



South County PreK Co-Op

SNACK POLICY

REASON FOR SNACK

The State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene requires that a nursery school provide a snack or “mid-morning or mid-afternoon nourishment” for preschool children.

BENEFITS OF SNACK TIME

Aside from being a healthy break, we believe that snack time is beneficial because it provides an opportunity to learn and share. Hopefully, the children will be given a chance to try new foods and to learn what foods are nutritious. In addition, the children are developing good table manners. They wait until everyone is seated and served before eating and they thank the parent/guardian helpers and children who brought the snack and beverage. During snack time, the children are seated around the tables, sharing conversation during an activity they enjoy. We all know that some of the best talking occurs during mealtimes when everyone is seated together.

TYPE OF SNACK

It is important to educate children about foods that are good for them. We therefore urge you to bring in wholesome foods such as raw vegetables, fresh fruits, and whole grain products. We discourage foods that contain excessive sugar, fats, and salts. We also discourage foods containing a lot of additives, preservatives, and artificial flavors and colors which contribute little food value and can cause problems in children sensitive to them.

To meet Department of Health Regulations, a snack/beverage combination must provide at least two foods (beverage included) from different food groups. Ideally, a third food group should be included. The food groups are: the milk group; meats and alternates; fruits and vegetables; and breads and cereals. This means that crackers served with apple juice, for example, is an acceptable snack/beverage combination since it includes two foods from different food groups. To make a better combination, add the third food group by providing cheese or peanut butter with the crackers. On the other hand, a snack/beverage combination of raisins and/or carrot sticks with juice would be unacceptable since all of these items are from the same food group.

The Health Department states that homemade snacks may not be used except for “special” occasions. For your child’s birthday, special breads, baked in muffin tins to look like cupcakes, or cookies can be made. We recommend using whole grain flours, when possible, and a minimum amount of sweeteners. You may also wish to bring in party napkins to make snack time extra special.

Milk products are acceptable snacks. Because they are “potentially hazardous food” perishable and capable of supporting rapid and progressive growth of infectious or toxigenic micro-

organisms), treat them accordingly. Refrigerate milk and milk products at home and as soon as you bring them into school.

Quantity and Size of Snack – There should be 20 individual servings for the 4’s classes and 19 individual servings for the 3’s class. This will ensure that all students, teachers and parent helpers have a snack. The snack at school should be a mid-morning or a mid-afternoon nourishment, not so filling that a child is not hungry at mealtime. Minimum serving sizes have been established by the Health Department. The snack/beverage combination must provide at least two servings of the minimum size indicated in the following chart:

MINIMUM SERVING TIMES

milk & milk products except cheese slices	½ cup (4 oz) ½-1 oz.
meat or alternate	½ - 1 oz.
fruit and/or vegetable fruit or vegetable juice	3 - 4 pieces ½ cup (4 oz.)
Bread Cereal Cracker	½ - 1 slice 1/3 cup 3 pieces

If more than two foods are included in the snack, two foods may together make up one serving. If one food is “just a taste”, such as a dip, topping, or garnish, two other foods (beverage included) must be served in amounts to assure the total of two servings. This is illustrated in the following example:

2 natural rye crisp crackers ¼ cup applesauce ½ cup milk	OR	3 natural rye crisp crackers 1 Tbsp. applesauce (topping) ½ cup milk
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Seconds are discouraged since there may not be enough seconds for all.

PREPARATION OF SNACK

Snacks should be simple, but have “child appeal”. They should be easy to prepare so that children can help to make them. If children can get into the act in the kitchen, they will discover that healthy foods are fun to work with and good to eat.

It is important to keep in mind that health practices dictate that a certain procedure be followed when preparing snacks.

1. **Bring any packages, jars or cans of food or drink to school unopened.**
2. All adults and children preparing the snacks must cleanse hands thoroughly.
3. Snacks must be prepared on a food contact surface that is clean, smooth, nontoxic and free of cracks.

4. Parent/Guardian helpers must supervise closely the placement of snacks on the tables. To avoid contamination of snacks, be certain each individual snack is placed on a napkin. Discard snack that has touched the floor, chairs or other surfaces.
5. Thoroughly clean tables by spraying with a bleach/water solution. Wipe chairs and sweep the floor under tables after snack time.
6. Use disposable utensils (such as plastic knives and spoons) and discard them afterwards. When a non-disposable utensil is used, such as metal knife, it must be cleaned by the three step sanitation process required by the Health Department. This process is posted in the kitchen. Since this process is time consuming, we urge you to use the disposables and throw them away afterwards. Besides disposable utensils, disposable plastic containers are also available at school for serving snacks such as canned fruit or dried cereal mixtures.

