

Wellness Policy



LOOK DEEP INTO NATURE, AND
THEN YOU WILL UNDERSTAND
EVERYTHING BETTER. -EINSTEIN

MADE WITH
FONT CANDY

A Place to Grow

Created April 2018

A Place to Grow practices a holistic approach to encompassing the needs of young children. A child's overall well-being is dependent on healthy lifestyle choices including proper nutrition, physical activity, a well planned physical environment, and good health practices. The intention of this wellness policy is to provide an overview of how A Place to Grow helps to prepare our children to grow physically and mentally stronger by highlighting best practices in each of these realms:

Physical Environment

Health and Wellness Environment

Physical Activity Guidelines

Nutrition Guidelines

Screen Time

Illness

Physical Environment

Our indoor environment has been certified as an Eco-Healthy Childcare. This certification means we choose to reduce environmental toxins and maintain earth friendly practices at our center.

- Recycling and composting
- Providing Dinner ware and eating utensils made of glass, metal, or are made of recycled BPA free materials
- Art supplies are ACMI certified non-toxic
- Lead and Radon in water and environment are below quality standards
- Flooring is a solid surface laminate which can be easily sanitized
- Cleaners are the least toxic for sanitizing and disinfecting
- Playground is primarily made of natural materials and contains no pressure treated wood

Our outdoor environment is certified as a Nature Explore Classroom. A Place to Grow promotes physical activity by embracing nature on our 13 acres of land. When playing in a natural environment, children are also developing muscle and bone strength, gross motor, socio-emotional, and cognitive skills. Research shows that time spent outdoors is a strong predictor of children's physical activity. Children should play outdoors daily when weather and environmental conditions do not pose a significant health or safety risk. Playing outdoors helps children learn in a different environment than the classroom, promotes a healthy weight and provides some sunlight exposure that is needed for the body to produce vitamin D.

Our outdoor classroom space includes:

- An open grassy area for large motor activities

- Several climbing structures as well as opportunities to climb rocks and trees
- A loose parts building area
- Large shaded sandbox in the shade of the trees
- Raised bed gardens
- Music and Movement Space
- Shaded space for classroom gatherings
- Opportunities for creating art in nature

Health and Wellness Environment

Nearly nine percent of 2-5 year olds have obesity. Now labeled as an epidemic, health care costs for treating obesity related conditions such as heart disease and diabetes range from \$147 billion to nearly \$210 billion annually. While multiple strategies are needed to reverse the epidemic, emerging prevention strategies directed at early childhood education and modeling show great promise. A large body of evidence shows that healthy eating, physical activity, and less time watching TV helps kids grow up at a healthy weight. In 2018, A Place to Grow participated in the Nutrition and Physical Self-Assessment for Child Care, which has resulted in the creation of this wellness policy as a guidance for teachers and families.

Physical Activity Guidelines

Physical activity in children has dropped drastically over the years. The body and mind need physical activity to thrive and learn about the environment around them. A Place to Grow promotes physical activity for children of all ages by embracing nature on our 13 acres of land as well as providing adequate indoor space for active play. While playing, children develop muscle and bone strength, gross motor, socio-emotional, and cognitive skills.

- Teachers encourage movement and gross motor skill development and regularly spend time actively engaging with children. Teachers may model physical activity and enthusiasm about being active and when supervising active play remain engaged by giving children ideas, feedback, encouragement, and reinforcement.
- Children are provided ample indoor and outdoor space to be active.
- A balance of quiet activities are incorporated daily while inactive time is limited. Time in restrictive equipment/positioners is limited for infants.
- Children are encouraged to play in all weather elements. This allows children to learn about our climate and changes in our environment.

Children are encouraged to “get messy” as it inspires children to feel a connection with nature. In order for children to be safe and comfortable in different conditions, families are expected to provide the following:

Winter	Spring	Summer
Water Resistant Mittens	Rain Pants	Sun Shirt
Snow Pants	Rain Boots	Sun Hat
Winter Jacket	Rain Coat	Sneakers or Sandals with Ankle Strap
Warm Hat covering ears	Rain Hat	Sunscreen
Winter Boots		Insect Repellant

Nutritional Guidelines

As children grow physically, they are also developing an awareness of sharing both the enjoyment of, and the responsibility for healthy eating. The environment and practices followed by children and adults sets the tone for a healthy lifestyle both at school and at home.

