealth/resources_prof.htm

Criterion	Moderate to vigorous physical activity is provided during each full day of care (8 to 9 hour day) for at least 45-120 minutes.
Why	Children need an outlet for their abundant energy! When children are allowed to develop their gross motor skills through vigorous play, they are calmer and able to focus on learning during educational times.
How To/Resources	"Integrating Physical Activity into the complete school day:" http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/teachingTools/upload/PA-During-School-Day.pdf

Criterion	Periods of inactivity (at one time), excluding nap time, are limited.

Why	Children need an outlet for their abundant energy! When children are allowed to develop their gross motor skills through vigorous play, they are calmer and able to focus on learning during educational times.
How To/Resources	National Association for Sport and Physical Education: www.naspeinfo.org.

Criterion	The physical activity provided includes: Both indoor and outdoor activities, Unstructured physical activity (free play), and Structured physical activity (age appropriate activities guided by the caregiver)
Why	A mix of physical activity settings means that children have opportunities to use their imagination and initiative during free play and ensures they develop gross motor and social skills (sharing, waiting your turn, the joy of team-work) during structured play and sport.
How To/Resources	National Association for Sport and Physical Education: www.naspeinfo.org. "Stories in Motion" is a series of short stories that include action words which prompt bursts of physical activity! Utilize these stories in your classroom for short physical activity breaks. http://educateiowa.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=373&Itemid=1332#StoriesMotion

Criterion	Active play time is not restricted as punishment.
Why	In many children, restricting activity to punish leads to yet more misbehavior. It is important to find other ways to motivate children rather than using restriction of play time as a punishment.
How To/Resources	National Association for Sport and Physical Education: www.naspeinfo.org.

Criterion	Physical activity curriculums, which encourage a variety of basic movement and manipulative skills, are utilized at least weekly.
Why	A consistent physical activity curriculum ensures children's gross motor development in a variety of areas and school physical education readiness.

How To/Resources	NASPE offers an array of teaching tools and guidance documents to help you engage with your students, implement best practices, educate parents, and motivate children to engage in a lifetime of physical activity. http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/teachingTools/ The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance (AAHPERD) has created the Let's Move in School Physical Education Teacher Toolkit. This free online toolkit will provide you with easy-to-use resources and activities every month. http://www.aahperd.org/letsmoveinschool/tools/peteachers/index.cfm

Criterion	Physical activity ideas and resources are sent home with parents at least monthly.
Why	Caregivers can be role models for parents and increase the chances that education received while in child care is reinforced at home.
How To/Resources	"Active Bodies, Active Minds; Minimize Screen Time, Maximize Health" screen time reduction resources for parents: http://depts.washington.edu/tvhealth/resources_family.htm "Make Family Time an Active Time:" http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardhealthylifestyle/PlayHard/makefamilytimeanactivetime.htm

Nutrition Education Criteria

Criterion	Caregivers participate in CACFP family-style meals and a staff member is seated at each dining table with the children. Caregivers eat the CACFP meals with children and serve as role models at mealtime.
Why	Eating family style meals encourages independence by allowing children to learn how to serve themselves, and lets them choose what they will eat and how much. It also gives them a chance to observe providers modeling good table manners and healthy eating.
How To/Resources	Role play mealtime using different scenarios. **Resources:** 1. University of Idaho: Feeding Young Children in Group Settings, http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/feeding/ 2. NFSMI CARE Connection Curriculum, http://www.nfsmi.org/ 3. NFSMI Mealtime Memo for Childcare, http://www.nfsmi.org/ 4. Setting the Stage, Policies and Best Practices for Nutrition and Physical Activity in Early Childhood Settings, www.educateiowa.gov; Team Nutrition Learning Tools

Criterion	Parents have knowledge of center's participation in CACFP and the CACFP meal pattern is shared with parents.
Why	Parents' understanding of meal pattern requirements promotes respect and modeling of caregivers' use of nutritional best practices.
How To/Resources	Include CACFP information in center policies and in the child enrollment packet. Present at parent meetings. Include in parent newsletter. **Resources:** 1. CACFP Meal Pattern Guidelines, http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/ 2. NFSMI CARE Connection Curriculum, http://www.nfsmi.org/ 3. USDA Nibbles for Health, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/

Criterion	Breastfeeding resources are promoted and available to parents.
Why	Breast milk is, in most cases, the healthiest choice for infants. It also prevents excess weight gain. Caregivers' support significantly influence parents' decisions to continue breast feeding. Mothers who feel strong social support to breastfeed are more likely to continue with it for at least 6 months (the minimum recommended time).