CONCLUSION

Whether you feel that snacks are necessary or desirable, they are required at nursery school and are an inevitable part of life. Let's have our children learn early to like and to choose nutritious foods for snacks. Let's begin now in nursery school to establish healthy eating habits.

SNACK SUGGESTIONS

- Read and compare nutritional information on package labels. Choose foods for snacks that provide plenty of nutrients for the money and for the calories.
- Keep snack simple & appealing so children can participate in preparation & serving.
- Finger foods in manageable sizes are easiest for children to handle.
- Bring beverages to school chilled. Even if the beverage is not a favorite, the children will probably drink it if it is cold and refreshing. (One or two hours in the school refrigerator is not enough.)
- Try to be informed about snacks being brought in so there is not too much repetition. Check the menu chart on the refrigerator.
- Consider a call to the other parent/guardian helper to coordinate a really great snack/beverage combination & to ensure the two foods from different groups requirement is met.

SNACK IDEAS

The following are some suggestions for snack. For a more complete list of suggestions and a list of snacks, please refer to the complete snack policy located at the school.

MEATS AND ALTERNATES

A. Nuts and Seeds

- dry roasted and unsalted when possible
- mix with cereals and/or dried fruits or use as a topping

B. Peanut Butter- on bread or crackers or on celery, apples, bananas or other vegetables or fruits

MILK GROUP

A. Cheese

- natural varieties
- serve in a variety of shapes
- as cubes on pretzel sticks
- open face or regular sandwiches
- kabobs with one or more fruits
- on crackers

B. Cottage Cheese

- plain, low fat preferred
- mix with fruit (fresh, canned or dried)
- serve with vegetables, fruit or crackers
- use as a dip with a variety of seasonings

C. Yogurt

- plain, low fat preferred
- top with grapenuts or wheat germ
- mix with fruit: fresh; canned; or dried
- garnish with chopped nuts or seeds
- use as a dip for fruits or vegetables

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

A. Fresh Fruit

B. Canned Fruit - must be commercially prepared, packed in juice

C. Dried Fruit

D. Raw Vegetables

- can be served whole, in sticks, slices, wedges, or as florets
- may be served plain or with a dip

BREADS AND CEREALS

A. Bread

- store purchased whole grain varieties preferred
- can be cut into squares, triangles, or finger strips

- good with cream cheese, nut butters, and unsweetened fruit butters and spreads including applesauce

B. Cereals

- no sugar coated varieties
- can be served with milk and topped with fruit
- can be topped with yogurt
- good mixed with dried fruit or seeds

C. Crackers

- whole grain varieties preferred
- good with natural cheese slices, cream cheese, butters, and unsweetened fruit butters and spreads including applesauce

MISCELLANEOUS:

Whole Wheat Bread Sticks

Whole Wheat Pretzels

**Note that popcorn- air popped or microwaveable is no longer acceptable as it has no nutritional value and poses a choking hazard.

SPECIAL OCCASION SNACKS

A. Home Baked Goods

- using whole grains when possible & minimum amount of sweeteners

B. Breads:

- Nut Breads
- Corn Bread
- Whole Wheat Bread
- Muffin and Fruit Breads:
 - Applesauce
 - Blueberry
 - Carrot
 - Date
 - Pumpkin
 - Banana
 - Bran
 - Cranberry
 - Oatmeal
 - Raisin
 - Zucchini

C. Cookies:

- Applesauce

- Cheese
- Pumpkin
- Various Nut Cookies
- Carrot
- Peanut Butter
- Various Fruit Cookies

D. Dairy Products

- must be commercially prepared milk sherbets, ice milk or ice cream
- in a dish or cone
- as a sundae with fruit and chopped nuts or seeds
- puddings and custards
- plain or with fruit garnish

BEVERAGE CHOICES

- In unopened containers only!!

A. Milk

- may not be reconstituted from a dry milk product
- choose 2%, whole, skim or buttermilk

B. Juice

- all 100% fresh or canned

C. Miscellaneous

- Hot cider or Cocoa may be nice occasionally on a cold winter day!