



# **Seeds for Healthy Eating Habits**

**Wellness Policies in the Early Care and Education Setting**



SECTION 1

# Wellness Policy Training & Support

# Outline

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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?

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- ❖ 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

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- ❑ **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

## WE MUST ACT EARLY

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.



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT:**  
Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity  
[www.cdc.gov/obesity/strategies/childcarece.html](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/strategies/childcarece.html)

ECE FACILITIES ARE IDEAL PLACES TO ENCOURAGE GOOD NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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.



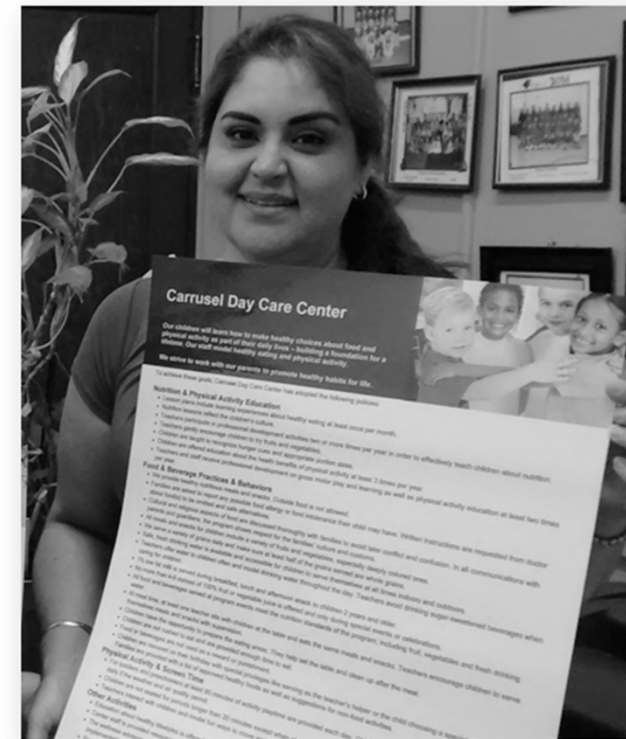
U.S. Department of  
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Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

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[www.cdc.gov/obesity/strategies/childcareece.html](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/strategies/childcareece.html)

# 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

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The Children's Workshop



*"...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

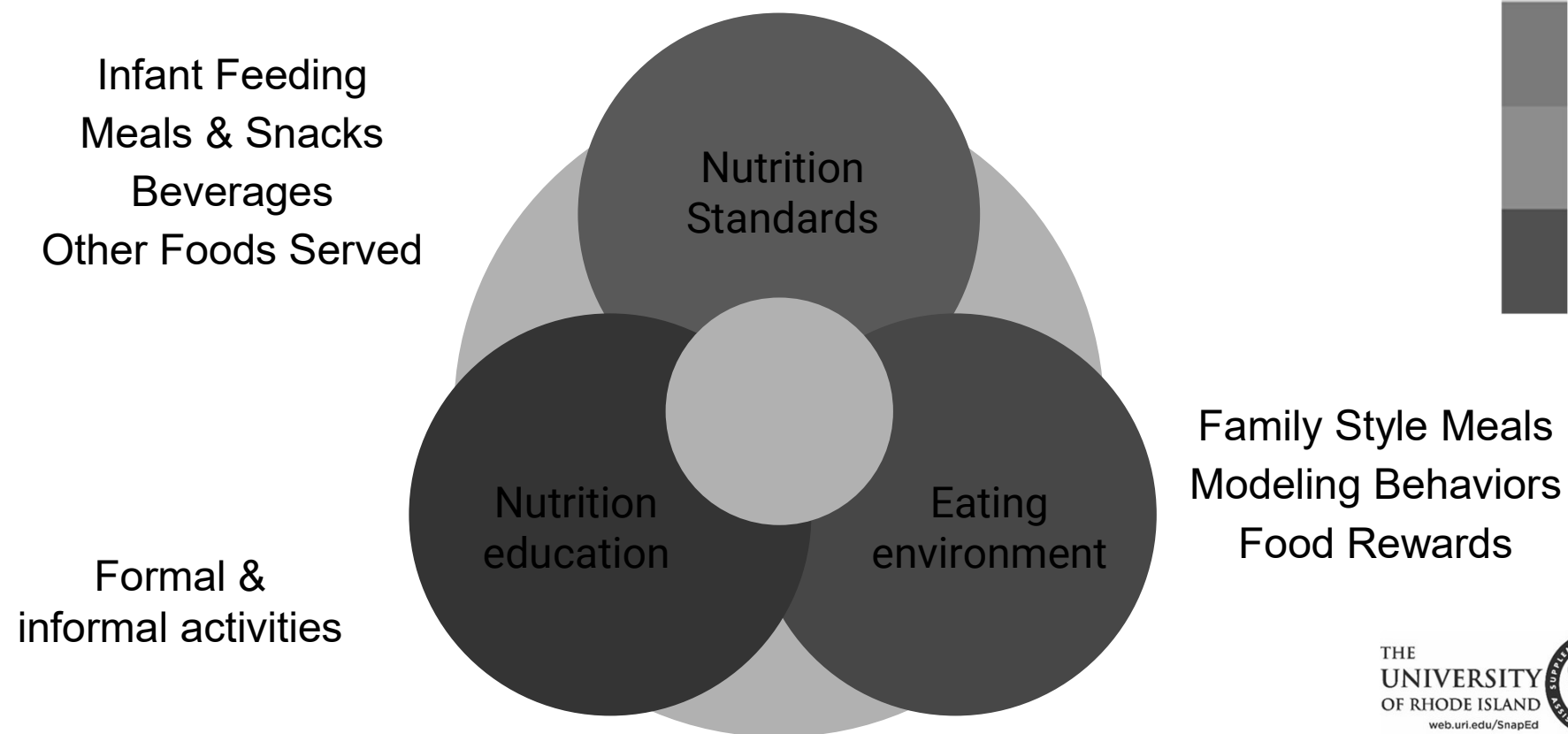
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- Goals and Standards for:
  - **Nutrition practices**
  - **Physical activity practices and education,**
  - Other program-based activities
- Evaluation Plan
  - Self-monitoring and measuring effectiveness



