

# Nutrition Best Practices (Toddlers/Preschoolers)

As a parent who works outside of the home and utilizes child care, it can be helpful to know about nutrition best practices for child care settings. **Best practices often exceed licensing requirements or other regulations, and are intended to be a resource for child care professionals and parents.** The following is not an exhaustive list of best practices, but instead are those that are the focus of the ChildcareAlive! program. See the resources listed at the bottom of this page for more best practices.

## REMEMBER TO THANK YOUR CHILD CARE PROVIDER FOR OFFERING HEALTHY FOODS!

- Drinking water is visible and freely available indoors and outdoors.
- 100% fruit juice is limited to no more than 4-6 oz/day or less for children 1 year and older.
- Sugary drinks, such as fruit drinks, sports drinks, sweet tea, and soda, are never or rarely offered.
- Children 2 years and older are served only 1% or non-fat milk (unless otherwise directed by child's health care provider).
- A fruit (not including 100% juice) and/or a vegetable (not including French fries, tater tots, or hash browns) is served at every meal and snack.
- Whole grain-rich foods are offered at least 2 times per day, including whole wheat bread, oatmeal, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, and whole wheat tortillas.
- Fried/pre-fried potatoes are offered less than once per week.
- Fried/pre-fried meats are offered less than once per week.
- Planned nutrition education is incorporated in classroom routines 1 time per week or more. (Nutrition education can include circle time lessons, cooking or gardening activities.)
- Meals to preschoolers are served family style so that children are encouraged to serve themselves (with adult help as needed).
- A written nutrition policy is included in parent handbooks, staff manuals, or other documents, and includes a variety of nutrition best practices, including:
  - Quality of foods and beverages provided
  - Healthy mealtime environments
  - Providers/teachers encourage and model healthy eating
  - Food is not offered to calm children or to encourage appropriate behaviors
  - Planned and/or informal nutrition education is delivered to children
  - Provider/teachers regularly receive professional development on child nutrition
  - Education is provided to families on child nutrition

### *Pre-Fried Meats/Potatoes*

*Pre-Fried potatoes and meats include items that are sold frozen and then cooked in an oven or microwave. These foods include frozen French fries, tater tots, hash browns, chicken nuggets, fish sticks, corn dogs, and breaded chicken patties.*



#### Sources:

Caring For Our Children 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition ([www.cfoc.nrckids.org](http://www.cfoc.nrckids.org)),  
Let's Move! Child Care Checklist ([www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org](http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org)),  
Go NAP SACC ([www.gonapsacc.org](http://www.gonapsacc.org)),  
CACFP Updated Meal Patterns 2017 ([www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks))