



Our Wellness Policy is designed to encourage the development of healthy habits in our community and to provide clear and consistent guidelines for staff, teachers and parents around food and physical activity practices. We have designed these policies as an expectation of CentroNía staff and guide parents to model healthy habits that lead to lifelong health and wellness.

1. Children Meals and Snacks:

CentroNía participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and follows dietary requirements set by USDA as well as state and local requirements. At CentroNía, we commit to:

- ✓ **Cook** all of our meals in house
- ✓ **Ensure** that children always have access to water
- ✓ **Offer** children a variety of foods, recognizing that a child may need to sample a new food ten or more times before learning to like it
- ✓ **Offer** vegetarian lunch at least once a week, following the “Meatless Monday” campaign

Not serve:

- × Highly processed food to make our menus lower in sodium, fat and sugar
- × Juices or other sugary beverages and
- × Not having vending machines or selling competitive food

2. We are a Free Nut Facility:

Food allergies are common and affect as many as one in ten children. The ‘Big Eight’ account for most allergic reactions, which are milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish. In addition to food allergies, other children may have cultural, religious or other food restrictions, such as vegetarianism.

CentroNía commits to:

- Being a nut-free facility
- Provide vegetarian alternatives every day
- Ask families to disclose any food allergies or cultural, religious or food preferences at the time of enrollment
- Track special dietary needs and, when necessary, designing an individualized plan in partnership with parents. Please visit *Appendix I* to view the individualized health plan template

CentroNía will make every effort to accommodate special diets but this may not be possible in all cases. If this is the case, CentroNía staff will talk to parents to design an alternate plan for the child.

3. Food Brought from Home:

CentroNía will provide written instructions to families to guide selections of foods brought from home in order to ensure that children have healthy and balanced meals throughout the day.

Acceptable foods include:

- All vegetables (except fried)
- All fruits (including sauces like apple sauce but not juices)
- Proteins such as eggs, cheese, fish, meats, legumes
- Starches like pasta, rice, quinoa, barley, whole grains, crackers, and bread

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If children come to school consistently with unhealthy food choices, CentroNía staff will address their concerns with families and suggest alternatives. Food sent from home for one child is **never** shared with other children.

4. Foods not permitted at CentroNía include:

- × No junk food, fried food (breaded meat/ fries), highly-processed foods, snacks nor any desserts rich in sugar, fat or salt (for example donuts, cookies, ice cream, cakes, pizza, potato chips, etc.)
- × No juice, energy drinks, soda, flavored waters or dairy products without refrigeration.
- × No nuts: peanuts, almonds, walnuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, peanut butter, nut butters, almond milk, nutella, etc.
- × No Lunchables

5. Celebrations

CentroNía is committed to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all our students. We acknowledge that celebrations are an important part of home and school life, and we are happy to celebrate each child's birthday in the center during the day.

- × **Birthdays are celebrated with fun-filled activities but food is NOT permitted during birthday celebrations.**

Other special events and meetings may have food that meets program standards strictly by serving healthy foods and beverages. For suggestions of food permitted when doing family engagement, graduation, or any other events, please refer to **Appendix II, or contact the F&W Department.**

6. Eating Environment

Where children eat (and with whom) contributes to learning, development and socialization in important ways. At CentroNía we are committed to ensure that adults are positive role models to our children. Mealtimes provide adults with ideal opportunities to help children adopt positive attitudes toward healthy foods. At CentroNía, we ask that each staff member support children by:

- Eating and drinking healthy foods at all CentroNía facilities
- Eating the same meals/snacks as children whenever possible
- Implementing family style service during mealtime after the age of 1.
- Never using food as incentives or punishments
- Engaging children and families in conversation about the benefits of making good food choices and adopting healthy lifestyles

7. Infants:

Breast Milk and Formula

CentroNía's priority is to promote breastfeeding, and to support our families in their decision. We also allow our staff members who are nursing, time to nurse their child, up to one year of age. Each center has a designated area for breastfeeding, for families and staff for use when breastfeeding.

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Introducing Solid Foods

At CentroNía, we introduce children to a variety of developmentally appropriate foods starting at 6 months of age. We ask parents to collaborate in this effort by filling out **OSSE Infant Notification Form** and coordinate with teachers so that the same new foods and textures introduced at home are given and continued during mealtime in the center.

8. Nutrition Education:

For children:

At CentroNía we believe that nutrition education is essential to help young children learn to make healthy choices. With that in mind, we provide nutrition education for children through formal and informal opportunities through the year.

- Teachers conduct nutrition education activities classroom at least **8-10 times a year**.
- Teachers and staff are responsible for teaching children about healthy foods and the pleasure of eating throughout the day and in particular during meal times, where teachers are expected to make mealtime pleasant, sit with children and enjoy the meal.

For Teachers:

In order for childcare providers to serve as role models and to teach children about the importance of leading healthy lifestyles, CentroNia's Food and Wellness Team provides training and professional development opportunities year-round.

CentroNia **Roots** is an initiative to provide teachers and parents the necessary tools to cultivate healthy habits during early childhood. CentroNia Roots includes easy steps to inspire adults to change their lifestyles and influence children to make smart food choices. Each chapter has an introduction with reflection questions, informational guides, and fun activities that involve the whole family about basic nutrition and wellness tips.

9. Physical activity

A. Physical Activity and Education

Physical activity and movement are necessary for child development, learning and growth. During the early childhood years, children learn fundamental gross-motor skills and need plenty of opportunities to practice these skills.

