



Instructions and Tips for Creating Compliant Documents: Menus for Child Care Centres (O. Reg. 137/15, s. 43(1))

Mandatory Requirements

The following menu-related requirements **must be met** in order to comply with the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and O. Reg. 137/15:

- Where the child is present at meal time, a meal must be supplied and provided by the licensee.
- Where a child receives child care for six hours or more, the licensee must ensure that the total food offered to the child includes, in addition to any meals provided, two snacks.
- Menu and all meals, snacks and beverages must meet the recommendations set out in the Health Canada documents, “Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide”, “Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit and Métis” or “Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants”, as amended from time to time, as the case may be.
- Any substitutions must be noted on the posted menus.

Other Related Requirements

- Planned menus for the current and following week must be posted in a conspicuous place with any substitutions noted on the posted menus.
- Menus must be kept by the licensee for thirty days after the last day for which it is applicable.
- Where special dietary and feeding arrangements have been made between the licensee and parent, the arrangements must be carried out in accordance with the written instructions of a parent.

Other Considerations

The following are some tips and other considerations for developing a menu. These are not mandatory, but they will support the development of more comprehensive and high-quality menus for children.

General

- Develop a monthly menu with rotational items.
- Ensure that the food provided will meet the needs of children in the centre, including children with allergies, restrictions and special dietary and feeding arrangements.

- Where an external caterer is hired to provide meals, it is the licensee's responsibility to ensure that the menu meets all requirements under the CCEYA.
- Include a sample of the menu in the parent handbook or provide copies of the menu for pick-up at the parent information board or in each room.
- Note specific food choices on the posted menu in order to inform parents (e.g., "apples" instead of "fruit"). This is important if a child is allergic or intolerant to a specific item or ingredient and the parent will be providing an alternative.
- Adapt the menu to address the developmental needs of varying groups of children (e.g., softer foods for infants).
- Where an alternative or additional menu (e.g. vegetarian menu, Halal menu) has been developed to meet the dietary needs of children in the child care centre, ensure that additional menus are posted.
- When substituting a menu item:
 - Cross out the item and mark the substitution.
 - Identify for which meal the change has been made (e.g., AM Snack: carrots substituted for celery).
- Identify the food group (as set out in the [Health Canada](#) documents) for each menu item (e.g., Fruit: oranges, Dairy: cheddar cheese).
- Consult the [Ontario Dietitians in Public Health – Menu Planning and Supportive Nutrition Environments in Child Care Settings document](#) for more information about how to interpret and implement Canada's Food Guide.
- Where programming includes children participating in a cooking activity, note this meal or substitution in the posted menu.
- Consider whether Ministry of Education director approval will be requested for meals and snacks brought from home (bagged lunches) in the case of children in a licensed kindergarten group or older children.
- Where a Ministry of Education director approval has been granted for bagged lunches, program staff should monitor the contents of bagged lunches and discuss with parents when there are concerns regarding the nutritional adequacy of snacks and meals. Any associated conditions that appear on the licence must be implemented (where applicable).