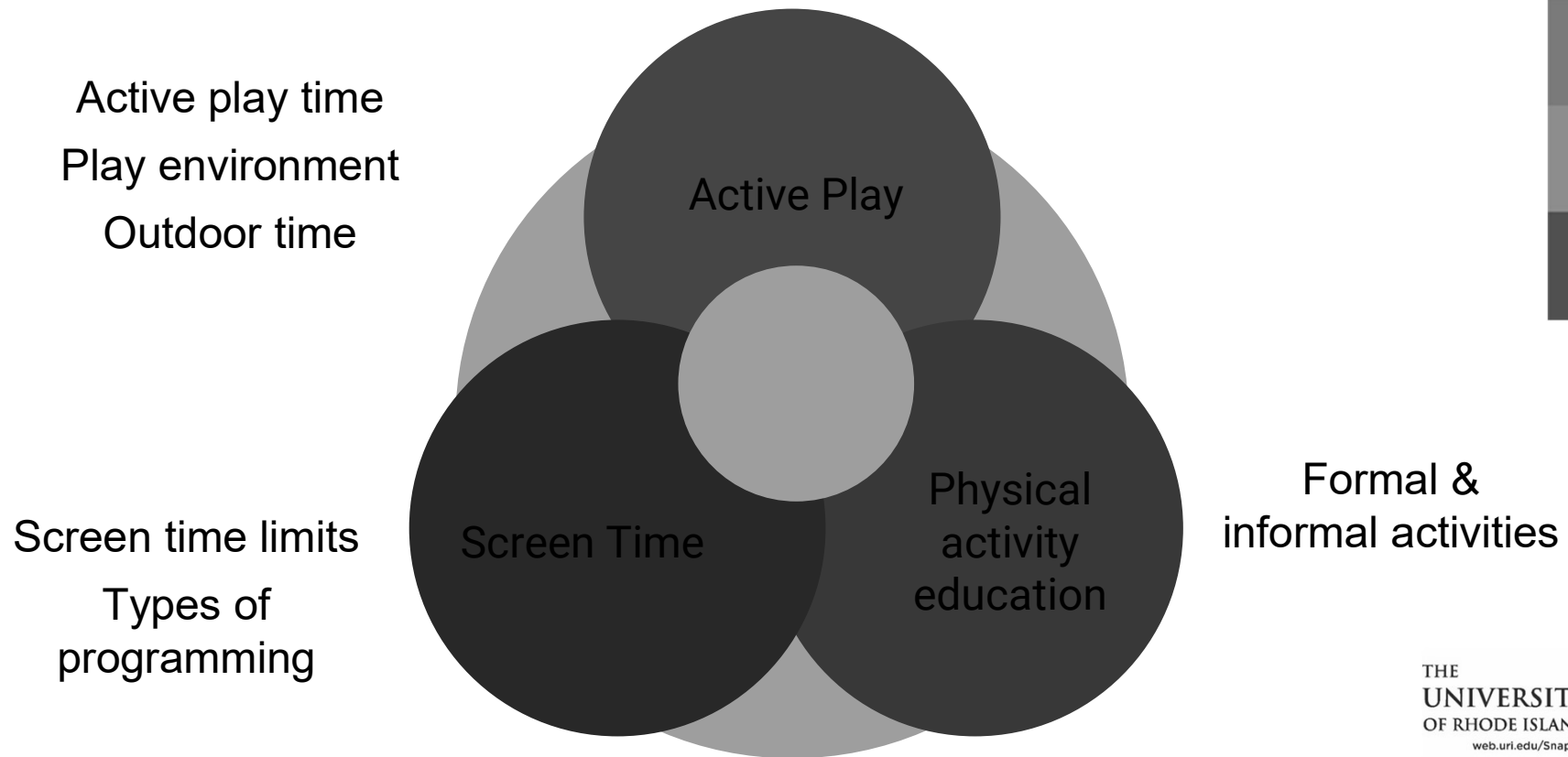
# Components of a Wellness Policy- Nutrition

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# Components of a Wellness Policy- Physical activity

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# Steps to Developing & Implementing Wellness Policies

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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/>



Go NAP SACC  
Self-Assessment Instrument

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Care Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## Breastfeeding & Infant Feeding

Go NAP SACC is based on a set of best practices that stem from the latest research and guidelines in the field. After completing this assessment, you will be able to see your program's strengths and areas for improvement, and use this information to plan healthy changes.

For this self-assessment, breastfeeding and infant feeding topics include teacher practices, program policies, and other program offerings related to supporting breastfeeding and feeding infants. All of these questions refer to children ages 0-12 months.

### Before you begin:

- ✓ Gather staff manuals, parent handbooks, and other documents that state your policies and guidelines about breastfeeding and infant feeding.
- ✓ Recruit the help of key teachers and staff members who are familiar with day-to-day practices.

### As you assess:

- ✓ Definitions of key words are marked by asterisks (\*).
- ✓ Answer each question as best you can, thinking about your general practices. If none of the answer choices seem quite right, just pick the closest fit. If a question does not apply to your program, move to the next question.

### Understanding your results:

- ✓ The answer choices in the right-hand column represent the best practice recommendations in this area. To interpret your results, compare your responses to these best practice recommendations. This will show you your strengths and the areas in which your program can improve.



Yield S, Barrios E, McWilliams C, Vaughn A, Etnosho T, Mecozza S, Hewson P, Ammerman A, Hewson S, Sommers J, Ball S. (2014). Go NAP SACC: Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care, 2nd Edition. Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Available at: [www.gonapsacc.org](https://gonapsacc.org).



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express breast milk, is available:  
 Always

feeding or expressing breast milk:

res  4 features

feeding mothers to store expressed breast

Always

breastfeeding are displayed in the

3-4 areas

provide breast milk for their infants by:

if breastfeeding support

4-5 topics

include the local public health department,

or trusted websites.

# Step 2. Prioritize - GO NAPSACC

❖ Best practices can be rewritten as policies

## Feeding Environment

19. Meals and snacks are served to preschool children in the following way:

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meals and snacks come to classrooms pre-plated with set portions of each food | <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers portion out servings to children | <input type="checkbox"/> Children serve some foods themselves, while other foods are pre-plated or served by teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> Children* always choose and serve most or all foods themselves |
|--|--|---|---|

\* This refers to preschool children who are developmentally ready to choose and serve foods themselves.

