



Department of Early Education and Care

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Small Group, Large Group and School Age Child Care Licensing

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: Developing a Basic Nutrition Training Program

606 CMR 7.12(2) All educators must receive basic training in the following: USDA recognized nutrition requirements for the health growth and development of children and food choking hazards.

Background and Regulatory Intent:

This regulation is intended to increase awareness of the USDA recognized nutrition requirements for the healthy growth and development for children and to increase awareness of choking hazards related to foods. National research indicates that obesity rates have tripled in the past 30 years resulting in a generation of children who may face a shorter lifespan than their parents. Children and adolescents who are overweight are at risk for health problems during their youth as well as during their adulthood. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) children who are obese are more likely to have risk factors including those associated with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes. These health issues can carry over into adulthood as obese children and adolescents have a greater chance of becoming obese adults.

It is clear that eating patterns and poor nutrition can lead to lifelong health problems. This highlights the importance for child care providers who either provide meals and/or snack or monitor lunches/snacks sent in by parent(s) to receive a basic training in the USDA requirements. This regulation also creates an opportunity to provide families with resources and information about the importance of good nutrition.

The following outline includes highlights of what might be included in the basic training:

- Good nutrition and why it is important
- Meal patterns – what are they and how are they different for each age group
- Snacks- what should be included in a nutritionally complete snack
- Information on the five main food components of milk, meat and meat alternatives, vegetables, fruits and grains and breads that are used in meal patterns.
- USDA Food Guide Pyramid for children
- Foods that may cause choking in children and what to do if that happens
- The importance of physical activity
- The importance of a curriculum for children that includes nutrition education

When developing the training, please look for assistance and guidance from resources such as:

- USDA website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/buildingblocks.html>
- Women , Infants and Children (WIC) food program at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/>
- The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) managed by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/CND/Care/>
- University of Massachusetts Extension Services at <http://www.umassextension.org/nutrition/>
- Nutritionists, Health Care Consultants