

TOP Star Best Practice Recommendations for Child Care

Key Area	Best Practices
Nutrition	
N1. Fruits and Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer fruit (not juice) at least 2x a day. • Serve fruit canned, fresh, or frozen, in its own juice, all of the time. • Offer vegetables (not fried) at least 2x a day. • Offer vegetables, other than potatoes, corn or green beans 1 or more times per day. • Prepare cooked vegetables without added meat fat, margarine or butter.
N2. Meats, Fats, and Grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer fried or pre-fried potatoes less than once a week or never. • Offer fried or pre-fried meats or fish less than once a week or never. • Offer high-fat meats less than once a week or never. • Offer beans or lean meats at least once a day. • Offer high fiber, whole grain foods at least 2x a day. • Offer sweets or salty foods less than once a week or never.
N3. Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make drinking water easily visible and available for self-serve both indoors and outdoors. • Offer 100% fruit juice 2x a week or less. • Offer sugary drinks rarely or never. • Serve skim or 1% milk to children over 2 years. • Locate soda and other vending machines off-site.
N4. Menus and Variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a cycle menu of 3 weeks or greater that changes with the seasons. • Include a combination of new and familiar foods on weekly menus. • Include foods from a variety of cultures on weekly menus.
N5. Feeding Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should help children determine if they are full before removing their plate. • Staff should help children determine if they are still hungry before serving additional food. • Staff should gently and positively encourage children to try a new or less favorite food. • Do not use food to encourage positive behavior.
N6. Foods Offered Outside of Regular Meals and Snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and enforce written guidelines for healthier food brought in and served for holidays and celebrations. • Celebrate holidays with mostly healthy foods and non-food treats. • Fundraising should consist of selling non-food items only.
N7. Supporting Healthy Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should talk with children about trying and enjoying healthy foods. • Staff should join children at the table for meals and consume the same food and drinks. • Always serve meals family style. • Staff should rarely or never eat less healthy foods in front of the children. • Provide visible support for healthy eating in 2 to 5 year old classrooms and common areas through use of posters, pictures, and displayed books.
N8. Nutrition Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training opportunities on nutrition (other than food safety and food program guidelines) for staff 2x per year or more. • Provide nutrition education for children through a standardized curriculum 1x per week or more. • Offer nutrition education opportunities to parents 2x per year or more.
N9. Nutrition Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a written policy on nutrition and food service that is available & followed. It may include items from the previous eight nutrition key areas.

Physical Activity	
PA1. Active Play and Inactive Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide at least 30 minutes of tummy time for infants each day. • Provide toddlers with at least 30 minutes of structured activity and at least 60 minutes of unstructured activity each day. • Provide at least 120 minutes of active play time each day for preschoolers. • Provide teacher-led physical activity to children 2 or more times per day. • Provide outdoor active play time 2 or more times per day. • Active play time should never be withheld for children who misbehave and additional active play time should be given for good behavior. • Ensure that children are not seated for periods of more than 30 minutes. • Rarely or never show television or videos. No screen time for children under 2.
PA2. Play Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a wide variety of fixed play equipment available that accommodate the needs of all children. • Make a large variety of portable play equipment available for children to use at the same time. • Make outdoor portable play equipment freely available to all children at all times. • Outdoor play space should include open, grassy areas and a track/path for wheeled toys. • Make indoor play space available for all activities, including running.
PA3. Supporting Physical Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to be active and join children in active play. • Provide visible support for physical activity in 0 to 5 year old classrooms and common areas through use of posters, pictures, and displayed books.
PA4. Physical Activity Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training opportunities on physical activity (not including playground safety) for staff 2x per year or more. • Provide physical activity education for children through a standardized curriculum 1x per week or more. • Offer physical activity education opportunities to parents 2x per year or more.
PA5. Physical Activity Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a written policy on physical activity that is available and followed. It may include items from the previous 4 physical activity key areas.
Breastfeeding	
B1. Breastfeeding Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a written policy that is available and followed. It may include items such as: • Provide a clean, private place for mothers to breastfeed or express milk • Provide a refrigerator for storage of expressed breast milk • Show sensitivity to breastfeeding mothers and babies • Staff are trained in handling human milk • Breastfeeding employees are provided flexible breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or milk expression • Breastfeeding promotional materials are displayed.
B2. Breastfeeding Infant Feeding Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan includes baby's regular feeding schedule; • How baby is to be fed; • How breast milk is to be stored and served • What the provider should do if baby is hungry and mom is unavailable, or her supply of expressed breast milk is gone.