



Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist...
Child Care Centers

A program self-assessment resource

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Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist **Child Care Centers**

Welcome to *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*. As a professional child care giver you want to provide the best care possible to the children in your care. Quality nutrition programs are an important part of providing best care to children. By participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) you have taken the first step to nutrition success. When you serve nutritious meals and snacks in a child-friendly setting, you are providing a quality nutrition program.

Completing the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* will help you determine if you are providing a quality nutrition program for the children in your child care center. When you are doing your job right, it is called **Best Practice**. The *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* includes Best Practices for quality nutrition programs. Completing the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* will help you determine if you are using Best Practices in your child care nutrition program.

There are three main sections to the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* -

1) Administration and Operations; 2) Nutrition; and 3) Health, Safety, and Well-Being of Children - Working with Parents and Others in the Community. Just follow the 5 easy steps below as part of your commitment to serving quality meals and snacks. Involve the child care staff, teachers, and parents whenever possible in completing the checklist.

Five easy steps to follow when using the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist*

- Step 1: Complete the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* by marking the response that best describes your nutrition program.
- Step 2: Decide which Best Practices you want to add or improve.
- Step 3: Select a few Best Practices at a time and begin to make improvements in your nutrition program.
- Step 4: Take advantage of nutrition education and other resources provided by the state and sponsoring organizations to make improvements. Take time to think about your progress in achieving the Best Practices you are working to improve.
- Step 5: Complete the *Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist* at least once a year to ensure that you continue to provide a quality nutrition program.

**Congratulations! You are taking the steps necessary to provide
the very best nutrition care for children.**

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

In this section, you will consider **Best Practices** related to the administration and operation of a quality nutrition program in your child care center.

Best Practice Checklist: Guidelines and Procedures

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines and procedures are designed to help you provide the highest quality nutrition program to children. Following these guidelines will assure that you receive reimbursement for meals and snacks. Best practices in quality nutrition programs include following all the guidelines and procedures of the CACFP. Your state agency or sponsor may have additional procedures that you must follow.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The child care center recognizes the importance of food and nutrition to healthy child development.				
The nutrition requirements of the CACFP, Head Start, or licensure are used to ensure that the food and nutrition needs of children are met.				
The child care nutrition program has written food and nutrition procedures for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding children with allergies • Foods brought from home • Food substitutions • Feeding children with special needs • Others are developed as needed 				
Child care personnel, including nutrition staff, teachers, and parents, are familiar with all food and nutrition procedures.				
All food and nutrition procedures are consistent with state and federal regulations.				
Daily food production records are accurate and complete.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Menu Planning and Food Preparation

Planning menus for meals and snacks in advance is important to meeting the nutrition needs of the children in your care. Taking time to plan menus, healthy cooking methods, and nutrition education are important Best Practices. Reading label directions and using standardized recipes are part of running a quality nutrition program. The state agency and sponsor are valuable resources for planning and preparing quality meals and snacks.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Work schedules for food preparation are developed, posted, and periodically reviewed.				
Batch cooking methods are used whenever possible.				
Meals and snacks are served so that all foods are at their peak of freshness and when the quality is the best.				
All child care staff, including teachers, are trained to observe children’s food choices.				
Observations of children’s food choices are noted and reported to the menu planner.				
How well children accept new foods is noted.				
Nutrition education activities are planned to help children accept new foods.				
Parents are involved in promoting new menus and foods offered in the child care center.				
The ethnic and cultural backgrounds of all children are considered when menus are planned.				
Menus are planned in advance.				
A complete set of standardized recipes is available in all food preparation locations.				
Child care nutrition program staff members are trained in the use of standardized recipes and how to follow package directions.				
Foods are prepared using healthy cooking methods such as steaming instead of boiling and baking, roasting, or grilling instead of frying.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Purchasing Foods

