



## Outside Food Policy Sample

There are many guidelines or policies that child care settings can adopt to encourage a supportive nutrition environment for children in their care. Below is an example of a policy to help limit outside food being brought into the setting by parents/caregivers, which in turn may interfere with a supportive nutrition environment.

Additional guideline and policy examples such as Promoting Vegetables and Fruit, Healthy Eating Environment and Healthy Eating Charter can be found in the [Paint Your Plate Toolkit](#) (page 22-28).

### ***“Outside Food” Policy***

*[Date policy was developed]*

#### **Policy Statement**

**[Child care centre]** encourages a supportive nutrition environment by not allowing outside food or beverages to be brought in by parents/caregivers and offers children the same meals and snacks, at regularly scheduled times (see below for exceptions).

#### **Rationale**

Children are capable and competent eaters with a curiosity to learn to eat a variety of foods. A supportive nutrition environment provides opportunities to support the four foundations of optimal learning and development which are belonging, engagement, expression, and well-being.<sup>1</sup>

This policy gives children the opportunity to try a variety of safe and nutritious foods to develop healthy eating behaviours.

- ✓ A variety of foods and beverages are offered to meet the Ontario Ministry of Education licensing requirements (Canada’s Food Guide and Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants).<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Food is prepared using safe food handling practices.
- ✓ Food offered is free from food allergens of concern to children with food allergies or sensitivities, preventing adverse reactions.



When no outside food is brought into the centre and when all children are provided the same food to eat:

- ✓ Children are more likely to feel included and engaged with their peers and educators during meal and snack times, which helps supports their learning.
- ✓ Children are supported to come to the table hungry and ready to eat nutritious food offered at meal and snack times.
- ✓ Conflicts between children may be avoided.
- ✓ Parents don't feel 'pressured' by other parents/providers to provide outside food (e.g., for special days).
- ✓ It provides safer and more inclusive eating environment for children with food allergies and other restrictions.
- ✓ Food safety can be ensured and monitored through the entire process of food purchasing, preparation and serving.
- ✓ Parents/caregivers are aware of all the foods being offered to their children.
- ✓ Ensure that children are not exposed to food marketing and advertising while in child care centre.

#### **Exceptions to this policy:**

- ✓ Special dietary concerns (such as food allergies) or feeding arrangements detailed in written instructions from a parent/caregiver labelled with full name and date.
- ✓ Food for infants under one year of age, with written instructions from a parent/caregiver.
- ✓ Expressed breast milk that is labelled with full name and date.
- ✓ Alternative arrangements (e.g., day camps, bagged lunches for licensed kindergarten groups, catering service).
- ✓ Emergency situation.

**Note:** If a child needs additional meals or snacks at the child care setting, speak to the supervisor to discuss arrangements.

Ontario Dietitians in Public Health (ODPH) Child Care Resources can be found here:

<https://www.odph.ca/child-care-resources>.

<sup>1</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education. How Does Learning Happen? 2014. Available at:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/howlearninghappens.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Ministry of Education. Child Care and Early Years. Act 2014. Available at:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/15013#BK54>