How To/Resources	Include breastfeeding information in center policies and in the enrollment packet. Discuss with parents when enrolling infant. **Resources:** 1. WIC handouts, http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/publications.htm 2. WIC Breastfeeding, Anytime, Anywhere (poster) 3. NFSMI Mealtime Memo, http://www.nfsmi.org/ 4. Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/

Criterion	Quantities of foods served are enough to meet children's appetite and energy needs.
Why	Children grow at variable rates and their calorie needs fluctuate. In addition, children who are hungry may have difficulty focusing and may feel irritable and unhappy.
How To/Resources	Learn how to use the Food Buying Guide and USDA Recipes. Practice completing food production record. **Resources:** 1. USDA Food Buying Guide, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/ 2. USDA Recipes for Child Care, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/

Criterion	New foods are introduced with familiar foods or familiar foods are prepared in new ways.
Why	Exposure, modeling and social support for trying new foods encourages children to become comfortable with different types/preparations of foods. Serving new foods along with familiar foods ensures that children can feel secure; that they can satisfy hunger with familiar foods while cautiously tasting new foods.
How To/Resources	**Resources:** 1. Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guide for Outside-of-Home Child Care, http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/index.html 2. Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/

Criterion	Children are taught to eat appropriately for age and developmental ability.
Why	Children's digestive systems and motor skills for swallowing and feeding themselves progresses at variable rates. It is critical that caregivers protect children from harmful bacteria, allergens, and choking by providing developmentally appropriate foods.

How To/Resources	**Resources:** 1. Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/ 2. University of Idaho Feeding Young Children in Group Settings, Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships, http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/feeding/

Criterion	Nutrition education is woven into activities throughout the day and provided through standardized curriculum (i.e. Team Nutrition; Choose MyPlate; Grow it, Try it, Like it; Healthy Habits for Life Resource Kit).
Why	Learning to enjoy healthy foods is a critical life skill that caregivers are uniquely positioned to support. Food and eating can also provide familiar, hands-on, contexts for teaching a variety of early academic skills.
How To/Resources	**Resources:** 1. Choose MyPlate, http://www.choosemyplate.gov/ 2. Grow it, Try it, Like it, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/ 3. NFSMI Mealtime Memo, http://www.nfsmi.org/ 4. Healthy Habits for Life Resource Kit, http://kidshealth.org/classroom/index.jsp?Grade=cc&Section=hhfl

Criterion	Caregivers have completed one of the following: • Training provided by the State agency on the CACFP meal pattern and reimbursable/creditable meals. • The NFSMI CARE Connection Nutrition Education webinars, http://www.nfsmi.org/ • Ellyn Satter's "Division of Responsibility in Feeding", www.ellynsatter.com: 3 segments @ 1 hour each = 3 hours of training
Why	Continuing education of caregivers supports their competency and motivation for supporting children's healthy development.
How To/Resources	Resources listed in Criterion

Criterion	Ellyn Satter's "Division of Responsibility in Feeding" is communicated with parents.
Why	Parents often need caregivers support in order to understand best practices for feeding their children. Consistent use of the division of responsibility in feeding, from child care to home environments ensures that children develop healthy relationships with food and match energy needs with energy expenditure.

How To/Resources	**Resources:** www.ellynsatter.com

Criterion	Policies for nutrition education are written for caregivers and parents and are reviewed annually.
Why	Specific policies for nutrition education ensure that children receive the early experiences they need to develop healthy relationships with food. Reviewing the policies annually ensures that new and relevant information can be incorporated into practice.
How To/Resources	**Resources:** Setting the Stage, Policies and Best Practices for Nutrition and Physical Activity in Early Childhood Settings, www.educateiowa.gov; Iowa Team Nutrition Learning Tools

Criterion	Written documentation shows that all nutrition education policies are presented to caregivers and caregivers have opportunities to learn and practice the policies. Policies are shared with parents.
Why	Written, shared, nutrition education policies promote a high standard of care.
How To/Resources	1. Setting the Stage, Policies and Best Practices for Nutrition and Physical Activity in Early Childhood Settings, www.educateiowa.gov; Team Nutrition Learning Tools 2. USDA Nibbles for Health, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/

