

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHILD CARE CENTER FOOD POLICY

Proper nutrition is important for the health and development of a child. Nutritional foods should be offered throughout the day to ensure children are getting the nourishment and energy they need to learn, grow, and be healthy. There are connections between nutrition and health, and health and learning. This makes it important for caregivers to show children what it means to eat for good health, including how important it is to eat a variety of foods, and to provide proper nutrition through the meals and snacks served in child care. In addition to eating nutritious foods, meal times are an opportunity for learning and developing social and self-help skills. Offering a pleasant meal time environment gives children the opportunity to enhance their social skills by letting them interact with each other. Self-help skills develop when children are encouraged to set the table, clear their place, wash their hands before and after meals.

Obesity in children has become one of the primary concerns for parents and health care professionals. Caregivers are responsible for the dietary decisions of children while in child care. Good nutrition fosters children's healthy growth and development and reduces the risk that children will become overweight or obese.

- Morning and afternoon snacks are provided at the center.
- Snack list is posted outside each classroom
- Lunches and meals are to be brought from home must be dated and labeled with your child's 1st and last name. Leftover food will be sent home with your child or discarded at the end of each day.
- Please place an icepack in your child's lunch as food should be stored at an appropriate temperature until eaten.
- Please provide your child with a healthy lunch with the different food groups.
- The center has microwaves to heat your child's food, however, Thermos are greatly encouraged to keep the wait time down.
- The center has additional food available to supplement the meals brought from home that do not meet the nutritional requirements.
- Foods such as sweets, soft drinks, potato chips, candy, cakes, cookies and fruit juices with less than 100% real fruit juice are not considered to have any nutritional value and are welcomed for special occasions or accepted occasionally.
- Special occasions are birthdays, holidays, and other activities used to enhance learning, or other similar events. **Items brought in for special occasions and shared with other children must be store bought with labels still attached.**
- When food is sent from a child's home and it will only be served to that child, there are no restrictions on the source. However, if food is prepared and sent from home to be shared with other children, the food must be store bought with labels still attached. This allows parents to

bring in goods to celebrate birthdays but make sure you are aware of the ingredients used if children are on a special diet or have allergies.

- Each child must have a water cup or water bottle. We encourage the children to drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated.
- Parents are asked to provide information regarding your child's food allergies and/or special diet.
- Special diet includes dietary requirements due to allergies or other medical issues, or possibly be for religious reasons. It does not include parental preferences.
- Parents are asked to provide a written emergency treatment plan to be followed in the event a child has an allergic reaction. The plan should include a list of all allergens, signs of an allergy reaction, and types and doses of medications to be used. Identify a protocol for an emergency and include contact information for the child's doctor.
- Parents are asked to abide by the No Peanut Zone if their child's classroom is a peanut free classroom.
- Children will not be allowed to walk around or sit on the floor while eating.
- Children eating table food or feeding themselves will be seated in high chairs or at child-size tables with steady chairs and seat belts to keep them from walking with food protect them from the possibility of choking.
- Propping a bottle or laying a baby down in a crib with a bottle may cause choking or ear infections. Babies will be held while eating until they are able to hold the bottle themselves, then they may be placed in the high chair to drink their bottle.
- Breastfeeding is the recommended feeding practice for infant's birth to 12 months and is welcomed at our center. Breastfeeding supports optimal growth and development of infants. It decreases the possibility that babies will get a variety of infectious diseases, ear infections, diarrhea, and some forms of cancer. Breastfed infants have a lower incidence of sudden infant death syndrome. Breastfed infants have a lower risk of obesity in childhood and in adolescence.