

## **Kennedy Child Study Center School Wellness Policy**

The Kennedy Child Study Center (KCSC) is committed to creating a healthy school environment that enhances the development of lifelong wellness practices to promote healthy eating and physical activities that support student achievement.

This Wellness Policy clarifies nutrition and wellness activities at the agency. It is updated on an as-needed basis with input from the Executive Director, Education Directors, and Director of Operations. The Wellness Policy is available to students, staff, and the community upon request.

### **Nutrition Education Goals**

1. Students at KCSC will receive nutrition education that is developmentally appropriate and teaches the skills children need to adopt healthy eating behaviors.
2. KCSC will promote family style dining practices to create and reinforce a healthy and social environment for mealtime.
3. KCSC students will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the classrooms and at home through lesson plans that reflect New York State Prekindergarten Common Core Foundation goals about physical health and wellness.
4. Regular parent newsletters include healthy recipes that are often similar to recipes students and teachers have made in class.
5. KCSC will create public displays related to nutrition and physical activity where they can be easily viewed, such as bulletin boards and website / Facebook posts.
6. KCSC will work with a licensed nutrition educator to assist kitchen staff with adopting healthy recipes that meet nutritional guidelines as set forth by NYSED and NYCDOH.

### **Establishing Nutrition Standards**

KCSC follows meal patterns and nutrition standards established for Pre-K students by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). KCSC offers free breakfast and lunch to all students. Our breakfast and lunch menus are created by a licensed nutritionist and focus on:

- Whole and enriched grain products that are high in fiber and low in added fats/sugars.
- Fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables using healthy food preparation techniques, and 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice. Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables will be served most often, rather than juices and canned fruits and vegetables.
- Low-fat, plain milk and yogurt, and nonfat and/or low-fat real cheese, rather than imitation cheese.
- Nuts, nut butters (when allergies are not an issue), seeds, trail mix, and/or soybean snacks.
- Lean meat, poultry, or fish using healthy food preparation techniques.

KCSC does not use food as a reward. Water shall be accessible to students throughout the school day.

Teachers and staff are encouraged to model healthy eating and behaviors. Staff and students participate in family style lunch, during which staff reinforce appropriate mealtime behavior.

KCSC promotes serving healthy foods during meals and at school celebrations. The agency's Parent Handbook contains the following policies:

- "Food from Home" – KCSC policy does not allow food to be sent from home, in order to allow students to enjoy a nutritious breakfast and lunch that meets their dietary needs and is served in a supportive, family-style environment. This policy is reproduced in Appendix A.
- Birthday / Celebration Policy: This policy details appropriate ways for parents to participate in birthday celebrations in a way that keeps children safe while allowing us to continue to promote good nutrition. This policy is reproduced in Appendix B.

Both policies are included in the Parent Handbook and reviewed with parents at the annual registration session.

### **Setting Physical Activity Goals**

Students have at least 60 minutes of physical activity during the school day both through occupational and physical therapy (when applicable) and unstructured play time (see Appendix 2). Gross motor skills are continually addressed in classroom activities. In addition to working with professional instructors, KCSC will expand our efforts to train teachers to lead yoga and Zumba in the classrooms, thus increasing our ability to increase physical activity in the classroom.

Unstructured playtime, outside when feasible, is provided for 20-30 minutes daily for each child. This is in addition to any structured physical activity.

KCSC will encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.

### **Setting Goals for Measurement and Evaluation**

Measuring/Data Collection:

- KCSC records daily meal participation.
- Nutrition education activities are included in weekly lesson plans that are implemented in the classroom.
- Any staff nutrition education is documented.
- Any parent nutrition education is documented.

### **Non-Discrimination and Dietary Restrictions**

KCSC is a Provision II School and provides free breakfast and lunch to all students, regardless of income eligibility. KCSC may not discriminate against any students by refusing to provide them with free breakfast and/or lunch. Students with religious, medical, or other dietary restrictions are offered alternate meals that meet their requirements. KCSC will work with each family and develop a Food Modification Plan (FMP) to address any specific food allergies or extreme limitations surrounding the food menu. The FMP must be approved by the school nutritionist and/or school nurse and reviewed with the child's team at least every 6-8 weeks. The FMP will identify specific food substitutions and the source to provide the alternate item.

APPENDIX A  
“Food from Home” Policy

KCSC policy does not allow food from home. There are three reasons for this:

- Our menus follow New York State guidelines for preschoolers, meaning they are specially crafted to give your child the best possible nutrition.
- Mealtime is an opportunity to encourage all of our students – including “picky eaters” – to try new tastes, textures, and food items, in a supportive, family-style environment.
- Snacks or food from home can create tension at mealtime, causing unnecessary temper tantrums for children who do not have snacks from home, and distracting all our students from eating the healthy food we have prepared for them.

Nutrition is an important part of your child’s overall health and we can work together to create a lifetime of healthy habits while your child is young and impressionable. We have worked with thousands of preschoolers over the years, and we know that even the pickiest eaters can learn to enjoy the meals prepared at our school!

We are able to provide modified food items (soy, gluten free, etc.) and/or puréed food to meet each child’s individual needs. If you have significant concerns about your child’s eating habits or health, we will set up an appointment for you with our Registered Nutritionist. If you believe you need to send specially prepared food from home to meet your child’s dietary requirements, please speak with your Family Support Coordinator and we will discuss your concerns.

*The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) KCSC may not discriminate against any students by refusing to provide them with free breakfast and/or lunch. Students with religious, medical, or other dietary restrictions are offered alternate meals that meet their requirements.*

APPENDIX B  
**Birthday/Celebration Policy**

While we actively encourage parents to be involved and take part in activities and special events, there are specific guidelines we ask you to follow if you choose to celebrate your child’s birthday at school. Classroom staff always acknowledge children on their birthday in their own special way. Some classes celebrate with special birthday hats or Birthday Helper jobs, and of course by singing the Happy Birthday song. We understand that parents may want to join in on the fun and add to the festivities.

These guidelines help to keep children safe and allow us to continue to promote good nutrition.

*All staff will monitor what is being brought in for children. Since some of our children have food allergies or special diets, it is important to check with your child’s teacher before you bring a special party treat.*

FOOD CATEGORY	PROHIBITED	ALLOWABLE ALTERNATIVES
Beverage	Soda Fruit Drinks Chocolate Milk	We provide water throughout the day.
Dessert Item	Small candies Lollipops Large Cupcakes Ice Cream cakes	Mini Cupcakes/muffins Small Cookies Animal Crackers Baked Chips or Pretzels Fruit Ices
Fruit or Vegetable	Grapes, Cherries	Fruit-Kabobs (cantaloupe, watermelon, banana) Apples w/ Caramel Dip Veggies and Ranch Dip

Please do not bring Goodie Bags to distribute. Children often take out the small toys during the school day, and can become upset if they get lost or broken. They may go into their backpacks in search of the toys during the bus ride, which can be dangerous. In addition, some of the toys may be choking hazards.