



CENTRONÍA FOOD AND WELLNESS POLICY

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	3
II.	Children Meals and Snacks.....	3
III.	Non-Discrimination Legislation.....	4
IV.	Modifications for Children with Disabilities.....	4
V.	Medical Authority & Statement.....	5
VI.	Special Diet Requests	5
VII.	CentroNía Mealtime.....	7
VIII.	Infants.....	7
IX.	We are a Free Nut Facility	8
X.	Celebrations.....	8
XI.	CentroNía Wellness.....	8
XII.	Evaluations.....	10
XIII.	Acknowledgement of Receipt/Confirmación de Recibo	11

CentroNía Food and Wellness Policy

I. Introduction

Our Food and 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 for CentroNía staff and to guide parents to model healthy habits that lead to lifelong health and wellness.

II. 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. One of the requirements is to offer ALL meal components, including:

	Fresh Fruits
	Vegetables
	Whole Grains
	Meat (beef, chicken, tuna) and Meat Alternative (garbanzo, lentils, beans, tofu).
Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breastmilk / Formula Iron-Fortified• Unflavored whole milk: children 1-year-old,• Unflavored 1% low-fat milk: children 2 to 5 years old,• Soymilk

At CentroNía, we commit to:

Serve: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Cook all 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 option, and follow the “Meatless Monday” campaign	Not serve: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Highly processed food to make our menus lower in sodium, fat, and sugar (for example donuts, cookies, ice cream, cakes, pizza, potato chips, etc.)✓ Pork✓ Juices, flavored milk, and other sugary beverages✓ Not having vending machines or selling competitive food
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Food brought from home is not allowed, other than lactose-free milk or special cases, with a medical note, previously discussed with the Food and Wellness team, due to liability and food safety.

III. Non-Discrimination Legislation

Nondiscrimination Legislation Federal nondiscrimination laws and regulations contain provisions that require CACFP facilities to make reasonable meal modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet.

These laws include:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504);
- the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, including changes made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008; and
- the USDA's nondiscrimination regulations (7 CFR 15b).

The USDA's CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226.20(g)) require reasonable meal modifications for children whose disability restricts their diet, based on a written medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority. Requests for a reasonable meal modification must be related to the child's disabling condition.

What is a disability? Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (includes eating, breathing, digestive and respiratory functions, etc.). Most physical and mental impairments will constitute a disability, it does not need to be life threatening. Ex. Digestion is impaired by lactose intolerance, whether or not consuming milk causes severe distress.

What is not a disability? Eating certain foods or eliminating foods from the diet due to a general health concern and/or preference. Ex. Request that a participant does not drink cow's milk because of a preference, not because the participant has lactose intolerance.

IV. Modifications for Children with Disabilities

The USDA's nondiscrimination regulations (7 CFR 15b) and CACFP regulations (7 CFR 226.20(g)) require that CACFP facilities make reasonable modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet, when a recognized medical authority certifies the need.

Meal modifications must be related to the child's disability or limitations caused by the disability, and require a medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority.

- A.** A reasonable modification is a change or alteration in policies, practices, and/or procedures to accommodate a disability that ensures children with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from a program. The USDA does not require CACFP facilities to provide the exact substitution or other modification requested in the child's medical statement, such as a

specific brand of food or nutrition supplement, unless it is medically necessary.

B. On a case-by-case basis means that the meal modifications are specific to the individual medical condition and dietary needs of each child.

V. Medical Authority & Statement

USDA regulations 7CFRPart 15b require substitutions or modifications in school meals for children whose disabilities restrict their diets. A child with a disability must be provided substitutions of foods when that need is supported by a statement signed by a state-licensed healthcare professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under state law.

This includes physicians (MD), physician assistants (PA) and certified physician assistants (PAC), doctors of osteopathy (DO), registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), and advanced practice registered nurses (APRN). These are the only medical professionals who are authorized to sign a child’s medical statement for meal modifications. CACFP facilities cannot accept medical statements signed by any other individuals.