Purchasing foods can be a challenge. It is important to purchase high quality foods that will meet the nutrition needs of the children in your center as well as meet your budget. Wise shopping will ensure there is adequate food available throughout the month.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Nutrition labels and other similar information are used to help make wise food purchases.				
Enough food to meet the meal pattern requirements and the needs of the children is purchased.				
The <i>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs</i> is used to determine amounts of food to purchase.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Mealtime Considerations

Mealtime is one of the most important parts of the child care day. Creating the right kind of mealtime setting is one of the most important things you can do for the children in your care. Take time to make mealtime relaxing and enjoyable for you and the children. Mealtime is a great time to teach positive attitudes about eating and foods. It is also a wonderful time to explore other concepts such as colors, textures, and many others. Be sure to schedule plenty of time for meals and snacks.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Children have a clean, pleasant, and attractive place to eat.				
The arrangement of tables and seating areas encourages conversation among children and with teachers.				
Meals and snacks are served without distractions.				
Television and videos are turned off during mealtime.				
Caregivers are seated with and eat the same meals and snacks as the children.				
Children are allowed to participate in the meal service by setting the table and by using family style meal service.				
Children have enough time to eat meals and snacks without hurrying.				
Adults provide assistance to children during mealtime.				
Meals and snacks for older children are served at the same time each day. Feed younger children and infants on demand.				
Meal schedules are reviewed regularly to ensure children’s needs are being met.				
Adults talk about food in a positive way and encourage children to try foods.				
Children are never disciplined or scolded at mealtime.				
Food is not used as a way to reward or punish children.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Food Safety

Best Practices related to food safety should begin with a good understanding of the principles of safe food handling. Be sure to take advantage of training in this important area, and make it a priority in your continuing education plans for everyone in the center. Stress the importance of food safety to everyone and provide the necessary materials and spaces needed for proper hand washing by the staff and children and to keep the child care facility clean.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
All food safety and health regulations, licensure registration, or other rules are followed.				
All health and safety inspection reports are kept on file.				
When help is needed with health and safety regulation questions, the care giver knows whom to ask.				
All child care program staff members are trained in proper hand washing and other food safety procedures.				
Children are taught to wash their hands before eating, after toileting, and other times as needed.				
Children are not served foods that may cause choking.				
When shopping for food, these basic safe food handling guidelines* are followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase refrigerated or frozen items after selecting your non-perishables. • Never choose meat or poultry in packaging that is torn or leaking. • Do not buy food past "Sell-By," "Use-By," or other expiration dates. • Put raw meat and poultry into a plastic bag so meat juices will not cross-contaminate ready-to-eat food or food that is eaten raw, such as vegetables or fruit. • Plan to drive directly home from the grocery store. You may want to take a cooler with ice for the perishables. 				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Food Safety, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
<p>When storing food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F). • Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer with an appliance thermometer. The refrigerator should be at 40 °F or below and the freezer at 0 °F or below. • Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days; other beef, veal, lamb, or pork, within 3 to 5 days. • Perishable food such as meat and poultry should be wrapped securely to maintain quality and to prevent meat juices from getting onto other food. • To maintain quality when freezing meat and poultry in its original package, wrap the package again with foil or plastic wrap that is recommended for the freezer. • In general, high acid canned food such as tomatoes, grapefruit, and pineapple can be stored on the shelf for 12 to 18 months. Low-acid canned food such as meat, poultry, fish, and most vegetables will keep 2 to 5 years - if the can remains in good condition and has been stored in a cool, clean, and dry place. Discard cans that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted. 				
<p>When preparing food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always wash hands before and after handling food. • Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat, poultry, fish, and their juices away from other food. After cutting raw meats, wash hands, cutting board, knife, and countertops with hot, soapy water. • Marinate meat and poultry in a covered dish in the refrigerator. • Sanitize cutting boards by using a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water. 				
<p>When thawing food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrigerator: The refrigerator allows slow, safe thawing. Make sure thawing meat and poultry juices do not drip onto other food. • Cold Water: For faster thawing, place food in a leak-proof plastic bag. Submerge in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately after thawing. • Microwave: Cook meat and poultry immediately after microwave thawing. 				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Food Safety, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
<p>When cooking food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook ground meats to 160 °F; ground poultry to 165 °F. • Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops may be cooked to 145 °F; all cuts of fresh pork, 160 °F. • Whole poultry should reach 180 °F in the thigh; breasts, 170 °F. 				
<p>When serving food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot food should be held at 140 °F or warmer. • Cold food should be held at 40 °F or colder. • When serving food at a buffet, keep food hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays. Keep food cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice or use small serving trays and replace them often. • Perishable food should not be left out more than 2 hours at room temperature (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F). 				
<p>When saving leftover food, these basic safe food handling guidelines are followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discard any food left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature was above 90 °F). • Place food into shallow containers and immediately put in the refrigerator or freezer for rapid cooling. • Use cooked leftovers within 4 days. <p>Meat and poultry defrosted in the refrigerator may be refrozen before or after cooking. If thawed by other methods, cook before refreezing.</p>				

