



## Ohio Administrative Code

### Rule 5180:2-12-22 Meal preparation/nutritional requirements for a licensed child care center.

Effective: July 1, 2026

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(A) What are the requirements for meals and snacks in a licensed child care center?

The center is to:

- (1) Offer varied, nutritious, and appropriately timed meals and snacks.
- (2) Offer food from the five basic food groups: protein, grain, fruit, vegetable, and dairy according to the following:
  - (a) Meals consist of food from each of the five basic food groups.
  - (b) Breakfast consists of food from three of the five basic food groups.
  - (c) Snack consists of food from two of the five basic food groups.
- (3) Offer food that is not a choking hazard, and that is developmentally appropriate in size, amount and texture.
- (4) Provide meals and snacks according to the posted current weekly menu, and spaced no more than four hours apart.
  - (a) The menus shall be posted in a visible place readily accessible to parents.
  - (b) The menus shall include all meals and snacks being served by the center, any substitutions shall be noted at the time of the change.
- (5) Offer milk based on parental preference.
- (6) Offer only one hundred per cent, undiluted fruit or vegetable juice, if used to meet the fruit or vegetable requirement for meals and snacks. Other fruit or vegetable juice is permitted as a beverage alternative.
- (7) Offer food to ensure that no child goes more than four hours without at least a meal, except when sleeping.
- (8) Obtain a physician's written instructions if administering a medical food to any child or if an entire food group is eliminated. When special diets are required for cultural or religious reasons, the center shall obtain written, dated and signed instructions from the child's parent unless the special diet is part of a center program.
- (9) Set its own policy regarding the accommodation of a parent's alternate diet for a child when the center provides the meal.



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- (10) Provide for the safe storage of all food, including milk (formula and breast milk for infants). If safe storage of milk is not available on routine trips or field trips, milk may be served at snack time instead of at the meal.
- (11) Have provisions for safe storage of parent provided food.
- (12) Have drinking water freely available to children. If drinking fountains are used, there shall be sufficient water pressure so that the child's mouth does not come in contact with the water dispensing mechanism. Individual bottles of water are to be labeled with each child's name.
- (13) Ensure that individual servings or individual packages of food or drink that have been served to a child are discarded or sent home with the child if not consumed during meal or snack time. Food or drink that is individually packaged and the package has not been opened may be stored at the center to be served again or sent home.
- (14) Not have screens (television, computer, etc.) on during meals and snacks.

(B) What requirements shall a center implement for safe, independent self-feeding?

The center shall ensure that:

- (1) Food is not served on bare tables. Food for infants may be placed directly on an individual highchair tray if the tray is removed, washed, and sanitized.
- (2) Eating utensils and dishes are suitable for the age and developmental level of the children.