Criterion	Parents are encouraged to volunteer/participate in mealtimes.
Why	Including parents in mealtimes reinforces a positive attitude toward food and mealtimes, and promotes continuity between home and child care.
How To/Resources	**Resources:** Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guide for Outside-of-Home Child Care, http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/index.html

Criterion	Visible support for good nutrition is provided in classrooms, and common areas through posters, pictures, and displayed books. Nutrition education involves multiple channels of communication, including the classroom and home/parents.
Why	Using a variety of means to impart nutrition messages to children and parents increases awareness and understanding of nutrition topics.
How To/Resources	**Resources:** 1. USDA Nibbles for Health, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/ 2. Team Nutrition Resource Library, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/, 3. Choose MyPlate, http://www.choosemyplate.gov/

Criterion	Nutrition education is presented to parents at a minimum, two times per year.
Why	Many parents need and benefit from caregiver support for learning to safely and appropriately feed their children and for planning meals and snacks.
How To/Resources	Include in parent newsletters and at parent meetings 1. USDA Nibbles for Health, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/ 2. Team Nutrition Resource Library, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/,

Criterion	Caregivers receive additional training opportunities on nutrition-related topics two times per year.
Why	Continuing education ensures that caregivers' knowledge of nutrition topics is accurate and up-to-date.
How To/Resources	**Resources:** The NFSMI CARE Connection Nutrition Education webinars, http://www.nfsmi.org/

Criterion	Children have the opportunity to see, identify, taste and enjoy a variety of foods that are culturally significant and commonly available in local markets, such as fruits, vegetables, breads, grains, milk, meats, fish, beans, eggs, etc.
Why	Food provides an ideal context for teaching important cultural concepts and for promoting children's pride in their heritage.

How To/Resources	**Resources:** 1. Team Nutrition Resource Library, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/ 2. Physical Activities and Healthy Snacks for Young Children, www.educateiowa.gov; Team Nutrition Learning Tools 3. USDA Nibbles for Health, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/ 4. NFSMI Mealtime Memo, http://www.nfsmi.org/

Criterion	Children are learning interactively about food and nutrition through books and by using food as a hands-on context for learning math, science and social concepts.
Why	Using a variety of means to impart nutrition messages to children increases awareness and understanding of nutrition topics.
How To/Resources	**Resources:** 1. Team Nutrition Resource Library, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/ 2. Grow it, Try it, Like it, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/ 3. Physical Activities and Healthy Snacks for Young Children, www.educateiowa.gov; Team Nutrition Learning Tools 4. Healthy Habits for Life Resource Kit, http://kidshealth.org/classroom/index.jsp?Grade=cc&Section=hhfl

Environment Criteria

Criterion	The daily schedule promotes a relaxed and adequate period for meals and snacks. Children have ample time to eat and practice social interaction skills, such as having a conversation.
Why	Children need to have enough time to practice table skills. Younger children tend to need a longer amount of time to eat a meal. They are less coordinated and are still developing the fine motor skills that help them use silverware effectively. If they feel rushed they may be less likely to eat well.
How To/Resources	While every child is different and care givers should individualize based on children's needs, at least 10 minutes for a snack and at least 20 minutes for a meal should be an appropriate amount of time for most children.

Criterion	Food is not used as incentive or punishment and children are not punished or rewarded for what they choose to eat. Certain food is not withheld as punishment and children are not forced to eat foods as a prerequisite to receiving an item or completing an activity.
Why	Offering food to encourage or reward behavior places unnecessary importance on food and may have negative effects. This action teaches children to eat when they are not hungry and can alter their internal hunger and fullness cues. Foods commonly used to encourage positive behavior, such as candy or cookies, are often high in fat or sugars with little nutrients. These foods offer little to support proper growth and development. As children become older, rewarding them with food may lead to emotional overeating and excessive weight gain.
How To/Resources	Reward children with non-food choices like praise, stickers, a favorite game or story, chance to be a classroom helper, etc.