The **medical statement** must have the following:

- information about the child’s physical or mental impairment that is sufficient to allow CentroNía, a CACFP facility, understand how it restricts the child’s diet;
- an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child’s disability; and
- if appropriate, the food or foods to be omitted and recommended alternatives.

When CentroNía believes the medical statement is unclear, or lacks sufficient detail, they must obtain appropriate clarification so that a proper and safe meal can be provided.

Examples of Medical Statements:

Acceptable Medical Statement	Non Acceptable Medical Statement
Cal is lactose intolerant and cannot drink cow’s milk. He should be served soy milk. Dr. Dan Physician.	Serve Sam soy milk. Dr. Dan Physician

VI. Special Diet Requests

Food allergies and/or food intolerances and other medical conditions are considered a **disability** that need a medical form, signed by a State licensed healthcare professional, such as a physician or nurse practitioner. The medical form for DC is named “Medical Substitution Form” and for Maryland is named “Diet Modifications for Children or Adults with a Food Allergy or Other Disability”.

All cases must be discussed with the Food and Wellness team, at least, before the first day of attending, and forms must be updated as needed or every **12 months**.

The **medical statement** should include a description of cases of special food request that is sufficient to allow CentroNía to understand how it restricts the participant's diet. It should also include an explanation of what must be done to accommodate the disability. In the case of food allergies, this means identifying the food or foods that need to be omitted and recommending alternatives.

Children **without disabilities**, including religious or moral convictions, general health concerns, and personal food preferences, CentroNía will consider reasonable modifications at a case-by-case basis.

CACFP Program Milk Requirements

Infant Meals Birth through 11 months

Breastmilk / iron-fortified infant formula, or portions of both, must be served to infant's birth through 11 months of age.

12 months through 23 months (1 year through 1 year and 11 months)

Unflavored whole milk / Breastmilk / Soymilk

*Iron-fortified formula may be served to children between the ages of 12 months and 13 months to help with the transition to whole milk.

2 years through 5 years (up to 6th birthday)

Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk / Soymilk

*Unflavored whole milk may be served to children between the ages of 24 and 25 months to help with the transition to low-fat (1%) milk.

6 through 12 years, 13 through 18 years, and adults

Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk / Soymilk

Milk substitution:

CentroNía must only make milk substitutions if the child has a medically documented disability that requires an alternative to milk, such as water, or a nondairy beverage, such as soy milk.

Food reactions:

If parents notice any food reactions at home, please contact CentroNía with a written note and schedule a doctor's appointment as soon as possible to provide exams confirming possible food allergies. If food reactions are noticed at the center, parents will be notified and also required to bring a medical note.

VII. CentroNía Mealtime

CentroNía offer and serve all meals to children in their classrooms.

- Breakfast is offered from 8:30 am to 9:00 am.
- Lunch is offered from 11:30 am to 12:00 pm.
- Snack is offered from 2:30 pm to 3:00 pm - preferable for children to eat it at the center.

Meals out of serving time won't be available unless there is a doctor's appointment previously notified. For more information, please refer to the Family Handbook.

VIII. Infants

A. 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, in this case it is important to the child to be bottle trained.

CentroNía shares the Infant Formula and Food Notification Form (DC form) or Infant Formula/Breastmilk Meal Plan Form (Maryland Form), which confirms the preference for breastmilk and/or the formula offered by CentroNía. The form includes information about food introduction. This form and it can be modified at any point.

B. Bringing Breastmilk to CentroNía

- Label the bottle with the baby's full name and the date the breastmilk was pumped.
- CentroNía does not allow frozen breastmilk and breastmilk in bags in order to provide food safety
- Parents should bring 4 to 6 oz of breastmilk in different bottles, ensuring there is enough to be offered throughout the same day.
- Unused bottles and leftovers will be returned to parents at the end of each day.
- Refrigerate breastmilk right after it is pumped and bring it to the center.
- Do NOT add any type of cereal in the breastmilk bottle.

