

Chester County Youth Center

Wellness Policy



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Chester County Youth Center Wellness Policy

Preamble

The Chester County Youth Center, a Residential Child Care Institution located in West Chester, Pa., is committed to the optimal development of every resident. The Youth Center believes that for our residents to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year/and during their placement in the facility.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students. In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities – do better academically. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance. This policy outlines the Youth Center's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all residents to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Residents in the Youth Center have access to healthy foods throughout the school day –through reimbursable school meals – in accordance with Federal and State nutrition standards;
- Residents receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Residents have opportunities to be physically active before, during and after school;
- Classroom instruction includes nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- Youth Center Staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of the Youth Center.

- The Youth Center is engaged in supporting the work of the NSLP in creating continuity between the Youth Center and the transition of the resident to their home or other residential placement so they may continue to practice lifelong healthy habits;
- The Youth Center establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students/residents and staff of the Youth Center. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

I. Youth Center Wellness Committee

The wellness committee will convene at least four (4) times per year to establish goals for and oversee Youth Center health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy.

Committee Role and Membership

- Deb Maccariella- Director
- Carrie Avery, Program Administrator
- Rachel Rodkey, Shelter Supervisor
- Charlie Gracie, I.U. Health & History Teacher
- Michelle Graham, Primecare, R.N.
- Lindsay Smith, Ch. Co. Health Department Educator
- Maribel Cruz, Supervisor 2
- Erica Giunta, DHS Accountant
- Brian Sebold, Building /Security Supervisor
- Residents

Leadership

The designated official responsible for convening the Wellness Committee, facilitating the development of the wellness policy, oversight of the Wellness Policy, compliance with and implementation of updates to the policy is: Carrie Avery, Chester County Youth Center Program Coordinator.

The names, titles and contact information of these individuals are:

Name	Title	Email Address	Role on Committee
Deb Maccariella	Director	dmaccariella@chesco.org	
Carrie Avery	Program Coordinator	cavery@chesco.org	Designated Official
Rachel Rodkey	Shelter Supervisor	@chesco.org	Snack Compliance
Maribel Cruz	Supervisor 2	mcruz@chesco.org	Snack Compliance
Charlie Gracie	I.U. Health & History Teacher	Butterfly1957@rcn.com	Health Education
Michelle Graham	PrimeCare	mgraham@chesco.org	R.N. Medical Consult
Lindsay Smith	Ch. Co. Health Dept. Educator/Consult/Policy Assessments/Student Surveys	lsmith@chesco.org	Nutrition Promotion
Erica Giunta	DHS Accountant	egiunta@chesco.org	Fiscal & Compliance
Susan Clough	CCIU Teacher	SusanC@cciu.org	Gym/Physical Activity
Brian Sebold	Security Supervisor	bsebold@chesco.org	On-site Monitoring

Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Wellness Engagement

3.

Implementation Plan

The Chester County Youth Center has adopted a Wellness Policy that provides nutrition education, physical activity that promotes resident wellness and balanced nutritional breakfast and lunch meals and snacks in accordance with and approved by the NSLP guidelines. In order to comply with and continue the practice of these policies, the following wellness committee members have been assigned the following responsibilities.

Deb Maccariella; designated as the person that will convene Wellness Committee Meetings, oversee the facilitation of the wellness policy, and promote on-going updating and policy compliance.

Carrie Avery; designated as the Wellness Policy Coordinator and will assist with the acquisition and implementation of nutrition and health education materials, programming and related activities.

Lindsay Smith, Ch. Co. Health Dept. Educator, administers assessments, provides resources and educational programming that supports the Wellness Policy goals.

Charlie Gracie, I.U. Teacher, will be provided educational materials for his classroom instruction that supports the Wellness Policy goals.

Michelle Graham, RN, Primecare, will provide medical counsel and treatment for the residents, support wellness activities and education thru use of media materials, , perform physical exams, and administer vaccinations and medication administration.

Maribel Cruz, Supervisor, will assist in monitoring compliance with program attendance, nutrition requirements of snacks, and wellness program availability on living units, and use of scheduled yoga, and gym time.

