**Itsy Bitsy Steps Learning Center**

**Child Care Nutrition Policy**

Policy Statement

Good nutrition is vital to children's overall development and well-being. In an effort to provide the best possible nutrition environment for the children in our facility, **Itsy Bitsy Steps Learning Center** has developed the following child care nutrition policies to encourage the development of good eating habits that will last a lifetime.

Child Care Nutrition

**Itsy Bitsy Steps Learning Center** follows the child care nutrition guidelines recommended by the USDA CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) for all the foods we serve. To provide a healthy and balanced diet that includes fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and limits foods and beverages that are high in sugar, and/or fat, our nutrition policy includes the following:

**Fruits and Vegetables**

* We serve fruit at least 2 times a day.
* We offer a vegetable other than white potatoes at least 2 times a day.

**Grains**

* We serve whole grain foods at least 2 times a day.

**Beverages**

* We limit juice intake to once per day in a serving size specified for the child’s age group. When served, the juice is 100% fruit juice.
* We do not serve sugar sweetened beverages.
* We serve only skim or 1% milk to children age 2 years and older.

**Fats and Sugars**

* High fat meats, such as bologna, bacon, and sausage, are served no more than once per week.
* Fried or pre-fried vegetables, including potatoes, are served no more than once in a 2-week period.
* We limit sweet food items to no more than once per week.

**Role of Staff in Nutrition Education**

* Staff provide opportunities for children to learn about nutrition 1 time per week or more.
* Staff act as role models for healthy eating in front of the children.
* At least 1 staff member joins children at the table for meals and snacks.

Meal and snack times are planned so that no child will go more than four hours without being offered food. We provide a variety of nutritionally balanced, high quality foods each day so please do not send your child with outside food and drinks.

**Allergies/Special Diet**

If your child has allergies, and requires a modified diet, you must list it on the medical report. We will need to have a physician's written instructions describing any foods the child is not permitted to eat. This helps to ensure us if your child should eat at the center. If a child has so many food allergies, we require parents to provide his/her breakfast, lunch and snacks.

Weekly Menus

Our weekly menus are carefully planned to follow child care nutrition guidelines at every meal. Each menu is designed to provide a wide variety of nutritious foods that are different in color, shape, size and texture. All of our child care menus include foods that are culturally diverse and seasonally appropriate. We also like to introduce new and different foods and include children’s favorite recipes in our menu planning. Menus are rotated on three week basis to provide the children with a balance of variety and familiarity. Menus are adapted to incorporate local and fresh in-season produce when available.

Nutrition and Punishment

Staff will never use food as a reward or as a punishment.

Celebrations

From birthday parties to holidays there are many opportunities for celebrations in our child care center. A birthday party will be held at the end of each month in each classroom. If you would like to recognize your child’s actual birthday, we request that you not send in treats or goody bags but instead send a birthday book or have your child wear a birthday t-shirt. For holiday celebrations, a sign–up sheet with specific foods and beverages will be placed on the classroom door.

Professional Development

Annual nutrition training is required to ensure that all staff understand the important role nutrition plays in the overall well-being of children.

***My signature below indicates that I have received a copy of the nutrition policy, it has been reviewed with me, and I have read and understand this policy.***

**Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Please circle as appropriate: STAFF PARENT**

**If parent, name of child\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**