

# **EARLY CHILDHOOD ACADEMY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**



## **LOCAL WELLNESS POLICY SY 2009 - 2010**

**Early Childhood Academy Public Charter School  
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**Local Wellness Policy**  
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**Background**

The U.S. Congress established a requirement in the Child Nutrition and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004, that **all school districts with a federally funded school meal program draft a local school wellness policy** by the start of the 2008-2009 school year. The law requires that these policies must, at a minimum, (1) include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness, (2) establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity, (3) provide assurance that those guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance applicable to school meals issued by the Secretary of Agriculture, (4) establish a plan for measuring the implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons with operational responsibility for ensuring that the schools meet the wellness policy; and (5) involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, school board, school administrators, and the public, in the development of the school wellness policy.

Early Childhood Academy Public Charter School will use the above requirements as a baseline and expand the policy to cover additional student wellness areas. The wellness policy will cover the following:

1. Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.
2. Establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.
3. Include safeguards to ensure access for all children to healthy foods and to fight hunger and nutrient deficiencies.
4. Provide assurance that those guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.
5. Promote student wellness by implementing Coordinated School Health Program components.
6. Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons with operational responsibility for ensuring that the schools meet the wellness policy.

7. Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, school board, school administrators, and the public, in development of the local Wellness Policy.

### **Vision/Statement of Responsibility**

Early Childhood Academy Public Charter School recognizes that nutrition education; food served in schools, and physical activity each affect student wellness. The school also recognizes the important connection between a healthy diet and a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school.

Early Childhood Academy PCS recognizes that it is the school's role, as part of the larger community, to model and actively practice, through policies and procedures, the promotion of family health, physical activity, and good nutrition.

Early Childhood Academy PCS further recognizes that the sharing and enjoyment of food and participation in physical activities are fundamental experiences for all District residents and are primary ways to nurture and celebrate our cultural diversity. These fundamental human experiences are vital bridges for building friendships, forming inter-generational bonds, and strengthening communities.

### **Preamble**

Whereas, a healthy diet increases a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school;

Whereas, each day, students and their parents trust that the foods offered at school are nutritious and safe, and that Early Childhood Academy PCS is responsible for ensuring the safety of foods provided at school;

Whereas, nationally, obesity rates have tripled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, in the District of Columbia, 14 percent of high school students are overweight and 17 percent are at risk for becoming overweight;

Whereas, in the District of Columbia, 79 percent of high school students eat fewer than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day;

Whereas, in the District of Columbia, 56 percent of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 81 percent of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, Early Childhood Academy PCS is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of Early Childhood Academy PCS that:

- All students in grades preschool through kindergarten will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Early Childhood Academy PCS will ensure that no student in the school goes hungry during the school day.
- Early Childhood Academy PCS will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, Early Childhood Academy PCS will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, and after-school snacks).
- Early Childhood Academy PCS will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

### **Section 1: Ensuring Quality Nutrition Education, Health Education and Physical Education.**

Early Childhood Academy PCS aims to provide age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instruction in nutrition, health and physical education that help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to enjoy healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle.

#### Health and Nutrition Education

Early Childhood Academy PCS will provide nutrition education that:

- is offered 5 times per week for 15 minutes for grades preschool through kindergarten as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;

- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

### Physical Activity

Early Childhood Academy PCS acknowledges the positive benefits of physical activity for student health and academic achievement. Recognizing that physical education is a crucial and integral part of a child's education, Early Childhood Academy PCS will provide opportunities to ensure that students engage in healthful levels of vigorous physical activity to promote and develop the student's physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. Besides promoting high levels of personal achievement and a positive self-image, physical education activities will teach students how to cooperate in the achievement of common goals.

The components of the school's physical education program shall include a variety of kinesthetic activities, including team, individual, and cooperative sports and physical activities, as well as aesthetic movement forms, such as dance.

Students shall be given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before-and/or after-school programs.

Early Childhood Academy PCS will ensure that:

- The required recess time will remain 30 minutes per day, and recess will not be determined by or at the discretion of teachers;
- Health and physical education is required for kindergarten students 90 minutes per week;
- Classroom teachers shall develop and implement a curriculum that connects and demonstrates the interrelationship between physical activity, good nutrition, and health;
- Early Childhood Academy PCS shall enhance the quality of physical education curricula and increase training of teachers through site-based staff development;
- An appropriate alternative activity to physical education shall be provided for students with a physical disability that may restrict excessive physical exertion;

- Teaching staff shall appropriately limit the amount or type of physical exercise required of students during code red days, temperatures above 90°, or other inclement conditions.
- Students shall have opportunities to enjoy physical activity and nutrition education through participation in community–sponsored gardening programs, if available.