* “Basics for Handling Food Safely” is available at http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/facts_basics.htm

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Planning and Teamwork

It is hard to overestimate the importance of planning. Achieving quality in the nutrition program in your child care center requires a commitment of time and effort to plan for success. Planning and working together as a team will not only assure your success, it will save time in the long term. Take time to plan all aspects of your nutrition program and involve all the nutrition program staff, teachers, parents, and others that may be appropriate.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The menu planner, cook, teachers, nurses, other child care staff, and parents work as a team to assure healthy meals are served to children.				
The team meets regularly to review nutrition procedures and make changes when needed.				
The child care program staff, program sponsor, and parents are involved in planning healthy meals and snacks.				
The child care program maintains nutrition information and nutrition resources provided by state agencies and sponsor.				
Child care nutrition program staff use information on menu planning, meal service, and nutrition education from state agencies, sponsor, and other reliable sources.				
Goals and plans are made to ensure success of the nutrition program, such as plans and goals related to introducing new fruits and vegetables, serving foods prepared with less fat, and using food activities with children.				
Goals and plans for the nutrition program are shared with the child care program staff.				
Goals and plans are reviewed on a regular basis and revised when needed.				
All CACFP forms and required information such as menus and meals counts are kept on-site.				
Information is requested from the state agency or sponsor when needed.				
A copy of the budget approved by the state agency is on file.				
Income and expenditure projections are evaluated monthly.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Planning and Teamwork, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The foodservice budget is prepared based upon the current number of children enrolled in the center.				
When available, automated data processing is used to enhance financial reporting between the child care program and the state or sponsoring agency administering the CACFP.				
The cost of food from all sources, including food from vendors, is reviewed regularly to assure the purchase of nutritious foods.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Best Practice Checklist: Staffing and Training

The child care nutrition program staff members are an important part of the child care team. A caring staff committed to providing the very best care possible is essential to quality care for children. Training opportunities will help the staff learn Best Practices in all areas of the nutrition program operation. This checklist deals with the nutrition program staff, but the principles can be applied to all the child care staff.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Procedures for recruiting and hiring qualified personnel are in writing and used when making hiring decisions.				
Procedures for recruiting and hiring reflect the cultural diversity of the local child care environment.				
Procedures to allocate staffing are based on factors such as meal production and service system, enrollment, teaching and supervision and other assigned duties within the child care program.				
Staffing in the child care center is based on any existing state or local requirements.				
A formal staff performance evaluation system is established.				
Staff is trained on nutrition topics including CACFP regulations, menu planning, food safety, nutrition education, and other relevant topics.				
On-the-job training is provided to improve skills and productivity.				
All staff members have opportunities to attend educational programs, staff development activities, one-on-one training, and professional meetings.				
Additional training and staff development are provided as needed.				
The child care program takes advantage of training offered by state agencies and sponsors.				
Training activities are evaluated at least annually.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Staff and Training, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Internal staff meetings are scheduled regularly to discuss problems and encourage suggestions for program improvement.				
A standard procedure is used to evaluate staff performance.				
All child care nutrition program staff members are evaluated in writing at least annually.				
Staff members are recognized for outstanding performance.				
Staff members are encouraged to be active members in local, state, and national child care associations.				
Staff members are encouraged to take leadership roles in professional associations.				
Staff members are encouraged to participate in certification programs.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

In this section you will consider **Best Practices** related to planning, preparation, and serving child care program meals and snacks that meet the nutrition needs of all the children in your child care center.

