



Easterseals Academy
Wellness Policy
Developed June 1, 2006
Updated December 9, 2014
Updated December 2016

Belief Statement

The Easterseals Academy 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 entire school environment shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence students' beliefs and habits and promote health and wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity. In addition, school staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

Intent

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a total school 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.

Rationale

A disturbing number of children are inactive and do not eat well. The result is an alarming number of children and adolescents 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 program have been shown to positively influence children's healthy.

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 healthy 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.

Many adult and school-aged clients served at Easterseals struggle with deficits in motor planning, coordination, and sensory integration and are unable to engage in age-appropriate physical exercise. In addition, several clients require medication in order to maintain an optimal level of functioning. In addition to further impairing motor abilities, weight gain is a common side effect of some of the medications.

Goals

1. Students at the Easterseals Academy shall receive nutrition education as part of their comprehensive functional skills curriculum. The emphasis on healthy eating and fitness shall be incorporated throughout each of the Illinois State Board of Education Learning Standards.
2. Nutrition education shall be integrated into the standards-based lesson plans of all domain areas.
3. Nutrition and fitness will be addressed throughout daily activities, such as cooking, meal times, science activities, occupational therapy sessions, community outings, etc.
4. Nutrition education and fitness shall provided by various staff members, including teachers, paraprofessional support staff, therapists, nurse, and administration.
5. Physical activity, incorporated throughout the daily schedule, emphasizes self-management skills, sensory integration, recreation, and overall fitness.
6. Students shall be provided opportunities for physical activity through swimming, Special Olympic practice and competition, occupational therapy sessions, community outings, exercise time, and daily walking.
7. The nurse, as needed, shall monitor the weight of at-risk students.
8. The nurse shall implement regular staff trainings regarding the nutrition and health of our students.
9. Teachers, therapists, and administration shall enlist the support of parents/family members for individualized student nutrition/fitness programs as needed.
10. Teachers, therapists, and administration shall educate parents/family members regarding individualized student nutrition/fitness programs as needed.

Consistent School Activities and Environment – Healthy Eating

1. Food providers will have information available about the nutritional content of school meals and/or individually sold foods with students, family and school staff.
2. School meals shall be served in clean, safe and pleasant settings with adequate time provided for students to eat, at a minimum, in accordance with state and federal standards and guidelines. The National Association of State Boards of Education recommends that students have adequate time to eat.
3. Students, parents, school staff and community members bringing foods and beverages to school for parties/celebrations/meetings shall be encouraged to provide healthful options.
4. School-based organizations shall be encouraged to raise funds through the sale of items other than food.
5. For the safety and security of food, access to any area involved in storage, preparation or service of food on the school campus shall be limited to authorized personnel.
6. Easterseals shall take efforts to promote nutrition food and beverage choices consistent with the current dietary Guidelines for Americans and Food Guidance System (MyPyramid) such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods and whole grain products.

CONSISTENT SCHOOL Activities and Environment –Physical Activity

1. All exercise programs are supervised by the certified occupational therapist. In addition, swimming activities are supervised by certified lifeguards.
2. Easterseals has developed community partnerships with other child-serving organizations including Chicago Park District, Cubs Care T-Ball, and Chicago Area Special Olympics.

FOOD OR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS A REWARD OR PUNISHMENT

1. School personnel shall be encouraged to use nonfood incentives or rewards with students and shall not withhold food from students as punishment.
2. School personnel shall not use physical activity as a punishment.
3. All individual and classroom-wide behavior intervention programs are supervised and monitored by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.