

## CentroNia Wellness Policy



Our 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 on nutrition and physical activity practices. We have designed these policies as an expectation of CentroNia staff and guide parents to model healthy habits that lead to lifelong health and wellness.

### 1. Children Meals and Snacks:

CentroNia participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and follows dietary requirements set by USDA as well as state and local requirements. At CentroNia, we commit to:

<b>Cook</b> all of our meals in house	<b>Not serve:</b>
<b>Ensure</b> that children always have access to water	Highly processed food to make our menus lower in sodium, fat, and sugar
<b>Offer</b> 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	Pork
<b>Offer</b> unflavored whole milk (2yo and younger) and unflavored 1% milk (2yo and above)	Juices, flavored milk, and other sugary beverages
<b>Offer</b> vegetarian lunch at least once a week, following the “Meatless Monday” campaign	Not having vending machines or selling competitive food

### 2. 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, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish. In addition to food allergies, other children may have cultural, religious, or other food restrictions, such as vegetarianism. CentroNia commits to:

- ✓ Being a nut-free facility
- ✓ Provide vegetarian alternatives every day
- ✓ Ask families to disclose any food allergies or cultural, religious or food preferences at the time of enrollment
- ✓ Track special dietary needs and, when necessary, designing an individualized plan in partnership with parents.

***CentroNia will make every effort to accommodate special diets, but this may not be possible in all cases. If this is the case, CentroNia staff will talk to parents to design an alternate plan for the child.***

### 3. Food Brought from Home:

CentroNia will provide written instructions to families to guide selections of foods brought from home in order to ensure that children have healthy and balanced meals throughout the day. These are exceptions that will require a medical note

Acceptable foods include:

- ✓ Vegetables (except fried)
- ✓ Fresh fruits (including sauces like apple sauce but not juices)

## CentroNia Wellness Policy

- ✓ Proteins such as eggs, cheese, tuna, meats, legumes

Whole grains like whole wheat pasta, brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat crackers, and whole wheat bread

### 4. Foods not permitted at CentroNia include:

- × No junk food, fried food (breaded meat/ fries), highly-processed foods, snacks nor any desserts rich in sugar, fat or salt (for example donuts, cookies, ice cream, cakes, pizza, potato chips, etc.)
- × No juice, energy drinks, soda, flavored waters, and flavored milk
- × No nuts: peanuts, almonds, walnuts, cashews, hazelnuts, coconut, pecans, pistachios, peanut butter, nut butters, Nutella, etc. These include plant based “dairy” products such as cashew, almond milk/cheese/yogurt, etc.
- × No Lunchables

### 5. Celebrations

CentroNia is committed to provide 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.**

### 6. Eating Environment

Where children eat (and with whom) contributes to learning, development and socialization in important ways. At CentroNia we are committed to ensure 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 CentroNia, we ask that each staff member support children by:

- ✓ Eating and drinking healthy foods at all CentroNia facilities
- ✓ 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

### 7. Infants:

#### Breast Milk and Formula

CentroNia’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. Each center has a designated area for breastfeeding, for families and staff for use when breastfeeding.

#### Introducing Solid Foods

At CentroNia, we introduce children to a variety of developmentally appropriate foods starting at 6 months of age. We ask parents to collaborate in this effort by filling out OSSE Infant Notification Form and coordinate with teachers so that the same new foods and textures introduced at home are given and continued during mealtime in the center.

## CentroNia Wellness Policy

### 8. 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 through the year. Teachers conduct nutrition education activities 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 meal times, where teachers are expected to make mealtime pleasant, sit with children and enjoy the meal.

#### For Teachers:

In order for childcare providers to serve as role models and to teach children about the importance of leading healthy lifestyles, CentroNia's Food and Wellness Team provides training and professional development opportunities year-round.

#### For Teachers, ECE leaders, and Parents:

**CentroNia Roots** is an initiative to provide teachers, leaders and parents knowledge to cultivate healthy habits during early childhood. CentroNía Roots includes easy steps to inspire adults to have a healthier lifestyle, thus encouraging the kids to make healthier choices. Each chapter has an informational guide and ideas involving the family about basic nutrition and wellness.

### 9. Physical activity

#### Physical Activity and Education

- ✓ 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

#### 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

#### 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

## CentroNia Wellness Policy

- ✓ Never using screen time as a reward

### 10. 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 CentroNia 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.

### 11. Evaluations

It is crucial for CentroNía administrative staff, teachers, and families to help implement CentroNia's wellness policy as a collective effort as an organization. By evaluating this policy, it helps to reinforce policies 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 each of you. You may contact via phone to 202-332-4200 ext 1175 or 1017.**