

DELCARE RULE GUIDANCE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN ECESAC 2012-2

DELCARE RULE 339 F. & G. A licensee shall have a written policy concerning food service including: ...F. If applicable, a procedure to be followed by Center staff if food brought from home fails to meet nutritional requirements as specified by Rules # 356-358; and G. This policy shall be provided to all parents/guardians at enrollment."

DELCARE RULE 345. A licensee shall ensure that meals and snacks are provided in accordance to the current USDA/Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements which are adjusted accordingly by the age of the infant and child as specified in **Appendix, CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements for Infants and CACFP Meal Pattern Requirement for Children.**

A. The licensee shall have supplemental foods from all basic food groups to serve children if meals provided by parents/guardians fail to meet nutritional requirements as specified in Rules # 356-358."

Intent:

Rule 339, previously Requirement 222, has remained unchanged since 1988. At that time and until present the intent as specified was, "good nutrition is essential for the child's health and growth. This requirement intends that the Center has a well documented policy concerning food service to ensure that the child's nutritional needs are met. This policy shall include the items specified above (written in the Rule) to ensure that ... 4) The Center provides supplemental meals and/or snacks if food brought from home does not fulfill child's daily nutritional needs. "

Rule 345, previously Requirement 228, wording was changed slightly from the 1988 Requirement but the basic requirements and intent remained the same. The intent of that Requirement and subsequent Rule as to ensure the child's nutritional requirements as recommended by the USDA are being met either by food provided by the Center or by the parent. These shall be appropriate to the requirements by age of children.

Since the time the original Requirements were written obesity in Delaware has increased. In 2006, approximately 37 percent of Delaware's children were overweight or obese. By 2011, Delaware was ranked the 21st most obese state in America with an obesity rate of 28% for adults. Over the last 15 years, obesity in Delaware has increased by 80%.

To combat Delaware's childhood obesity epidemic, Nemours launched a statewide program to improve child health. The "social-ecological" strategy reaches beyond clinical encounters to promote better health and behavior at multiple levels. Part of that strategy was to ensure healthy habits within child care programs. It was with the guidance of Nemours Health and Prevention Services and the Child and Adult Care Food Program that the previous Requirements #339 and 345 remained in the 2007 Delacare Rules for Early Care and Education and School-Age Centers in order to set a lifelong pattern of healthy living and reduce health care costs. The strategy continued to include meals prepared or served by centers and those provided by parents/guardians in order to provide equal opportunity for all children to benefit from healthy eating.

Related Delacare Rules:

Rules 340-360 and 370. These Rules cover nutrition requirements within Early Care and Education and School-Age Centers and Parent/Guardian Communication.

Guidance:

In order for children to grow up healthy, it's important they adopt healthy habits at child care, school, home and in their community. Families are children's first and most important teachers. Repetition of healthy behaviors in multiple contexts helps those behaviors "stick" as children grow older. Because you build relationships with families over time, you are in the position of being able to engage them as partners to support healthy habits. To successfully establish "team" approach to healthy eating it is important to engage families as partners, learning more about the hopes they have for their children and getting their support for the positive changes you're making at your center. You can do this by utilizing their skills and opinions in the same way you do with your staff. Listening and exchanging ideas in a respectful way can help families understand that you're working *together* to help their children grow up healthy.

These Rules *do not* require that:

- A child be deprived of food provided by parents/guardians that the child wants to consume;
- Foods sent from home be discarded;
- A child be forced to eat or consume a particular food;
- A child be disciplined for not wanting to eat;
- A child be deprived of food as a form of behavior. (this would be a non-compliance with Rule #362 J.)

To help a child achieve a healthy lifestyle requires a partnership between Centers and parents/guardians. To gain family support of healthy eating Centers should develop strong, clear and respectful communications with families. Centers shall provide parents with:

- information about current USDA/Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements so they can use that information to prepare food for their child;
- a copy of the Center's policy on nutrition and food service.

A Center that requires meals and snacks to be provided by parents/guardians to supply meals and snacks shall specify in their nutrition and food service policy that is communicated to the parent/guardian what actions the Center will take if a meal and/or snack is not provided. This may include, but is not limited to, contacting the parent/guardian to bring food to the child in care or take the child from the Center to provide the food, providing food to the child, charging the parent for any food provided. In no case should a child go without a meal or a snack because the parent/guardian failed to provide food.

If food brought from home fails to meet nutritional requirements as specified by Rules # 356-358 the Center shall:

- provide information or links to information about healthy nutrition and meals. It is suggested that information contained in "The First Years in the First State Toolkit: Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care", Administrator' Guide, pages 75-81 be used as well as other information contained in this Toolkit that is available for viewing or download at <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/state-resources/first-years-first-state-toolkit-improving-nutrition-and-physical-activity-quality> .

ECESA Centers that follow this Guidance will **not be cited for non-compliance** with **DELAWARE RULE 339 F. & G** and **Rule 345 A.** for food provided by parents/guardians that does not meet current USDA/Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern requirements.