At CentroNía we make sure that children get enough physical activity by providing all children, including those with special needs, with:

- More than 120 minutes of unstructured (active play) time, both indoors and outdoors each day
- Outdoor play twice a day, weather and air quality permitting
- Structured (teacher-led) activities in classrooms at least once a day for a minimum of 45 minutes

B. Teacher Behavior:

Teachers play a key role in ensuring that all children participate in physical activity and develop healthy habits.

At CentroNía, we ask that each staff member support children by:

- Modeling physical activity by walking, taking the stairs, and moving in place as much as possible
- Encouraging children to be active and join in active play, and avoid elimination games
- Always supervising children on playground equipment
- Making water easily available for children to serve themselves
- Never using active playtime as an incentive or as punishment

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C. Screen Time

While it is challenging to keep young children away from computers and television, too much screen time (smartphones, iPad, TV, computers, video games, and any other handheld devices) has harmful effects on children. Excess screen time is associated with language delays, obesity, attention problems and even aggression.

At CentroNía, we commit to control screen time by:

- Not exposing children under two to any screen time
- Allowing a maximum of 1 hour of screen time per week for children over two
- Only showing commercial-free, age-appropriate, educational programming that is integrated with the curriculum
- Encouraging families to limit screen time at home to no more than two hours daily
- Never using screen time as a reward

10. Other Program-based Activities

Engaging Families

Families are key players in helping children develop healthy lifestyles. Because of this, it is important that CentroNía builds strong, lasting relationships with families and that it provides the necessary support. At CentroNía, all families will:

- Receive information about program's nutrition, physical activity and screen time policies upon enrollment
- Have the opportunity to participate in various activities and learning opportunities throughout the year, such as nutrition education, cooking demos, and wellness workshops
- Receive frequent communication about food and physical activity choices of their children
- Receive monthly menus, updated every month in the Family Resource page in the CentroNia website

Community Partners

At CentroNía, we collaborate with organizations that can contribute activities and resources to promote the development of good habits, access to local and fresh foods, collaborate with community events and much more.

11. Evaluations

It is crucial for CentroNia administrative staff, teachers, and families to help implement CentroNia's wellness policy as a collective effort as an organization. By evaluating this policy, it helps to reinforce policies across the organization and to keep policies up-to-date by making needed changes in a timely manner. Decisions about changes to the Wellness Policy will follow national and state early childhood standards and research on effective health programs.

The Food and Wellness team is available for questions and support each of you. You may contact via email: centronia.catering@gmail.com or by phone to 202-332-4200 ext 1050.

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Appendix I

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM CHILDREN WITH ALLERGIES, FOOD ALLERGIES, AND HEALTH CONDITION INDIVIDUALIZED CARE PLAN

Date: *Fecha:* _____

Teacher's Name: *Nombre Del Maestro:* _____

Child's Name: *Nombre Del Niño/a* _____

DOB: *Fecha de Nacimiento:* _____

What type of allergy and Symptom? (*¿Tipo de Alergia y síntoma?*) _____

What type of Medication (if any) child is taking for allergy

(*Tipo de Medicamento si necesario*) _____

What Kinds of Food to Avoid? (*Qué tipo de alimentos se debe evitar*)

What Precautions to take? (*Qué precauciones se deben tomar?*)

In case of emergency, what action to take? (*¿En caso de emergencia, que acción tomar?*)

Parent Signature: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

CentroNía Wellness Policy: A Snapshot

CentroNía staff members and parents are a **vital** point of contact and influence for our children and youth. We ask that each member of the staff support the organizational wellness goals by complying with CentroNia's Wellness Policy, USDA regulations, and food safety guidelines.

Children Meals

All of our meals are prepared and cooked in-house with a variety of foods and local products, when possible, for breakfast, lunch and snack. Meals comply with USDA Child and Adult Food Care Program (CACFP).

Acceptable foods include:

- ✓ All vegetables (except fried)
- ✓ All fruits (including sauces like apple sauce but not juices)
- ✓ Proteins such as eggs, cheese, fish, meats, beef, turkey, legumes
- ✓ Starches like pasta, rice, quinoa, barley, whole grains, crackers, and bread

Food not permitted

- × No junk food, fried food, highly-processed foods, snacks nor any desserts rich in sugar, fat or salt (for example donuts, cookies, ice cream, cakes, pizza, chips, etc.) and dairy products without refrigeration.
- × No juice, energy drinks, soda, flavored waters.

We are a nut-free facility

The 'Big Eight' allergens are milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish. CentroNia commits to being a nut-free facility (no peanuts, almonds, walnuts, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, peanut butter, nut butters, almond milk, Nutella, etc.)

Eating Environment: At CentroNía we are committed to ensure that adults are positive role model during mealtimes as these are ideal opportunities to help children adopt positive attitudes toward healthy foods. We ask that each staff member support children during their mealtime by implementing family **style** service during mealtime after the age of 1.

Nutrition Education:

For teachers: CentroNia **Roots** is an initiative to provide teachers and parents the necessary tools and basic nutrition information to cultivate healthy habits during early childhood.

For children: At CentroNía, we believe that nutrition education is essential to help young children learn to make healthy choices. Teachers conduct nutrition education activities at least **8-10 times a year**.

Celebrations:

CentroNía acknowledges that celebrations are an important part of home and school life, and we are happy to celebrate each child's birthday in the center during the day.

- ✓ Birthdays are celebrated with fun-filled activities but **food is NOT permitted during these celebrations**.
- ✓ Other special events and meetings (graduation, family engagement events, etc.) may have food. Please refer to the **Checklist Form of Food Brought into CentroNia**.

The Food and Nutrition team are available to consult and support each of you as you plan activities and events to include food. Contact centronia.catering@gmail.com