Our children share the meal time experiences and sit together at small tables. Families bring their own healthy meals and snacks from home, but neighboring children can see what their friends are eating, which fosters a natural inquiry for trying new things. Children are exposed to a large variety of foods and may even ask to try something their friend is eating. Shared snack experiences may stem from this natural inquiry. Older children may help share in the meal time experience by helping to set tables, put cups out, and help clean up. This model closely simulates a family style eating experience and simultaneously maximizes exposure to new foods.

Specific classroom instruction is provided when modeling positive meal time behaviors and experiences. Children are asked to wash hands before meals, help set and clear tables, are encouraged to try less favorable foods, select healthy options independently for snack times, and are reminded that when eating and drinking we need to be seated safely. The Kitchen area in pretend play is designed to closely model positive nutritional examples and promote family style eating practices by providing tableware, pots and

pans, and healthy food choices. Food is not used as an incentive or punishment in any classroom.

Foods provided from home must be stored in the original containers or labeled in food safe containers the date opened and date of expiration. We encourage use of stainless steel and glass for food storage, drinking, and silverware.

Meals and snacks provided from home must meet the USDA requirements for nutrition, as provided in the attachments. USDA Guidelines provide guidance on both variety and portion size for all age groups. Because the categories of protein, vegetable, fruit, and whole grain are so broad we have refined a list of “The World’s Healthiest Foods” which are everyday foods that are familiar to most people, easy to find at the store, and are tasty to eat. Parties and celebrations will be focused around shared healthy food choices which meet the same USDA guidelines.

The following food items are to be excluded from the school and/or classroom:

- We are a nut free school, because nut allergies can be so severe in small children. *Food may not contain nuts or be manufactured in a facility that processes nuts.* An Asthma and Allergy Action Plan that has been completed by a physician must be on file for any child with food allergies. All food allergies need to be clearly communicated to the staff.
- Childcare personnel shall not serve foods which can be a choking hazard to children younger than 3 years of age or children who have been identified with chewing/swallowing difficulties, including, but not limited to: spoonful of peanut butter, whole rounds of hot dog or sausage, whole grapes, hard candy/chewing gum, raw carrot rounds, peas or celery, chips or hard pretzels, marshmallows, nuts or seeds, popcorn, or any other hard or cylinder shaped food that may pose a choking hazard.
- Food choices from drive through restaurants are excluded from consumption, as they do not meet USDA guidelines for healthy options. While filling and convenient, they tend to be nutrient poor, high in fat and calories, and offer excessive portion sizes.
- Dessert type items such as cookies, cake, and candy are excluded, as they do not meet USDA guidelines for healthy options.

Screen Time

Children under age two years are not exposed to screen time. Screen time is limited to educational content only based on monthly curriculum.

Illness

Per NH Child Care Licensing requirements, child care personnel shall observe each child each day upon arrival and throughout the day for injuries and symptoms of illness which impair or prohibit the child's participation in the regular child care activities or require more care than child care personnel are able to provide without compromising the health and safety of the ill, or injured child, or the other children in their care.

When a child exhibits symptom of illness, staff shall contact the child's parents and inform them of the need to remove their child from the program. Children who are sent home exhibiting these signs may not return until 24 hours after the last symptom or fever are present.

A child who is sick and has seen the doctor should provide a doctor's note stating it is acceptable for them to return to school. If your child has been diagnosed with something contagious, please notify the school at once. We will notify other parents so they can be on the lookout for similar signs and symptoms and we can disinfect the center appropriately to avoid spread to other children.

The symptoms of illness referenced shall include, but are not be limited to, the following:

- More than one episode of vomiting in one day
- More than one episode of diarrhea in one day
- Uncontrolled coughing or wheezing
- Unusual or extreme fatigue or lethargy
- Skin lesions which have not been diagnosed or treated by a licensed health care practitioner
- An under arm temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher combined with any of the following: diarrhea, rash, ear ache, sore throat, or vomiting.

