

## WELLNESS POLICY

The Kennedy Children's Center (KCC) 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.

The Wellness Policy reflects the mandated guidelines of the New York State Child Nutrition Program (NYSCNP). Our breakfast and lunch program are funded through the NYSCNP.

### A. Nutrition and Physical Activity

#### *Establishing Nutrition Standards*

KCC follows meal patterns and nutrition standards established for Pre-K students by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). KCC offers free breakfast and lunch to all students. Our breakfast and lunch menus are provided by third party vendors who provide individualized meals for all students. Menus are available on our website and follow these guidelines:

- 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.
- Lean meat, poultry, or fish using healthy food preparation techniques.
- Water shall be accessible to students throughout the school day.



#### *Setting Physical Activity Goals*

Children participate in a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity each school day. This includes guided and structured play times in classrooms, and indoor play areas.

KCC encourages 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.

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

KCC is a Provision II School and provides free breakfast and lunch to all students, regardless of income eligibility. 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.) KCC 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.

## **B. “Food from Home” Policy**

**KCC policy does not allow parents to send 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 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 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 meticulous eaters can learn to enjoy the meals prepared for them.

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 that you need to send specially prepared food from home to meet your child’s dietary requirements, please speak with your Family Support Coordinator. Together we will discuss your concerns and develop a Food Modification Plan if necessary.

## **C. Birthday/Celebration Policy**

During COVID-19, we cannot have parents in classrooms to celebrate. 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.

The children and staff at Kennedy come from diverse backgrounds. Not everyone celebrates the same holidays, and not everyone celebrates a given holiday in the same way. Helping children understand the diverse nature of our school community is one of the goals of celebrating holidays at school. If you do not want your child to participate in holiday celebrations, please inform your child’s teacher.