Best Practice Checklist: Meal Requirements

The CACFP meal requirements are designed to help you provide the highest quality nutrition program. Following the meal pattern requirements is a first step in planning, preparing, and serving meals and snacks that meet the nutrition needs of growing children. Best Practices in quality nutrition programs include following all the meal requirements of the CACFP.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Menus are planned to meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements for meals and snacks.				
Planned menus are followed and menu substitutions are appropriate.				
Standardized recipes are used to assure the right amounts of foods are prepared and healthy food preparation methods are used.				
Required amounts of food are served at meals and snacks.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Nutrition Recommendations

The CACFP meal pattern requirements should be used in combination with the Best Practices listed in this section of the checklist. Special attention is needed for certain nutrients that are hard for children to get, such as vitamin A and fiber. Encouraging children to try a variety of foods will improve their chances of getting all the nutrients and energy they need for growth and development. Respecting the food cultures of children is important, too. Keep up with the latest information about nutrition and children; scientists are learning new facts all the time.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Menus are planned to provide foods rich in vitamin A and vitamin C (fruits and vegetables), iron (meats, poultry, green vegetables, and enriched breads and cereals), and calcium (milk, cheese, yogurt, and fortified orange juice).				
Meals and snacks are planned to provide the right amounts of calories and fat.				
Meals and snacks are planned to provide plenty of fiber by including whole grains and plenty of fruits and vegetables.				
Meals and snacks are planned to be sure they are not high in sodium or sugar.				
Menus are planned around a wide variety of foods, especially fruits and vegetables.				
Child care givers determine when children are served meals and snacks and what foods are served.				
Younger children are fed upon demand as much as possible.				
Children can decide how much to eat from the foods offered and are allowed to decline unwanted foods.				
Meals and snacks include foods familiar to children and consistent with the cultures represented in the center.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Special Food and Nutrition Needs

Not all children have the same nutrition needs; and some children have very special food, nutrition, and feeding needs due to disabilities, allergies, and other considerations. Best Practices in a quality child care nutrition program tend to the special needs of all children enrolled in the center. It is important to allow all children to participate as fully as possible in all child care activities, so keep the special needs of children in mind as you plan daily activities as well as menus. You may need to seek help in providing for children’s special needs. Ask your state agency or sponsor. Be sure to include parents and teachers in your efforts to meet children’s special needs.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Special nutrition needs are based on written recommendations of a recognized medical authority.				
Menus are adapted to meet the nutrition and feeding needs of children.				
The child care program works with state agencies and the sponsor to ensure that the special nutrition needs of children enrolled are met.				
A plan is in place for obtaining the services of a registered dietitian for consultation on diet orders when meals are to be modified.				
Children with special needs are included in mealtime activities as much as possible.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Feeding Infants

Feeding infants requires special care. Following the Best Practices in this section will help ensure you are feeding infants properly. If you would like more information on feeding infants, ask your sponsor or state agency. The Best Practices in this section are taken from *Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Program*. All child care providers will find this an important source of information. You can order or print the entire publication directly from the USDA Web site at http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/feeding_infants.html.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Best Practices outlined in <i>Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Program</i> are followed.				
Babies have a safe, caring, and pleasant mealtime; for example, babies are softly talked to, cuddled, and served foods that are not too hot.				
Concerns about how the baby is eating and growing are discussed with parents.				
The child care giver talks to parents about what the baby is eating at home and in child care to be sure that the baby’s nutrition needs are met.				
All signs of neglect in feeding are reported to the appropriate authorities.				
The infant meal pattern requirements are followed carefully.				
A breastfeeding-friendly setting is created by limiting other foods or beverages until parents indicate the baby is ready.				
The child care giver shares the benefits of breastfeeding with expectant mothers.				
Only age-appropriate foods and beverages are offered to babies. The child care giver works with parents in the introduction of solid foods.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Feeding Infants, *Continued*