USDA Nutrition Guidelines Birth to 12 Months

Infant feedings consist of breast milk or iron fortified formula with no more than three hours between feedings and personalized to each child's needs. Infants younger than six months who are unable to support themselves will be held while being bottle fed.

Milk/formula shall not be kept/used after one hour from when feeding begins. Left over breast milk will be sent home. Leftover formula will be discarded.

Solid foods will be introduced no sooner than 4 months of age and children are transitioned into eating solids and preparing for self-feeding as appropriate.

Birth- 5 months: 4-6 oz breastmilk or formula on demand

6-11 months:

Food Component	Snack	Lunch
Breastmilk/Formula	2-4oz	6-8 oz
Protein		Cheese 0-2oz Cottage Cheese/ Yogurt 0-4oz Meat 0-4 tablespoons Fish 0-4 tablespoons Poultry Egg Dry Beans (cooked)
Vegetable/Fruit	0-2 tablespoons	0-2 tablespoons
Whole Grain	Bread 0-½ slice Crackers 0-2 Infant Cereal 0-4 tablespoons	Infant Cereal 0-4 tablespoons

USDA Nutrition Guidelines One Year to Six Years

4 of the 5 areas should be met each day with 2 choices for each snack.

Food Component	Snack	Lunch
White Milk or Milk Alternative	4 oz	4-6 oz
Protein minimally processed lean meats	Egg (½) Fish 1/2 oz Meat ½ oz Beans ⅛ Cup Seed Butters 1 TBSP Seeds ½ oz Dairy 1/4 C (Cottage cheese, plain yogurt) ½ oz cheese Vegan alternatives ½ oz	Egg (½-¾) Fish 1-1.5 oz Meat 1-1 ½ oz Beans 1/4 Cup-⅜ Cup Seed Butter 2-3 TBSP Seeds ½-¾ oz Dairy ½-¾ Cup (Cottage cheese, plain yogurt) 1-1 ½ oz cheese Vegan alternatives 1-1 ½ oz
Vegetables minimal processed or whole	½ Cup Frozen, canned, or fresh	⅛- ¼ Cup Frozen, canned, or fresh
Fruit no added sugars	½ Cup Dried, canned, or Fresh	⅛-¼ Cup Dried, canned, or Fresh
Whole Grain	Bread ½ slice or serving Bread, muffin,waffle, or roll Pasta or Rice ¼ Cup Cooked Cereal ¼ C (oatmeal or cream of wheat) Whole Grain Cereal ½C-¾ C	Bread ½ slice or serving Bread, muffin,waffle, or roll Pasta or Rice ¼ Cup

Everyday Foods & Lunchbox ideas

Vegetables ($\frac{3}{4}$ c)	Fruits ($\frac{3}{4}$ c)	Beans & Legumes ($\frac{1}{4}$ c)	Grains (3-5 oz)	Poultry & Meats (2-4 oz)
Asparagus Avocados Beets Bell peppers Broccoli Carrots Cauliflower Celery Corn (Fresh) Cucumbers Green beans Green peas Leafy Greens Kale Spinach Romaine Lettuce Olives Potatoes Squash Sweet potatoes Tomatoes Zucchini	Watermelon Cantaloupe Strawberries Blueberries Raspberries Lemon Lime Oranges Kiwi Grapefruit Apples Apricots Bananas Figs Grapes Papaya Pears Pineapple Plums Prunes Raisins/ Dried fruit	Dried peas Beans: Black Kidney Lima Garbanzo Pinto Lentils Tempeh Tofu	Barley Brown rice Buckwheat Millet Oats Quinoa Whole wheat Pancakes Waffles Muffins Pita Bread Dry Cereal Banana Bread	Beef, grass-fed Chicken pasture-raised Lamb, grass-fed Turkey, pasture-raised Cod Salmon Scallops Shrimp

Eggs & Dairy (Grass Fed) (2 Cups)	Seeds ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz)
Cheese Cow's milk Yogurt Eggs (pasture-raised)	Flax Pumpkin Sesame Sunflower

References:

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