Erica Giunta, Accountant, performs all NSLP related financial functions, assists in off-site and on site assessments, and provides support for all other NSLP requirements and compliance.

Susan Clough, CCIU Teacher, recreational activities and staff support of wellness program.

Brian Sebold, Operations Supervisor, performs on-site kitchen assessments, monitors FSMC compliance with NSLP, schedules inspections

4.

Record Keeping

The new and updated Wellness Policy for 2020 is posted on WEB CC, our County website, for the community we serve and general public to view. Also posted is the 'Find Summer Meals in Your Community' site that identifies the locations in Chester County and throughout the nation where nutritious free meals are available for children and teens under 18 while school is not in session.

Documentation of all meetings, efforts to review and update the Wellness policy, notification and invitations to attend Wellness Committee meetings, and all assessments of the program will be kept and made available for review.

Triennial Progress Assessments

The persons responsible for hosting /managing the triennial assessments will be Carrie Avery, CCYC Program Coordinator, and Erica Giunta, DHS Accountant.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

All revisions will be based on the results of the triennial assessments, new health information, and new federal or state guidance standards that may be issued. The Wellness Policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

The Chester County Youth Center is a Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI). Although confidentiality of our residents is mandated by State law, we continually look to the Chester County Community as a resource for meaningful and beneficial programming for our residents.

Parents of our residents are provided information about the Youth Center's Wellness practices in our Parents Handbook, which is available in both English and Spanish. The handbook is given to all parents of the residents in the Youth Center at the time of their admission and /or at visitation. This booklet also includes descriptive information about the programming that is provided for their children.

Informational brochures are available in the front lobby and visitation room for parents and visitors alike to read and keep, a copy of our updated 2020 Wellness Policy will be posted on the WEBCC Youth Center website.

5.

Our Community involvement includes collaboration with government and private agencies, both contracted and volunteer, who provide a variety of programs all of which relate to wellness thru nutrition and health education, physical exercise and related structured activities

like gardening and cooking. These organizations include but are not limited to: The Chester County Intermediate Unit, Chester County Health Department, Prime Care Medical, Trellis For Tomorrow, AHHAH, Holcomb Behavioral Health, Aramark Food Service, Thresholds, The Crime Victim's Center of Chester County, Alcoholics Anonymous, Heads Up Drug Program, and Cruisin' Smart.

The Youth Center will actively communicate its Wellness Program to the parents of the residents by providing Parent Handbooks with a description of all services including our Wellness Policy and the 'wellness' practices provided to the youth. NSLP Brochures will be placed in our lobby, allowing access for both our parents and the general public. To generate greater awareness and promote wellness through better eating habits and physical activities, Healthy Choices and Practice posters are placed in most areas of the building that our youth use throughout the day. Additionally, upon final approval from the Commissioners, a copy of the Wellness Policy will be posted on the Youth Center Website for parents and the general public to view.

II. Nutrition

School Meals

The Youth Center is committed to serving healthy meals to our residents.

- Breakfast and Lunch meals will be served under the guidelines of the National School Program and will meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements as established by local, state and federal regulations.
- All meals will be appealing and attractive to the residents.
- All meals will be served in clean and pleasant settings.
- When a child misses a meal due to an appointment, court, visit or other reason, or his/her admission occurs between the dinner and breakfast, an alternative meal, sometimes referred to as a 'bag' lunch will be provided.
- To promote healthy food and beverage choices, the following Smarter Lunchroom techniques are used:
 - a. Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets
 - b. Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of residents
 - c. All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained/instructed to politely prompt residents to select and consume the daily vegetable.
 - d. White milk is an option at every meal

