

HOOSIER CARE SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

BELIEF STATEMENT

Hoosier Care is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle and recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of students to develop and learn. The overall environment shall be aligned with healthy school goals in order to promote health and wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as is appropriate to each person. In addition, staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of their own daily life.

INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure an environment that promotes and supports student health and wellness, helps to reduce childhood obesity and meets the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and the Illinois School Code, including, without limitation, goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other activities designed to promote student wellness; nutrition guidelines for all foods available during the day; a plan for measuring implementation including designating one or more persons charged with operational responsibility.

RATIONALE

A disturbing number of children are inactive and do not eat well. The result is an alarming number of children who are overweight. Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 on June 30, 2004. Recognizing the role schools can play in health promotion; this law requires local education agencies participating in a program authorized by the National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to develop a local wellness policy. The objectives of the wellness policy are to improve the school nutrition environment, promote student health and reduce childhood obesity. In addition, Public Act 094-0199 amends the Illinois School Code, requiring the Illinois State Board of Education to establish a state goal that all districts have a wellness policy.

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases. Schools and school communities have a responsibility to help students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented wellness programs have been shown to positively influence children's health.

Schools also have a responsibility to help students establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to maintain and improve their physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in general and of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes.

GOALS FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION

Hoosier Care participates in the National School lunch program as a Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI). The individuals in the Hoosier Care program have profound multiple disabilities including cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities and medical needs. Many of them are fed via G-tube by nursing staff instead of eating orally. As a result of their disabilities and medical needs, the students do not understand or even respond to a traditional program for nutrition education. Instead, they are working on mealtime skills through their Individual Education Plans (IEP's) and Individual Program Plans (IPP's), which range from just tolerating their meals to helping take bites of food or a drink of liquid.

The overall nutritional aspects of the individual's diets are monitored by various medical, nursing, educational and support staff. This monitoring includes, at minimum, monthly reviews by the staff doctor, the nursing staff and the registered dietitian to determine if the nutritional needs of each individual are being met. In addition a monthly weight is taken. These reviews as well as the weighing may be done on a more frequent basis if it is determined that an individual's nutritional needs require it or if there has been too large of a weight gain or weight loss. In addition, the daily dietary intake is documented for all individuals.

GOALS FOR NUTRITION PROMOTION

Hoosier Care informs parents about the nutrition program and wellness policy on an annual basis at the beginning of each school year.

A nutrition bulletin board with information for parents, community members, staff and students about the nutrition program and good nutritional practices is utilized and updated regularly.

Hoosier Care also advertises the Summer Meal Program.

GOALS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

As stated above, the individuals in the Hoosier Care program have profound multiple disabilities including cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities and medical needs. All of the individuals require some type of assistance with their daily physical activities and living skills. This can range from total assistance to some type of a more moderate assistance, depending on the severity of the person's disabilities. All of the individuals are in wheelchairs and most need help with transfer and transport.

The students are encouraged on a daily basis to participate to fullest extent possible in physical activities that are appropriate for them. Both gross and fine motor skill development is addressed formally though the student's IEP and IPP. These documents are where the individual physical activity goals are set for each student. In addition, physical therapy programs (assisted standing, assisted walking, propelling a wheelchair, assisted sitting and range of motion) are completed as appropriate and if the student tolerates them.

The students also have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities including adaptive little league and Special Olympics.

GOALS FOR OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE STUDENT WELLNESS

School meals will be served in a clean, safe and pleasant setting with adequate time provided for students to eat, at minimum, in accordance with state and federal standards and guidelines.

All food service personnel shall have had adequate pre-service training and regularly participate in professional development activities that provide strategies for providing tasty, appealing and healthy school meals.

Food providers shall work with suppliers to obtain foods and beverages that meet the nutrition requirements of school meals.

Food providers shall take every measure to ensure that student access to food and beverages meets federal, state and local laws and guidelines.

All foods and beverages made available shall comply with the federal, state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hoosier Care does not offer competitive foods to its students.

For the safety and security of food, access to any area involved in the storage, preparation or service of food shall be limited to authorized personnel.

School personnel shall be encouraged to use nonfood incentives or rewards with students and shall not withhold food from students as a punishment.

School personnel shall not use physical activity as a punishment.

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL MEALS

School meals served shall be consistent with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and/or shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program and all applicable state and local laws and regulations.

UNUSED FOOD SHARING PLAN

Hoosier Care does not have an unused food-sharing plan as it is not appropriate for its nutrition program due to the individual nature of the diets for each student including many who have adapted diets or eat via g-tube.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE MARKETING

Food and Beverage Marketing is not appropriate for the Hoosier Care nutrition program due to the individual nature of the diets for each student including many who have adapted diets or eat via g-tube. In addition, Hoosier Care does not sell any foods as a part of its program and the diets that the students do receive are recommended by a licensed dietician and ordered by each student's physician.

MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The executive director is charged with the overall operational responsibility for ensuring that Hoosier Care meets the local wellness policy requirements.

A wellness team consisting of at minimum the executive director, principal/head teacher, dietary director and director of nursing will oversee the development, implementation and evaluation of the wellness policy. Members of the wellness team will consult with others as needed, including health care professionals (physician, dietitian) and parents.

The principal/head teacher, dietary director and director of nursing shall be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the local wellness policy.

The wellness team shall review and evaluate the wellness policy on an annual basis and make any changes that it deems necessary.

Hoosier Care will also conduct a local wellness policy triennial assessment. This assessment will determine Hoosier Care's compliance with the wellness policy, the progress it has made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy and how its policy compares to model wellness policies. This triennial assessment will be posted online and will be available for public viewing.

Reviewed and approved August 9, 2023