

Our Nutrition Guidelines for the licensed Childcare/Early Education were updated and the changes went into effect May 2013. Some of the changes include:

- No solids/cereal for infants until six months old and no juice until one year of age.
- Water with all meals and all snacks.
- After age two, 1% or fat free milk must be used.
- Limit starchy vegetables to one serving per meal.
- Include two fresh fruits and one fresh vegetable per week.
- Limit juice to once per day.
- Limit processed pre-fried foods to one per week.
- Recommend at least one meatless meal per week, using a meat alternate.
- Recommend limiting parties to one per month.

To help you and your parents better understand the revised guidelines, we have developed several handouts for your use. The handouts are also located on the Mississippi State Department of Health website www.HealthyMS.com under “regulation and licensure” then “menu planning”. We hope that you will take this information and make copies and share with your staff and parents.

The handouts we have attached include:

- Letter to the parents – This addresses the changes for the parents.
- Party Suggestions – We want each child to enjoy their special day, but it doesn’t have to be with cake and party foods, these are alternate suggestions for a child’s special day. A parent could also come to the center and during activity help the children prepare a healthy snack – if allowed at your center.
- Processed Pre-fried Items – This shows the foods to limit to once a week.
- Physical Activity – Suggestions for structured physical activity for your teachers.
- Healthy Lunch Box Ideas – This would only be used for suggestions for the parents if the children were going out for a field trip and bringing their lunch.

There are several other resources on the menu planning page at www.HealthyMS.com. We also have a section on the Farm to School/Pre-School page that allows you to register your center if you would like to purchase fresh locally grown produce. We have “Menu 201” and “Color Me Healthy” trainings scheduled throughout the state on the childcare calendar. You are encouraged to send your staff to these free trainings. If you have questions on planning your menus, you may contact our Nutrition Director Donna Speed, MS, RD, LD at donna.speed@msdh.state.ms.us. For other questions, contact your local Childcare Licensure representative.