



California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division

# Preschools SHINE Fact Sheet

## Criteria for Element 8: Wellness Policies

Adopt written wellness policies related to meal quality, mealtime environment, nutrition/garden education, physical activity, and professional development.

Nutrition and physical activity policies are critical to improving children's health and well-being. Strong, clear, and well-written policies can foster healthy practices and support healthy behaviors throughout the child care environment. Effective policies provide clear guidelines to staff members and families and influence the day-to-day practices in child care programs. These daily practices play a key role in helping children develop healthy eating and physical activity habits.

The policy development process consists of a few steps to get started:

1. Form a team to help draft policies. The team may include board members, program administrators or the director, teachers, food service personnel, a dietitian, a health education consultant, a physical activity consultant, and families and community members.
2. Review current science-based nutrition and physical activity guidelines from credible sources (such as the ones below) to become familiar with accepted standards and be able to assess the environment:
  - USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans (<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm>)
  - American Academy of Pediatrics, Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs ([http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/SpcCol/Preventing\\_Childhood\\_Obesity](http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/SpcCol/Preventing_Childhood_Obesity)) and Caring for Our Children <http://cfoc.nrckids.org/>
  - Harvard School of Public Health, Early Child Care Obesity Prevention Recommendations (<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/obesity-prevention/early-child-care/early-child-care-obesity-prevention-recommendation-complete-list/>)
  - National Association for Sport and Physical Education, Active Start: A Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Children from Birth to Age 5 ([http://iweb.shapeamerica.org/iweb/Purchase/ProductDetail.aspx?Product\\_code=304-10488](http://iweb.shapeamerica.org/iweb/Purchase/ProductDetail.aspx?Product_code=304-10488))



3. Conduct an assessment of your current policies and program practices before developing new policies. Are the policies/practices still current, or are some policies absent that should be in place in the program?
  - Use the Preschools SHINE Self-Assessment to review your nutrition and physical activity practices. Other self-assessment tools are also available online: the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAPSACC) and the Contra Costa Child Care Council Self-Assessment.
  - Identify strengths and gaps in the program and develop an action plan to fill the gaps.
4. Draft policies in language that is clear and leaves no gaps in the program.

**B**elow are examples of policies for Preschools SHINE elements 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7. Use the examples as a starting point to build policies suited to the site, and include more details (by adding when, how often, or by whom) to meet the needs of the agency.

### Element 2: Meal Quality

- Our program will serve meals and snacks that follow the CACFP Meal Pattern and are consistent with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Our program menus shall offer a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, poultry and fish, legumes, and low-fat or fat-free milk.
- Our program will serve foods that are developmentally appropriate and ensure that any food served does not place children at high risk for choking.
- Our program shall follow food safety principles for food preparation and ensure that all foods served are safe to eat.
- Our program shall use recipes that include healthy food items and utilize healthy food preparation techniques that maintain nutrients.
- Our program shall accommodate children with special dietary needs.



### Element 3: Mealtime Environment

- All meals will be served family style, and staff members will be positive role models for children as they sit with children and eat the same meal or snack that they eat.
- Children shall serve themselves and be provided with assistance when needed.
- Staff members shall talk with children at the table and promote a calm and relaxed atmosphere.
- Staff members must provide clean and adequate space for children to enjoy their meals and snacks.
- Staff members must encourage children to try new foods but never force them to do so, or to finish all of their food.
- Staff members shall allow children to decide when they are full and support their self-regulation of food intake.
- Children have adequate time to eat and enjoy their meals and snacks.
- Meals are adequately spaced, at least three hours apart.
- Staff members shall not use food as a reward for good behavior or withhold food as a punishment.



### Element 4: Nutrition Education

- Our program shall provide enriching classroom nutrition education experiences for preschoolers at least two to four times per month.
- All nutrition education activities at our child care program must be consistent with the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- For planned cooking activities with preschoolers, staff members will select nutrient-rich foods and recipes that have only moderate use of fat, sugar, and salt and use healthy food preparation methods such as baking, steaming, boiling, stewing, and sautéing.
- Our program shall use nutrition education curriculum and resources that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and USDA MyPlate concepts and contain appropriate health messages for preschoolers. The selected curriculum and resources will also reinforce math, science, language arts, and literacy concepts.
- Nutrition concepts and themes shall be integrated, whenever possible, into daily routines such as mealtimes, transitions, and physical activity.

## Element 6: Physical Activity

- Our child care program will schedule 60 minutes of structured physical activity and 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity each day.
- Our child care program curriculum requires play time outdoors at least two times per day, when weather permits.
- All active physical play, indoors or outdoors, is supervised by adults in the program.
- Our curriculum will incorporate physical activity into planned school-readiness activities, such as mathematics, science, language, and literacy concepts, and music.
- Our program does not support sedentary activity, and children are not sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time.
- Screen viewing time is limited to 30 minutes per week for our preschoolers and is not permitted during meals or snack times.
- Physical activity will not be withheld or used as a punishment at our child care program.

## Element 7: Professional Development

- Our child care program staff members shall regularly participate in professional development activities, as appropriate, related to meal quality (including CACFP menu planning, food purchasing, food preparation and service, and food safety), nutrition education, physical activity, edible gardening, and other relevant topics that will increase the quality of the nutrition and physical activity environment.
- Our child care program staff members shall participate in online and face-to-face training sponsored by the CDE's Nutrition Services Division and will attend other conferences and seminars as appropriate.
- Leadership team members in our child care program shall participate in the Preschools SHINE training program to foster professional growth.