- e. Alternative entrée options (e.g. salad bar option) are highlighted on posters within all serving and dining areas.
- f. Resident surveys will be performed at least once per year.
- g. Sliced, whole or cut fruit will be available daily.
- h. Student Artwork is displayed in the dining area.
- i. Vegetable options have been given descriptive names.
- j. A reimbursable meal can be created in the serving areas available to our resident's .i.e. the serving window and the salad bar.
 - Menus will be posted outside of each serving window daily.
 - The Youth Center Medical staff will advise the FSMC of all special dietary needs and the FSMC will accommodate/provide for these needs.
 - Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they received their meal and are seated
 - Residents will be served lunch at a reasonable time of the day.
 - Four Farm to school activities that have been implemented are:
 - a. The gardening program consisting of 8 raised beds
 - b. Agriculture and nutrition are reinforced throughout the learning environment by including the residents in all gardening activities such as planting, weeding, watering and harvesting.
 - c. Local and regional products, including produce from the Youth Center Gardens are incorporated into the Healthy snack program and evening meal salad bar.
 - d. Field trips to local farms for some residents, and special programming such as Grains, Brains and Healthy Tissues provided by Arts Holding Hands and Hearts (AHHAH) highlight food preparation and tastings along with nutrition promotion.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

The Food Service Management Company (FSMC) that is contracted with by Chester County, hires and trains all food service personnel that work in the Youth Center. The Youth Center (SFA) floats an RFP that requires knowledge, experience and compliance with the NSLP. Additionally, the SFA then interviews interested parties, reviews submitted bids, and qualifies the FSMC before entering a contract.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe unflavored water will be available to all students throughout the day and throughout the Youth Center. The Youth Center will make drinking water available where all meals are served during mealtimes.

- Water coolers are placed strategically throughout the Youth Center.
- Additional Spring Water stations are placed in some areas of the building.
- Water bottles are provided for day trips and outside community service projects.
- All water sources and containers are maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The Youth Center will limit the availability of food outside of the 3 meals and snacks provided by the FSMC.

- Vending machines: Residents do and will not have direct access to these. Only during evening visits are parents allowed to purchase a snack or beverage for the child.

Celebrations

The Youth Center will acknowledge major holidays on the actual holiday and birthdays on the actual birthday. For these limited occasions, such as on birthdays, ice cream and cake may be served or a traditional turkey dinner may be served on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

For Holidays such as Memorial Day, the 4th of July, and Labor Day, the FSMC usually prepares a traditional barbeque menu and the meal will be served in picnic format in an outdoor area, weather permitting .

These food items are not served on a regular basis and are served in a limited quantity.

Fundraising

As an RCCI, the Youth Center does not have its residents participate in fundraising.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion will be achieved in several ways at the Youth Center.

- Classroom instruction during regular school hours will be provided on many different health and nutrition subjects.
- The classroom instruction will be supported by the healthy choices offered through our participation in the NSLP, and the SFA's raised bed garden program and salad bar.
- Fruit choices will be displayed in attractive baskets or other attractive serving vessels in the serving line for the residents to pick from.
- A salad bar will be offered at every evening meal and on a less regular basis at the lunch meal as well. An alternative individually pre-prepared and dished salad may be served in place of the salad bar at the lunch meal. All vegetables on the salad bar will be fresh and when seasonally available, may be provided from the Youth Centers own raised bed gardens.
- The Youth Center will continue to pursue contracts with AHHAH, an organization that provides classes in yoga, a class entitled 'Healthy Grains, Brains & Tissues' which focuses on defining good nutrition, and actual food preparation with taste testing, and a class in self-expression.
- The Youth Center will also promote nutritional wellness thru the use of educational posters, strategically located above water coolers, at the serving windows in the dining room, in the gymnasium and on the living units, in the visitation room for parents to see as well as the residents and strategically located on the vending machines to assist staff and parents in making healthier choices.