## **Section 2: Establishing Nutritional Guidelines for All Foods Served on Campus During the School Day.**

A component of the educational mission of Early Childhood Academy PCS is teaching students to establish and maintain life-long healthy eating habits. This mission shall be accomplished, in part, through serving healthful food in the schools. Early Childhood Academy PCS will ensure that:

### Free and Reduced-Price Meals

- All qualified students will become eligible for free lunch, through frequent checking and coordination with the Department of Human Service Income Maintenance Administration and agencies serving homeless and run-a-way youth;
- Maximum participation in the school meal program will be achieved by developing a coordinated, comprehensive outreach and promotion plan, and by putting systems in place that ensure the elimination of the stigma of accepting “free” lunch;
- Early Childhood Academy PCS will provide students with at least 30 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 30-45 minute after sitting down for lunch;

### Breakfast

- Early Childhood Academy PCS will operate a Universal “Free for All” School Breakfast Program;
- Early Childhood Academy PCS will operate a Breakfast in the Classroom program with assistance from Food Services;
- Early Childhood Academy PCS will market the Universal “Free for All” School Breakfast program through take home flyers, school newsletters, home mailings, etc.

### Nutritional Quality of School Meals

- The nutritional value of the food served will improve upon USDA standards through provision of nutritious, fresh, tasty, locally grown food that reflects community and cultural diversity;
- Half of the grains served will be whole grain

## After School Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Early Childhood Academy PCS will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. The school will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

- Early Childhood Academy PCS will provide snacks through after-school programs and will apply for reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program operated by the State Education Office.

## Foods and Beverages Sold Individually in Vending Machines, A la Carte Lines, Fundraisers, and School Stores

- Early Childhood Academy PCS shall not have vending machines accessible to students;
  - Vending machines, a la carte, fundraisers, and school stores shall only offer approved items, as cited by the D.C. Action for Healthy Kids Healthy Vending Policy outlined below;
  - Draft food and beverage vending contracts shall be made available to the public for inspection and comments before being signed by Early Childhood Academy PCS and Early Childhood Academy PCS may not sign exclusive contracts, or contracts with confidential clauses, with soft drink, fast food, or snack food companies.
- (2) The following beverages shall not be provided or sold:
- (A) Soft drinks, sports drinks, punches, and iced teas;
  - (B) Fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50 percent real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; and
  - (C) Drinks containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk.
- (3) All snacks, sweets, or side dishes sold or served on the school site outside of the federal school meal program shall meet all of the following standards:
- (A) Have 35 percent or less of its total calories from fat;
  - (B) Have 10 percent or less of its total calories from saturated plus trans fat;
  - (C) Have 35 percent or less of its weight from sugars, excluding sugars occurring naturally in fruits, vegetables, and dairy ingredients; and
  - (D) Have no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.
  - (E) Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below  
One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
    - One ounce for cookies;

- Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items;
- Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
- Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
- Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; and
- The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

### Food in other areas of the School Environment

- Early Childhood Academy PCS will develop a “Healthy Snacks ” and “Healthy Parties ” policy, and provide parents and teachers with a list of healthy, affordable food choices for snacks and parties;
- No unhealthy food or beverage item may be advertised on school grounds, and fast food and “branded ” food items shall not be offered for sale as part of any school meal program or as à la carte items;

### Food Marketing in Schools

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, Early Childhood Academy PCS will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).<sup>1</sup> School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages<sup>2</sup> is prohibited. Healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products will be encouraged by Early Childhood Academy PCS.

Early Childhood Academy PCS will market healthy foods through the use of: books or curricula and school supplies; educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward; programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy high-nutrition food products; free samples or coupons; and food sales through fundraising activities.

### Rewards

Early Childhood Academy PCS will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior,<sup>3</sup> and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

### Celebrations

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<sup>1</sup> Advertising of low-nutrition foods and beverages is permitted in supplementary classroom and library materials, such as newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and similar media, when such materials are used in a class lesson or activity, or as a research tool.

<sup>2</sup> Schools should not permit general brand marketing for food brands under which more than half of the foods or beverages do not meet the nutrition standards for foods sold individually or the meals are not consistent with school meal nutrition standards.

<sup>3</sup> Unless this practice is allowed by a student’s individual education plan (IEP).

Early Childhood Academy PCS will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above). At the beginning of the school year, ECA will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas and healthy snack ideas to parents and teachers.

**Section 3: Assure that guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set at the federal level by the Secretary of Agriculture.**

The Child Nutrition Services Director will review this policy and ensure that the policies are not less restrictive than those set by the Secretary of Agriculture or state law.

**Section 4: Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy.**

Early Childhood Academy PCS shall develop a steering committee for the development and monitoring of the wellness policy; and this committee shall also be responsible for evaluation of the policy annually.

The State Education Office will also monitor the status of Local Wellness Policies while conducting reviews and site visits to Early Childhood Academy PCS.

**Section 5: Community Involvement**

The Early Childhood Academy PCS Parent Leadership Team, consisting of school administrators, teachers, parents, and community members, will develop a plan for community involvement in the school wellness policy.