Older babies are fed along with other children so they are part of the mealtime experience.				
Appropriate feeding equipment is used with all babies, including those with disabilities.				
Age-appropriate infant seats and high chairs for babies that are being fed solid foods are used.				
Safety straps in infant seats and high chairs are used.				
Babies and younger children are fed upon demand as much as possible.				
Babies are fed until they are full and not forced to finish a bottle or other foods.				
Young babies are held while they are being fed.				
Eye contact is maintained with babies during feedings.				
Babies are fed slowly, allowing at least 20 minutes for babies to feel full. Never make a larger hole in a bottle nipple to make milk come out faster.				
Cereal or other foods are never fed from a bottle.				
Babies and young children are never left unattended during mealtime, not even for a few minutes.				
Bottles are never propped and older babies never go to bed with a bottle or cup.				
Babies are not allowed to feed continually from a bottle or cup.				
Wash hands before and after handling breastmilk, formula, and other baby foods.				
Bottles are safely heated under warm running water and tested on the wrist to be sure the temperature is right. Never use a microwave oven or the stovetop.				
All bottles of breastmilk and formula are refrigerated as soon as they arrive and until ready to use. Bottles are never allowed to stand at room temperature.				
Breastmilk and formula are always used only for the baby for whom they are intended.				
All bottles and food containers are labeled with the baby's name.				
Unfinished bottles of breastmilk or formula are never used at another feeding.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Feeding Infants, *Continued*

Frozen bottles of breastmilk are thawed in the refrigerator in the amount needed for one feeding and are never refrozen.				
Directions for mixing infant formulas are followed carefully.				
All bottles are cleaned and sanitized before use.				
Baby food is never fed directly from the jar. The amount needed is portioned out and the remaining is promptly refrigerated.				
All uneaten baby food left in the baby's bowl, plate, or cup is discarded and never saved for another feeding.				
All bottles are labeled with the date and discarded according to the following schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discard all formula and breastmilk after 48 hours. • Discard all breastmilk that has been frozen and thawed after 24 hours. • Discard all frozen breastmilk that has never been thawed after 3 months. 				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
Child Care Centers
Best Practices for Quality Nutrition Programs

SECTION: NUTRITION

Best Practice Checklist: Nutrition Education

Providing current, age-appropriate nutrition education is an important aspect of the child care curriculum. Nutrition education activities can be used to teach math, science, social studies, and language. Music and art are also great places to use food-related themes. Work with teachers when planning the daily learning activities in the curriculum and include activities that teach about healthy foods and good eating habits for young children. This is a great way for the entire child care staff and parents to learn about healthy eating as well.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
Nutrition education is provided as a component of the comprehensive child care curriculum.				
The child care food and nutrition staff is included in curriculum planning.				
The child care program takes advantage of state and local agencies for nutrition education opportunities to remain current in nutrition knowledge and recommendations.				
The child care nutrition program staff supports educational efforts implemented in the classroom (i.e., providing appropriate foods for tasting parties).				
Current age-appropriate nutrition education materials are readily accessible to child care teachers.				
Plan nutrition education activities that follow the nutrition recommendations of the <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> and the <i>Food Guide Pyramid for Children</i> .				
The child care program takes advantage of lending libraries for nutrition education materials.				
The child care program staff initiate pleasant conversation at mealtimes related to the foods served, tell stories, and use other classroom activities that teach children about healthy foods.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
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SECTION: NUTRITION

Nutrition Education, *Continued*

Snacks offered for class activities promote healthy eating habits.				
Children help select and prepare healthy snacks.				
Snacks provided by parents, including snacks for special occasions, follow the same guidelines as regular CACFP meals and snacks.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
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**SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN -
WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY**

In this section you will consider **Best Practices** related to planning activities for the health, safety, and well-being of all the children in your child care center.