C. Milk Formula

- CentroNía offers Enfamil formula for families that chose to provide milk formula to their infants.
- If parents chose to bring their own formula, all formula options must be iron-fortified and free of nuts.
- Formula must be prepared by the teachers in the classrooms in an identified bottle.
- Teachers cannot add any type of cereal in the bottle with formula and they MUST follow the instructions written in the container.
- All formulas MUST be in the original container, closed and in perfect condition to be accepted in the classroom.

D. Infants Food offered at CentroNía

-
- All children must be offered breastmilk and/or formula from 0 to 12 months
 - 1-year-old: unflavored whole milk or soymilk or a substitute written by doctor
 - From 6 to 11 months old, food is offered as puree. In case the child needs to change the food texture at some point, parents must bring a medical note.
 - Parents must fill out the First Food Check-In Form (DC & MD) to confirm foods and textures being offered at home. Children must be offered, at least, meats and meat alternatives, different vegetables and fruits. CentroNia's Menu is provided for reference.

IX. 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 (cashew, coconut, almond, etc), wheat, soybeans, sesame, fish and shellfish.

- Being a nut-free facility, includes not allowing plant based "dairy" products such as cashew, almond, coconut milk/cheese/yogurt, etc.

X. Celebrations

CentroNía is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all our students. We acknowledge that celebrations are an important part of our culture, 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 nutritious foods and beverages. For suggestions of food permitted when doing family engagement, graduations, or any other events, please refer to **contact the Food & Wellness Department.**

XI. CentroNía Wellness

Where children eat (and with whom) contributes to learning, development and socialization in important ways. At CentroNía we are committed to ensuring 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 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

A. 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 throughout the year.

- Teachers conduct nutrition education activities in the 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 mealtime, where teachers are expected to make mealtime pleasant, sit with children and enjoy the meal.

For Teachers, ECE leaders, and Families:

CentroNía Roots is an initiative to provide teachers, leaders and parents knowledge to cultivate healthy habits during early childhood, being offered training and professional development opportunities year-round. CentroNía Roots includes easy steps to inspire adults to have a healthier lifestyle, basic nutrition and wellness, therefore encouraging the kids to make healthier choices.

B. Physical Activity & Education

Food and Wellness Department is responsible for making sure the educational program is following the physical activity requirements. 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

C. 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

D. 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 and at mealtime

E. 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 CentroNía website

Community Partners

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

XII. Evaluations

It is crucial for CentroNía administrative staff, teachers, and families to help implement CentroNía's wellness policy as a collective effort as an organization. By participating in evaluation surveys, it helps to reinforce health culture 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 our families. You may contact us via phone or email at

**Victoria Reis: 202-332-4200 ext. 1017 / vreis@centronia.org
Patricia Montoya: 202-332-4200 ext. 1175 / pmontoya@centronia.org**



Educating children and youth and strengthening families in a bilingual, multicultural community.

XIII. Acknowledgement of Receipt/Confirmación de Recibo

Child's Name/ Nombre del niño(a): _____

Parent/Guardian's Name/ Nombre del padre/madre/guardián: _____

SY 2024-25 • Food and Wellness Policy Acknowledgement of Receipt
AÑO ESCOLAR 2024-25 • Confirmación de recibo de la Política de Comida y Bienestar

By signing this statement, I confirm that I have received and read CentroNía's Family Handbook and acknowledge to follow all the rules set forth therein.

Al firmar esta declaración, confirmo que he recibido y leído el Manual de la Familia de CentroNía y reconozco seguir todas las reglas establecidas en el mismo.

In case of any changes in the child's health, parent/guardian have 30 days to bring the new medical note.

En caso de cualquier cambio en la salud del niño, el padre/tutor tiene 30 días para traer la nueva nota médica.

Parent/Guardian's Signature
Firma del padre/madre/tutor

Date
Fecha