Criterion	Children are instructed in hand washing techniques and both children and staff wash their hands before meals and snack.
Why	Keeping hands clean is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infection and illness. Washing hands before meals is especially important since hands will come into contact with the mouth and with food that will be consumed.
How To/Resources	Centers for Disease Control hand washing techniques: http://www.cdc.gov/features/handwashing/

Criterion	Children, including picky eaters (able to eat food but resisting), are gently encouraged by staff to try new or less favorite foods. Staff are role models for tasting new foods, and food is never forced.
Why	If encouragement is too strong it may cause a child to eat for reasons other than hunger. Children may learn to overeat if they are made to eat everything or clean their plates, which can lead to weight problems later in life. Interfering with their internal hunger and fullness cues could lead to unhealthy eating patterns. Learning food efficacy is an important part of development. Children need to know that they can choose what foods to eat, and how much. When given these choices, they are likely to try a wider variety of foods. This also helps them learn hunger/satiated cues their bodies give them.
How To/Resources	Staff can help children learn to listen to their bodies to decide whether they are hungry, full or eating out of habit. Children should never be forced to eat if they are full and should be given more food if they are still hungry. If you don't like a food, don't say anything positive or negative about it. You can say something non-judgmental like, "These carrots are orange," or, "What shape are these carrot slices?" **Resources:** 1. www.ellynsatter.com 2. Setting the Stage, Policies and Best Practices for Nutrition and Physical Activity in Early Childhood Settings, www.educateiowa.gov; Team Nutrition Learning Tools

Criterion	Menus are available and posted for staff and parents. Children and parents have opportunities to provide input on the food and menus.
Why	Families should know what their children are eating in child care and have the chance to make suggestions about what is served. Families can also plan their home meals better if they know what is on the menu at child care.
How To/Resources	Make posted menu eye catching. -Parents don't need to know the details of the meal pattern and where each food goes. -Send a copy of the menu home with parents.

Criterion	Both children and staff wash hands before and after meals.
Why	Keeping hands clean is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infection and illness. Washing hands before meals is especially important since hands will come into contact with the mouth and with food that will be consumed. After meals, hands have just come into contact with the mouth and hand washing hands can prevent the spread of these germs to others.

How To/Resources	Centers for Disease Control hand washing techniques: http://www.cdc.gov/features/handwashing/

Criterion	Children serve themselves during meals and snacks with adult supervision. Some or all foods are served family style to the maximum extent possible at each meal. Children help set the table and/or clear dishes after the meal is finished.
Why	Family style meals create an opportunity for children to practice their independence; pouring, spooning, and passing skills; and table manners. Modeling and practicing such behavior at child care facilities can foster habits that carry into other environments, including the home. Also, allowing children to choose their own portions may help prevent children from overeating or feeling pressured to eat food they do not want. Chores such as setting the table help build children's identity and self confidence. When children are involved in the meal in any way, they are more likely to want to eat it.
How To/Resources	Definition: *In family style meal service, adults place each meal component on the table in serving dishes. The children serve themselves with assistance from supervising adults who set the example. There must be enough food at the table for each child to have a full portion; however, the child may choose not to take it.* Providers can meet this recommendation by passing a bowl with the vegetable or grain item or having each child pour their own milk as they are able. -Start with easily served items. -Practice passing, serving and pouring skills before starting family style meal service. Have children pass bowls of uncooked beans or rice and pour small pitchers of water. **Resources:** 1. Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/ 2. University of Idaho Feeding Young Children in Group Settings, Building Mealtime Environments and Relationships, http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/feeding/ 3. NFSMI CARE Connection Curriculum, http://www.nfsmi.org/

Criterion	Children and staff sit down together for meals. Adults sit at the table and eat the same foods served to the children
Why	This practice allows the staff to serve as good role models. Children are always watching their teachers, especially during mealtime. This time together provides many openings for teachers or staff to: Teach children about healthy foods Talk about the foods served and where they came from Encourage proper table manners Engage children in pleasant discussion to build communication skills Teach children about the tastes, smells, textures and different colors and shapes of foods If staff eat or drink less healthy foods in front of the children, they are sending negative messages to children.

How To/Resources	Teachers should be willing to try new foods and adopt the same behaviors that they are trying to teach children. When a new food is served, teachers can greatly influence the children's acceptance through their own enthusiasm for trying new things. Adults do not have to eat an entire meal, just a bite or two of each food served. The goal is to have children see adults they admire eating and drinking healthy foods and drinks. Staff will be more likely to be on-board with this activity if they are also given a scheduled break for their meals.