Best Practice Checklist: Safety

Safety is a high priority for all child care providers. You want to ensure that the children in your care are safe from accidental and intentional injury. The well-being of all children is important to you. Being prepared to deal with the unexpected will help you provide Best Practices that keep the children in your care safe.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
All child care program staff know how to prevent choking and how to help a child who is choking.				
Kitchen safety procedures, such as proper use of knives, microwave ovens, and all heating appliances, are used.				
Instructions for equipment operation and cleaning are accessible to the staff.				
A plan for reporting, investigating, and correcting the cause of accidents is followed.				
A plan for equipment maintenance is implemented.				
The child care nutrition program staff is trained in kitchen safety techniques.				
All trash is disposed of properly, especially diapers and similar waste.				
Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are in place and all child care program staff know how to use them correctly. Batteries for fire detectors are checked regularly.				
Fire evacuation plans are in place and practiced regularly with the children.				
Pets are not allowed in food preparation and serving areas.				

Comments:

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**SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN—
WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY**

Best Practice Checklist: Emergency Readiness

Most child care facilities never have to deal with natural disasters or other large-scale emergency situations, but it is critical to be prepared. Best Practices in emergency readiness start with being “ready” with a plan in place to deal with potential situations that might threaten the health, safety, and well-being of the children in your care. As with all other aspects of the child care operation, teamwork is important...work together and be prepared.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The child care program has a written plan for taking care of sick children and children who become sick while they are in the center.				
The child care program has a written plan for taking care of children when parents are late picking children up at the end of the child care day.				
The child care program has a written plan for taking care of children until they are picked up by parents when weather or other situations require the center to close unexpectedly.				
The child care program has a plan for providing services during a disaster or other emergency situation.				
Disaster plans include a 3-day food and water supply, other emergency supplies, and information as recommended by the Red Cross or Department of Homeland Security.				
Disaster plans are shared with all parents.				
All child care program staff are trained to implement disaster plans.				
All child care program staff and parents are familiar with any community disaster and emergency plans.				

Comments:

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
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**SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN—
WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY**

Best Practice Checklist: Promoting the CACFP

The benefits of the CACFP to the children in your child care center are worth sharing. Take opportunities to tell other child care providers about the program and how they can participate. You will also want to share your experiences in the program with the policy makers in your community and state. By spreading the word about CACFP and how it helps you offer a quality child care program through nutritious foods and nutrition education, you are helping make sure the CACFP continues to get the support it needs at the local, state, and federal levels.

Indicate if your program meets each of the Best Practices below. Check “Yes” if you are already doing a Best Practice. Check “Some” if you have started working on a Best Practice. Check “Maybe” if you might work on a Best Practice in the future. Check “NA” (Not applicable) if you do not think the Best Practice is something you need to be doing.

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The CACFP child care program promotes the benefits of the CACFP within the community.				
The CACFP child care center helps new program participants with questions about implementing the CACFP in their centers.				
Parents are made aware of benefits of the CACFP.				
The child care program shares child care menus with parents.				
The child care program shares ideas for healthy meals and snacks with parents.				
Parents are encouraged not to use foods as a reward or punishment.				
The child care program works with schools and other community groups to create a healthy food environment for all children.				
The child care nutrition program staff evaluates needs for providing additional meals such as supper in the center.				
The child care nutrition program staff evaluates needs for providing nutrition programs or services such as breakfast programs, after school feeding, summer feeding, elderly feeding, contract services, and parent functions.				
The child care nutrition program staff is involved in the development of plans for additional services.				

Steps to Nutrition Success Checklist
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**SECTION: HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN—
 WORKING WITH PARENTS AND OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY**

Promoting the CACFP, *Continued*

Best Practices	Yes	Some	Maybe	NA
The child care nutrition program staff provides public policy makers such as legislative personnel and government agencies with information about the benefits of the CACFP.				
Public policy makers are invited to visit the child care facility to observe the contribution of the CACFP to the health and education of children.				

Comments: