

Big Sandy Area C.A.P., Inc. – HEAD START  
Program Policies and Procedures

## Meal Service

### POLICY:

Meal service is designed to promote the physical, social, and emotional development and healthy eating habits of children.

- *This policy relates to Head Start Performance Standards 45 CFR Part 1302.31 & 1302.44*

### PROCEDURE:

1. **USDA Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, Child Nutrition Program is the primary source of payment for meal services. Head Start funds may be used to cover those allowable costs not covered by USDA.**
2. **Every child enrolled in a program with less than six hours will receive a quantity of food in meals and snacks which provides at least 1/3 to 1/2 of their daily nutritional needs. Children enrolled in a program for more than six hours will receive meals and snacks to meet at least 1/2 to 2/3 of their daily nutritional needs. Meals and snacks are high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar, and salt. Because nutritional needs are met during mealtimes, parents are not allowed to send money for extra food for their child.**
3. All children who have not received breakfast at the time they arrive to the program site will be served a nourishing breakfast.
4. Breakfast, lunch, and snack must have at least two hours between the beginnings of each meal.
5. Sufficient time is allowed for each child to eat.
6. In order to ensure good appetites and a relaxing mealtime environment, calming transitional activities should be planned before meals.
7. Mealtimes should occur in a quiet, well-lit, and ventilated area.

8. Children, staff , and volunteers eat together family style and share the same menu to the extent possible. **Snack and meal times will be structured and used as learning opportunities that support staff/child interactions and foster communication and conversations that contribute to the child's learning, development, and socialization.**
9. Food will not be used as punishment or reward. Children are encouraged but not forced to eat or taste. **Children will not be forced to finish their food.**
10. A variety of foods is served to broaden each child's food experience.
11. Children are involved in meal related activities which provide opportunities for decision making, communication, sharing, fine motor, and eye-hand coordination (setting tables, preparing food, carrying trays, rinsing plates, etc.).