Food Holding Procedure

Early Learning
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Puget Sound Educational Service District

Purpose

This tells Site/Center teams how and why food must be held at temperatures that will ensure food served in classrooms is safe to eat.

Guidance

Our program complies with all Federal, State, and local food safety and sanitation laws, including those related to storage, preparation, service of food, and the health of food handlers. Chapter 246-215 WAC of the Washington State Retail Food Code informs procedures related to food service in the Early Learning Program. A link to the full document can be found at the end of this procedure.

Temperature control is the best method for limiting growth of bacteria that cause food borne illness or food poisoning. Children under the age of five do not have fully developed immune systems. They are considered a Highly Susceptible Population which means they are more likely than other people in the general population to experience foodborne illness and its complications.

Potentially hazardous foods (PHF) are foods that are most likely to become unsafe and cause people to become sick. Pathogens grow well in these foods and the right time and temperature control is needed to limit this growth.

Potentially Hazardous Foods:

- Milk and dairy products
- Eggs
- Poultry
- Meat: beef, pork and lamb
- Fish, shellfish and crustaceans
- Baked potatoes
- Heat treated plant food like rice, beans and vegetables
- Tofu or other soy proteins
- Sliced tomatoes, melons and cut leafy greens, bean sprouts

This procedure will be followed during all field trips and other activities where a CACFP meal is served outside of the classroom.

All efforts need to be made to keep foods out of the danger zone (41-139 degrees F). Food temperatures need to be maintained by using refrigeration or ice, warming units or ovens, or other approved methods to keep pathogens from growing.

Young children are at a greater risk for developing foodborne illness than the general population. Because of this, we identify the danger zone to be 41-139 degrees F. This differs from 41-135 degrees F for the general population.

The metal stemmed dial thermometer is the most common thermometer used to check food temperatures. Dial thermometers work well for taking the temperatures of thick foods. Digital thermometers may also be

used. They are easy to read and are better for measuring thin foods, like hamburger patties. Appliance thermometers are commonly used to measure temperatures in refrigerators and freezers.

Procedure

1. **Food Temperatures**
    - You must determine the point where food temperature becomes the responsibility of the Early Learning classroom. This will vary by site/center depending on how the food is prepared, delivered and transported. Site/center teams will work with center, school district, or PSESD food service staff to determine who will take, record, and file food temperatures of all potentially hazardous foods.
    - **Sites/Centers receiving food from school districts:** You must ensure that school district food service staff are taking and recording temperatures of all potentially hazardous foods.
    - **Sites receiving food from their own kitchen:** Kitchen staff must obtain and record temperature of food when cooking is complete and every two hours after until served.
    - **Sites receiving food from off-site location:** Food should be accompanied by a transfer sheet showing the cook time and temperature of any potentially hazardous food. You must obtain and record temperature of food as it enters the classroom. Use clean, sanitized and accurate thermometers to check temperatures of all potentially hazardous foods.
    - **When taking food temperatures:**
        - Insert the stem of the thermometer several inches into the food and hold it for at least 20 seconds.
        - Record the temperature of all potentially hazardous foods, the time it was taken, and any corrective actions (see below) on the *Daily Food Temperature Record.*
        - File the *Daily Food Temperature Records* and discard them after the end of the school year (Full Year Programs—keep one calendar year of temperature records)
        - Calibrate thermometers monthly. See Washington State Food & Beverage Worker's Manual for instructions. A link can be found at the end of this document.

2. **Refrigerator and Freezer Temperatures**
    - You must ensure that each refrigerator and freezer used to store food is equipped with a working thermometer.
    - You must record refrigeration and freezer temperatures and any corrective actions daily on the *Daily Refrigeration Temperature Record.*

3. **Hot Holding Temperatures**
    - You must ensure hot foods are held at 140 degrees F or hotter for no longer than two hours before serving.
    - You must follow reheating procedure if food drops below 140 degrees F within a two hour period.
    - You must discard all hot food with a temperature less than 140 degrees F if it has been held for more than two hours from when the previous temperature was taken.

4. **Cold Holding Temperatures**
    - You must ensure cold foods are held at 40 degrees F or colder.
    - You must discard food found to be above 40 degrees F in a refrigerator and is believed to have been at that temperature for more than two hours.

5. **Reheating**
    - You must reheat hot foods that have fallen below 140 degrees F within the two hour holding window for hot holding foods.

- Foods intended for hot food service must be heated to a temperature of 165 degrees F or hotter. (sites/centers with commercial equipment, three compartment sink, separate food preparation and hand washing sinks only.)
- You must bring food to a temperature of 165 degrees F or hotter and remain at that temperature for at least 15 seconds. You must stir food while reheating to ensure all parts are hot.
- You must cover food that is microwaved for reheating, stir at least once during cooking and let stand, covered, for two minutes before serving.
- You must allow sufficient time for food to cool to a safe temperature for children to eat before serving.

6. **Cooling Hot Foods (food service sites with commercial equipment, three compartment sink, separate food preparation and hand washing sinks only)**
    - You must cool hot cooked food not intended for same day use immediately after cooking.
    - You must place hot food in shallow pans that are no more than 2 inches thick or deep and place pans in the refrigerator on top shelf where nothing can drip on them. Do not stack or cover pans.
    - You must cover food after it has cooled to 40 degrees F or colder.

Related Documents

Daily Food Temperature Record
Daily Refrigeration Temperature Record

Resources

Washington State Retail Food Code, Chapter 246-215 WAC (PDF)

Food Safety is Everybody's Business: Your Guide to Preventing Foodborne Illness
http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/332-036.pdf

Technical Information from FSIS: Kitchen Thermometers
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/thermy/kitchen.pdf
Food Safety and Inspection Service Technical Information (FSIS) Slightly Revised May 2002 Food Safety Education Staff (301) 504-9605; FAX: (301) 504-0203 Kitchen Thermometers: One of the critical factors in controlling pathogens in food.

Serving It Safe, 2nd Edition
http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/Safety/safe.html
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