

FOOD SERVICE IN CHILD CARE FACILITIES

Nutrition and food safety play an important role in creating a safe and healthy child care setting. Interior Health is committed to assist facilities in creating environments where children are supported to be healthy eaters and are protected from foodborne illness.

Nutrition

Early Learning environments such as early childhood centres, family daycares and preschool programs play a key role in helping children build healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime. If you and/or your staff have the ability and the capacity to supply meals and snacks, offer fresh, healthy and appealing foods. If parents are sending food for their children, inform them of your nutritional policies and provide supports to ensure they bring healthy and safe food to the daycare. There is a list of suggested resources on the last page of this document.

Care providers are required to promote healthy eating and nutritional habits. A healthy feeding relationship helps children learn to accept new foods at their own pace and feel good about eating. As a care provider, you decide what, where and when to feed. Let children decide how much and whether to eat from what is offered. For more information see [Fostering Healthy Eating Habits in Your Child Care Facility](#) and [Feeding Young Children](#).

Teaching children about healthy eating is best done by modeling healthy eating and offering hands-on opportunities to explore and taste food. Even if a facility does not provide meals or snacks, regular opportunities using food as a means to learn and explore is encouraged. [Appetite to Play](#) is a source of exciting learning activities for young children and is a valuable resource for food and nutrition in licensed child care.

Food Safety

Following food safety techniques to prevent food borne illness is important for your child care operation. Young children are more likely to get a food borne illness than healthy adults. It is recommended that caregivers have safe food handling training. Food training information can be found in the 'Resources' section of this document. Training focuses on four basic rules for keeping food safe:

- ✓ **Clean** - Wash your hands and surfaces often
- ✓ **Separate** – Don't cross contaminate
- ✓ **Cook** - To a safe temperature
- ✓ **Chill** - Refrigerate foods promptly

Hand washing is one of the most important activities you can do to prevent food poisoning. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and running water. Scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

Don't prepare foods when you are sick. If you have symptoms of a foodborne illness or if you have an infected cut or sore, do not handle, prepare or serve food for others.

In some care settings, there may be a need for a permit under the BC Food Premises Regulation. Your licensing officer will make a referral to an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) to determine if your facility requires a permit to operate, food service establishment. If there is very little food preparation and those foods that are offered are considered to be lower risk, you may be able to offer a variety of healthy foods without the need for an approval by an EHO. A list of these foods can be found below in Table 1.

There are some foods that are not to be served to children. **Do not serve honey to children less than one year of age. The use of home canning is prohibited.**

**TABLE 1: NO FOOD PERMIT IS REQUIRED
FOR LOW RISK FOOD AND/OR MINIMAL PREPARATION**

Food examples:

Commercially prepared/store bought food such as:

- Canned fruit, apple and fruit sauce.
- Frozen fruit and dried fruit.
- Fruit and vegetable 100% juice (pasteurized).
- Milk and soy beverages.
- Hard cheese, cheese strings, and yogurt.
- Nuts, seeds, and nut butters that do not require refrigeration after opening.
- Hummus, salsa and dip.
- Prepared condiments: jam, ketchup, mustard, butter, margarine, salad dressing, and cream cheese.
- Breads and cereals.

These may be portioned from larger containers to individual dishes/cups for immediate service as long as there is no additional preparation.

Most whole or sliced fresh fruits and vegetables are safe to prepare and serve on site; however, cantaloupe or raw seed sprouts should not be served to children under age two (See Health File - Food Safety for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables)

In addition to the provision of these low risk foods, it is acceptable to heat bottled milk or infant formula.

Provide foods that have been prepared in a kitchen with a food permit.

Bake low hazard grain products (e.g. cookies, muffins, biscuits, bread, etc.) with no cream fillings.

It is recommended that care providers be knowledgeable in safe food preparation. Two sources of training include:

- Caring about Food Safety (online course).
- Food Safe level one.

TABLE 2: APPROVAL REQUIRED

Requirements: Your Licensing Officer will make a referral to an Environmental Health Officer and provide you with information on the approvals process for a food permit. HP-CF-9043 Food Safety Approval Process in Child Care Facilities.

<p>Column 1</p> <p>INCREASING FOOD RISK</p>	<p>Column 2</p> <p>HIGHER RISK FOOD AND/OR</p> <p>HIGHER RISK PROCESS</p>
<p>A Food Permit is not required; however, it is recommended that operators have FOODSAFE Level 1 certification or equivalent.</p>	<p>A Food Permit is required.</p> <p>Operator <u>must</u> have FOODSAFE Level 1 certification or equivalent.</p>
<p><i>Ingredients must be purchased from a store. Food items must be consumed as soon as they are prepared. Leftovers must be discarded and not sent home with the children.</i></p>	<p><i>Ingredients must be purchased from a store. All food groups may be used to create a menu. Leftovers are permitted.</i></p>
<p>Foods cooked on site from fresh ingredients such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh or frozen vegetables, vegetable soup, vegetarian pizza • Cooked grains, beans/lentils, including oatmeal, and pasta • Hard boiled eggs • Hummus, salsa • Vegetable salads • Dips made from yogurt, sour cream or cream cheese • Fruit smoothies • Fresh squeezed vegetable or fruit juices 	<p>Foods cooked on site from fresh ingredients from all four food groups including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meat, poultry, and fish products, tofu, eggs • Cooked grains, beans/lentils, including oatmeal, and pasta • Soup, casseroles, stews, chili and pasta dishes using all four food groups • Sandwiches, pizza • Pasteurized soft cheeses (Camembert, Brie, feta) • Cooked puddings and custards (served cold)

Food Safety Resources:

Interior Health:

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/FoodSafety/Pages/Resources.aspx>

BC Centre for Disease Control: Food page

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/food-safety>

BC Health Files:

<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/>

- [Food Safety in Child Care Facilities](#)
- [Food Safety for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables](#)
- [Foods to Avoid for People at Risk of Food-Borne Illness](#)
- [Food Safety: Easy Ways to Make Food Safer](#)

FOODSAFE:

<http://www.FOODSAFE.ca/>

Caring About Food Safety:

<http://media.openschool.bc.ca/assets/cafs/mainpage/home.html>

Licensing and Nutrition Resources:

Interior Health, Child Care Facilities Health and Nutrition page:

www.interiorhealth.ca/childcarefood

Appetite to Play:

www.appetitetoplay.com

Health Canada – Canada’s Food Guide:

<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

Dietitian Services at Health Link BC - Email or call a dietitian. Dial 8-1-1 toll free:

[Dietitian Services at Health Link BC](#)