20. Television or videos are on during meal or snack times:

- |                                 |                                |                                    |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Always | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|

21. When in classrooms during meal and snack times, teachers and staff eat and drink the same foods and beverages as children:

- |  |                                    |                                |                                 |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Always |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|

22. Teachers and staff eat or drink unhealthy foods or beverages in front of children:

- |                                 |                                |                                    |  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Always | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|

23. Teachers enthusiastically role model\* eating healthy foods served at meal and snack times:

- |  |                                    |                                |  |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely or never | <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Often | <input type="checkbox"/> Every meal and snack time |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|

The best practice is listed in the right hand column

## Step 2. Prioritize - GO NAPSACC

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❖ Best practices can be rewritten as policies



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21. When in classrooms during meal and snack times, teachers and staff eat and drink the same foods and beverages as children:

Rarely or never

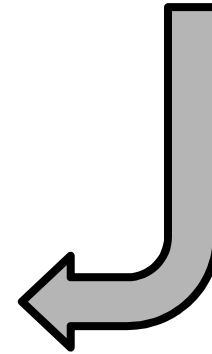
Sometimes

Often

Always

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**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

c. Juice

- Whole fruit is more nutritious than fruit juice and provides dietary fiber. Even 100% fruit juice provides fewer nutrients and fiber than whole fruit.
- Parents commonly provide young children juice at home.
- Drinks that are called fruit juice drinks, fruit punches, or fruit nectars contain less than 100% fruit juice and have lower nutritional value.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT	All the time	Most times	Sometimes	Rarely or never
If fruit juice is offered, it is 100% juice:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If fruit juice is offered, it is limited to 4-6 ounces per day:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-100% juice (e.g., fruit punch) is served:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other policies on serving juice at your program include:

.....

.....

.....

**SOME MODEL BEST PRACTICES FOR JUICE:**

- No more than 4-6 ounces (oz) of pure (100%) juice is provided to toddlers and preschoolers in a day including the amount of juice served at home.
- Juice is not served to children. Water is encouraged for thirst.

What policies regarding serving juice will you include in your Wellness Policy?

.....

.....

.....

# 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>

TEMPLATE- WELLNESS POLICY FOR HOME DAYCARES

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child care program name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nutrition & Physical Activity Education:**

Nutrition Education for Staff, Children, and Parents

- I lead planned nutrition education activities at least one time per week.
- I talk informally with the children about trying and enjoying healthy foods.
- I complete annual professional development on child nutrition.
- I offer families information on child nutrition 2 times per year or more.

Physical Activity Education

- I lead planned lessons for children focused on building gross motor skills at least 1 time per week.
- I often talk with children informally about the importance of physical activity.
- I complete annual professional development on children's physical activity.
- I offer families information on children's physical activity 2 times per year or more.

Other nutrition/physical activity education policies:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

estar para Guarderías

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

en su poster de la póliza de bienestar):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Elige por lo menos 1 póliza en esta sección

Padres

nutricional al menos una vez a la semana.  
abar y disfrutar alimentos saludables.  
re nutrición infantil.  
nutrición infantil 2 veces al año o más.

adades en desarrollar habilidades motoras

on los niños sobre la importancia de la

re la actividad física infantil.  
a actividad física infantil 2 veces al año o más.  
idad física:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Choose at least 1 policy in this section

# Step 3. Communicate

- ❖ Share your new wellness policy with staff, families, and the community
- ❖ Share multiple ways
  - Staff/family handbooks
  - Website
  - Bulletin boards
  - Newsletters

## Example Wellness Policy

### The Children's Workshop

Our children, staff and families will learn how to make healthy choices about food and physical activity as part of their daily lives – building a foundation for a lifetime. Our staff model healthy eating and physical activity.

We strive to work with our parents to promote healthy habits for life.



To achieve these goals, The Children's Workshop has adopted the following policies:

#### Nutrition & Physical Activity Education

- Nutrition education is provided through monthly nutrition activities, mealtime discussions about food, and inclusion of nutrition games and books in our learning centers.
- Children are offered education about the health benefits of physical activity at least once a month.
- Staff members receive training on nutrition, physical activity or food safety at least twice per year.

#### Food & Beverage Practices & Behaviors

- Healthy meals and snacks that follow the USDA CACFP meal patterns are provided daily. Food provided from home needs to be approved by the center director.
- Birthdays are recognized in a monthly celebration; guidelines will be center based and provided by the School Director regarding healthy options.
- Non-food alternatives will be encouraged for special events.
- Our center encourages healthy celebrations. Childcare providers will be provided with suggestions for healthier celebration foods and non-food activities.
- Staff and children will practice family style serving at all meals.

#### Physical Activity & Screen Time

- Children have outdoor active playtime at least two times daily, weather and air quality permitting. Please reference the weather quality guide. Indoor gross motor activities will be provided if weather is not permitting.
- Among children two and older, screen time is limited to no more than 30 minutes total per week and no more than 15 minutes per session. Only educational or physical activity programming is shown under direct supervision.

#### Other Activities

- All snacks and meals provided at staff meetings and events include healthy foods and beverages.
- Education on healthy lifestyles is offered to parents at least twice yearly. Materials are written in a language and at a level the families can understand.
- In all communications with families, early childhood providers show respect for families' cultures and customs.
- Review of wellness policies is done once a year to determine what, if any, changes are needed.

## Step 4. Action Plans!

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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.

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



# Sample Action Plan

Wellness Policy Goal:		
<p><b>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.</b></p>		
Action Plan Steps	Persons Responsible or Involved	Target Date for Completion
Communicate new policy with staff	Director	<i>Staff meeting Feb 21st</i>
Brainstorm idea of nonfood treats to bring in for birthdays and other celebrations with staff	Director	<i>Staff meeting Feb 21st</i>
Ask children to develop a list of healthy foods and activities they would enjoy at celebrations and parties.	Teachers	<i>Week Feb 25th</i>
Encourage parents to share with staff their child's favorite nonfood items or activities that can be included in the celebration.	All staff	<i>Week March 4th</i>
Create list of healthy food items and non-food items for celebrations	Director	<i>Draft by April 1st</i>
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	Director	<i>May newsletter</i>
Share healthy recipe ideas with parents around celebratory times	Center	ongoing
Post healthy sign-up sheets outside of each classroom	Classroom Teachers	Ongoing



# 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!

Wellness Policy Review Tool		
		Date: _____ Center: _____
Overarching Questions	(Y/N)	Comments
Have you communicated your Wellness Policy Poster or wellness policy with families?		
Are other healthy messaging materials displayed?		
Are other healthy messages communicated with families?		

Nutrition & Physical Activity Education		
Wellness Policy	Policy Status (Circle one)	Comments
<i>Nutrition education is provided through monthly nutrition activities, mealtime discussions about food, and inclusion of nutrition games and books in our learning centers.</i>	Implemented <input checked="" type="radio"/> Partially Implemented Not Implemented	<i>All classrooms are providing monthly nutrition activities, but only a few teachers have included nutrition game and books in their learning centers.</i>
	Implemented Partially Implemented Not Implemented	

# Sustaining Wellness Policies

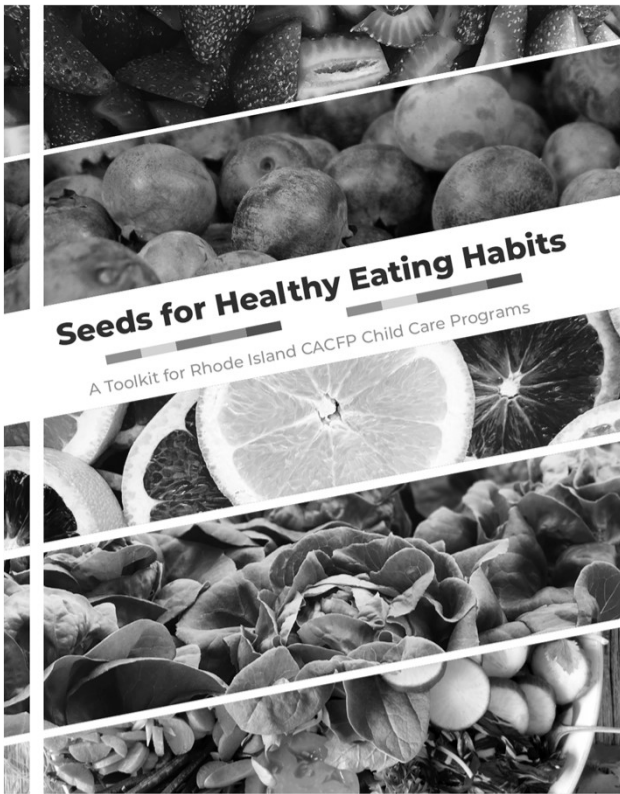
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- ❑ Use a team approach
- ❑ Add it to someone's job description
- ❑ Integrate it into staff manuals and staff training
- ❑ Engage families





# Want more?



\*This project was funded using U.S. Department of Agriculture grant funds.\*

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/> and click on "USDA Team Nutrition" tile.





**RIDE** Child  
Nutrition  
Programs

THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND  
[web.uri.edu/SnapEd](http://web.uri.edu/SnapEd)



# Thank you!

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