

Parent's Guide to the *Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings*

The *Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings* are a set of requirements that must be followed by child care facilities and family home day care providers as of July 1, 2011.

Who developed the standards?

The standards were developed by the Food and Nutrition Support for Licensed Child Care Centres (FNSLCC) Advisory Group. This group was made up of representatives from government, Public Health Services, training institutions, and the child care sector, and was co-chaired by representatives from the



Departments of Community Services and Health and Wellness. Public consultations were also held, and feedback from over 500 participants helped shape the final standards that are in effect today.

What do they involve?

The new standards focus on 13 areas: Food and Beverages Served, Clean Drinking Water, Breastfeeding, Adapting the Menu for Infants, Food Safety, Special Dietary Considerations, Meal and Snack Routines, Meal and Snack Time Environment, Modeling Positive Attitudes Towards Food and Nutrition, Fundraising with Food and Beverages, Food is Not Used to Reinforce Desired Behaviours, Special Functions, and Promotion and Advertising. Through the implementation of these standards, children in care will be provided with foods that fit *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.

This means foods served will contain a minimum amount of sodium, added sugar, added fat, saturated and trans fat, and a source of fibre. The standards also involve shaping positive attitudes towards food and nutrition in children, as well as ensuring that all food provided is safe for children in care.

What is the benefit?



Fundamental to the new standards is simply improving the diet of children in regulated child care settings by improving the quality of the food they receive while in care. Providing children with varied, nutritious food in their child care setting will also allow for them to try new, healthy foods and develop preferences for these foods. The standards aim to positively influence children's attitudes towards food and nutrition by providing

guidance and learning opportunities from child care staff and care providers. All of these benefits can be carried with a child into adolescence and adulthood, thus improving the health of children, youth, and adults in the years to come.

What is my role?

Family involvement and communication is critical to children's development of healthy nutrition attitudes and practices. This may happen independently in the home, or families may work with the child care staff and care providers to stay involved and participate in snacks and meals. If the lessons learned in their day care are reinforced at home by the influencing adults in the child's life, lasting habits and healthy children can grow and develop.

For more information on the *Standards for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care Settings*, visit:

http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/provider/documents/Manual-Food_and_Nutrition.pdf