Alternative Actions for Compliance:

Licensing regulations are the baseline for health, safety and quality care. Licensees may always exceed the Delacare standards in order to enhance the health, safety and quality of care. This Bulletin does not compel programs to change their current practice. Licensees may continue applying Rules #339 (F) & (G) and/or #345 (A) as they have been utilizing the policies they currently have in place that were written to meet the intent of the Rules.

Resources for Setting Policies and Approaches to Healthy Eating:

Communication: (taken from "The First Years in the First State Toolkit: Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care", Administrator' Guide")

- Provide information in your family handbook on the importance of a strong partnership, why you value their involvement and what you can do to work together. Nutrition policies concerning the standards of food served at the Center, expectations of food brought from home and any charges related to supplementing food must be specified. (Rule #370 P.)
- Distribute weekly, monthly or quarterly newsletters to update families on special events, positive changes at your center or home and the subject matter their children are learning.
- Invite families to give suggestions and ask questions in any way that works for them: by e-mail, conversation at the end of the day, a comment/suggestion box or at regular "Family Feedback" meetings.
- Listen and respond to ideas and concerns in a timely manner.
- Use electronic methods such as a website, e-mail list serves, blogging or Facebook® so families can give and receive information in a quick and convenient way.
- Create a family committee, such as a PTA or Family Nutrition Board. Give them a voice in menu planning, ask for healthy recipe contributions, and get their suggestions on how to best communicate with and engage other families.
- Bulletin boards are a great activity for kids, but they can also provide families with useful information and tips, as well as updates on center activities, menus and family events.
- Seek out local newspapers or magazines to increase community awareness of your work to help children develop a healthy lifestyle.
- Encourage staff to share information and photographs of children's activities with families via e-mail or face-to-face conversations at the end of the day.
- Encourage staff to develop strong relationships with families through interactions at the beginning and/or end of the day.
- Host a potluck where families bring a favorite healthy dish along with the recipe. Combine and distribute the recipes in a "Family Recipe Book.
- Work with local farmers to teach families the basics on how to start their own garden.
- Include families in relevant training: health, safety, healthy eating/physical activity, social-emotional development, etc.

Suggestions for Family Activities at Home: (taken from "The First Years in the First State Toolkit: Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care", Administrator' Guide")

- Have kids pack a family member's lunch. Parents/guardians may be surprised by what children choose!
 - Create a scavenger hunt around the house or neighborhood: Can you find three things that make it easy to be healthy and three things that make it hard?
 - Prepare healthy snacks and meals as a family. See the "Engaging Children" section for ideas on preparation tasks that include children in the process.
- <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/Delaware/nhpsadminguide.pdf>
- Conduct simple science experiments that involve food and are edible.
 - Have the whole family log each person's daily physical activity.

- Encourage family field trips to a local orchard, park, museum or farm and link these suggestions to activities that kids have done in child care.

The Importance of the Role of Staff: (taken from "The First Years in the First State Toolkit: Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care", Administrator' Guide")

Child care professionals play a key role in the healthy development of children, both as teachers and as role models. When staff members take an active role in promoting the health, nutrition and physical activity of the children in their care, they are encouraging the healthy development that is the foundation for exploration and learning across all domains. Encourage your staff to work together to make your program even better.

- **Ways to involve staff and parents/guardians in nutrition and physical activity of preschoolers:**
 - No Child Left Inside: <http://ncli.delawaregreenways.org>
 - Samples of family physical activity logs: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/downloads/activity-log.pdf>
 - MyPyramid kitchen activities for kids: <http://www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers/HealthyHabits/PickyEaters/kitchenactivities.html>
 - MyPyramid behavioral milestones for healthy habits <http://www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers/HealthyHabits/Milestones.pdf>
 - Interactive nutrition tools and tips for parents and health educators to use in promoting healthy living for the whole family: <http://www.nourishinteractive.co>

Resources:

"The First Years in the First State Toolkit: Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care", <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/state-resources/first-years-first-state-toolkit-improving-nutrition-and-physical-activity-quality>

- **Handouts and newsletters:**
 - <http://www.mypyramid.gov/>
 - <http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/educators/classroom-connections-handouts.asp>
 - <http://foodandhealth.com/handout.php>
 - California Childcare Health Program parent tip sheets:
 - <http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/html/pandr/factsheetsmain.htm>
- **Other resource sites:**
 - Healthy Child Care America: A program of the American Academy of Pediatrics which works to improve the early education, health and safety of children in out of home child care. www.healthychildcare.org
 - The USDA Team Nutrition *Resource Library*: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>
 - *Family Resources* provided by the USDA: http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=3&tax_subject=257&topic_id=1353&level3_id=5799&level4_id=0&level5_id=0&placement_default=0
 - *Family Guide to Healthy Eating*: <http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/parents/main.asp>

Indicators & Documentation:

- Center's food and nutrition policy.
- Center's communications with parents/guardians on food service and nutrition, fees and charges.
- Notes in a Child file.

- Observation during meal/snack time Licensing Specialist.
- Interviews with Center Staff, children or parents.
- CACFP Monitoring reports.