Criterion	Staff show visible support for healthy nutrition and physical activity habits via posters, pictures, or books about nutrition and physical activity in every room.
Why	Environmental factors can influence healthy eating behaviors; therefore, it is important to design children's environments to include objects that help support good nutrition. Simple acts of displaying posters with pictures of healthy foods, discussing and asking questions, showing enthusiasm about food, and being happy during mealtimes will show children that this part of their day is valuable to them and others.
How To/Resources	Free or low-cost posters can be found on-line. In addition, children can create their own posters or pictures of healthy eating habits to hang in their classroom or throughout the facility. *(See resources at http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html and www.choosemyplate.gov.)*

Criterion	Child-sized eating and serving utensils are available and used.
Why	Children to practice their independence; pouring, spooning, and passing skills; and table manners, when provided with the appropriate serving and eating utensils and in coordination with a family style meal service. Participation in meal time rituals imparts feelings of responsibility, social connectedness, food appreciation and it also imparts important gross and fine motor skills.
How To/Resources	To help young children to scoop food more easily, small spoons, plates with edges or small, shallow bowls can be used. Tongs and smaller serving spoons and scoops are examples of serving utensils that are easier to handle by children.

Criterion	Parents are encouraged to bring non-food items for celebrations. Holidays are celebrated with mostly healthy foods or with non-food treats, such as stickers.

Why	A healthy nutrition environment is created by serving nutritious foods during regular meals and snacks as well as at special occasions. Typical celebrations usually include calorie dense foods of limited nutritional value, such as cookies, cake and candy. On occasion, this may not pose a problem, but it sends a message to children that eating such foods is the only way to celebrate.
How To/Resources	This criterion encourages facilities to celebrate with mostly healthy foods (facility provided) or in non-food ways. Child care facilities can let parents know gently but firmly that the facility supports a healthier approach to celebrations. This can easily be done by including the facility policy in your parent handbook. Everyone benefits from healthy choices, and it sends a message to families that good nutrition is important to the facility. Offer a suggested snack list for parents to decide what special snack will be served on their child's birthday. See **Healthy Foods for Celebrations** at http://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/eatsmartguidelines/resources.php) Another way to make the celebration fun is to serve something the children can help make like mini-pizzas.

Criterion	Fundraising activities, if applicable, involving children/families are supportive of physical activity and healthful eating. If foods are sold, including snack bars and any foods sold to the children, they are nutritious.
Why	Fundraising is a common practice for many child care facilities. Even if the money raised is used to support things the facility really needs, the message becomes unclear when sales of unhealthy food items are used to raise funds. Also remember that families and staff buy much of the food that is sold. Having extra candy and sweets around the house makes it that much harder to encourage healthier eating for children.
How To/Resources	See **Nonfood Fundraising Ideas** http://health.mo.gov/living/wellness/nutrition/eatsmartguidelines/resources.php

Criterion	Food and vending machines, if present, are located in areas no visible or accessible to children.
Why	Vending machines provide opportunities for staff to buy soda, other sweetened beverages and foods often high in fat and sugar. Having them on-site increases the likelihood that staff will eat and drink these items in front of children in the facility. Vending machines on-site, especially if located in a public area, also send a message to families that these foods and beverages are "okay" for children to consume.
How To/Resources	If vending machines are in your building, place them in areas that are not visible or accessible to the children. In addition, if the vending machine must be on-site, you may want to work with the vendor to offer healthier items.

Criterion	If infant care is provided, breastfeeding is encouraged.

Why	Breast milk is, in most cases, the healthiest choice for infants. It also prevents excess weight gain. Caregivers' support significantly influence parents' decisions to continue breast feeding. Mothers who feel strong social support to breastfeed are more likely to continue with it for at least 6 months (the minimum recommended time).
How To/Resources	Include breastfeeding information in center policies and in the enrollment packet. Discuss with parents when enrolling infant. **Resources:** 1. WIC handouts, http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/publications.htm 2. WIC Breastfeeding, Anytime, Anywhere (poster) 3. NFSMI Mealtime Memo, http://www.nfsmi.org/ 4. Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs, http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/

Criterion	If infant care is provided, breastfeeding mothers are accommodated with a separate area to breastfeed and/or pump.
Why	Gives working mothers the opportunity to continue to provide their infant with the best nutrition, breast milk, when they return to work after childbirth. Providing working mothers with a breastfeeding room gives them the opportunity to extend the bonding period.
How To/Resources	A bathroom is not an appropriate lactation area. Ideally, a breastfeeding room or area should be equipped with an electrical outlet, contain comfortable seating, be near a sink with hot water and soap for hand washing and cleaning of equipment, and be near a refrigerator for storage of expressed breast milk.

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