Nutrition Education

The Education Program is provided by the Chester County Intermediate Unit. In addition to providing instruction as required by the Pa. Dept. of Education, our teachers include programs purchased by the Youth Center (SFA) from the Human Relations Media Library to assist in the promotion of healthy eating, personal health and disease prevention. The Youth Center will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;

- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other instruction through subjects such as math, science, and the social sciences;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat free dairy products;
- Promotes physical activity and exercise;
- Links with school meal programs, Youth Center raised-bed gardens, and other contracted community providers programming;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing;
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The Youth Center has incorporated the following essential topics on healthy eating into their health education curriculum:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from My Plate
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grains products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain trans fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture

Some examples of the programming provided at the Youth Center that addresses many of the topics listed above are as follows:

1. Healthy Eating and Exercise
2. Caffeine: How Much is Too Much
3. Advertising, the Media and Your Health
4. Diabetes: Why Many Teens are at Risk
5. Understanding Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
6. Top 5 Food Mistakes Every Teen should Avoid
7. Cancer Update: Causes, Treatment and Prevention
8. Tobacco and Death: Perfect Together
9. The Danger of Sugar and Salt
10. The Mind/Body Connection: How Emotions affect your Health
11. Super-Size Me; consequences of a fast food diet

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

The Youth Center is a RCCI, and as such we do not do any marketing in the facility. All food and beverages are provided at no cost to each resident. In addition to participating in the NSLP, healthy habits, good nutrition and exercise are promoted in their formal education, as well as special programming and activities that are provided.

Staff Wellness

The Youth Center recognizes and values the health and well-being of every staff member, as does the County of Chester which offers a comprehensive wellness program for all employees of the County. The Youth Center encourages its employees to participate in the many programs offered. The Wellness Committee will strive to offer additional programming on-site that promotes good nutrition, exercise and other healthy behaviors, and will continue to promote the same thru the use of educational posters placed strategically throughout the building.

Physical Activity

Physical activity for the residents of the Youth Center is not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education.

Prior to any physical activity in the Youth Center, all residents receive a physical examination performed by Prime Care Medical Services. The medical staff will advise Youth Center staff of the exams results if there are any physical limitations or restrictions to be followed by each child for their own physical safety and protection.

Once a resident is cleared by the Medical staff, the resident will have the opportunity to engage in a variety of physical activity at least two times each day in the gym for periods of 50-60 minutes on both weekdays and weekends, outside in the yard (weather permitting), and two times a day in the multi- purpose room, also for periods of 50-60 minutes.

Physical Education

The Chester County Intermediate Unit teachers regularly provide residents with scheduled physical education as recommended/required by the Pa. Dept. of Education, using age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. All residents are provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes.

- Residents are encouraged to be vigorously active for at least 50% of the physical education class time.
- All physical education classes are taught by licensed teachers who are certified or endorsed to teach physical education.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

The Youth Center will strive to include the following essential topics in their health education curriculum

- The physical, psychological, and social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight

- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Weather related safety.....i.e. avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active outdoors
- Dangers of using performance enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including the media, family, peers and culture
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- Health related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility and body composition
- Phases of an exercise session, i.e. warm-up, workout, and cool down

Outdoor Recess

Outdoor recess and activities will be offered when the weather is appropriate. If the weather is appropriate, scheduled gym time for the detention residents may instead be used outside in the yard, and the Shelter residents may use this time for walks on the walking trail, or other outdoor activities in their separate yard area with the gazebo.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

The Youth Center recognizes that students and residents are more likely to be attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks from sitting, and when they can be physically active or stretch. At the Youth center, there are 3 teachers that provide the required education for all of our residents. Each teacher has his/her own classroom, and the residents travel in between each class to different classroom, thereby getting a chance to stretch their legs, walk, utilize the facilities, get a drink of water and engage in conversation.

After School Activities

After school activities are offered to all residents of the Youth Center through a variety of methods. There is free time allotted so that residents may write letters, make entries into their journals, visit the nurse as needed, or consult with their attorney, probation officer and/or CYF caseworker.

Each of the 5 living units has scheduled gym time after school and in the evenings after dinner, including on weekends. The gym is equipped for standards activities/games such as basketball, volley ball, and dodge ball. The gym is also used for scheduled Yoga classes.

Each living unit also has its own selection of board games, reading material and a television. All units have access to exercise videos and two units have Wii's for unscheduled opportunities for physical exercise. Additional equipment such as a stationary bicycle, a ping pong table, foos ball table, corn hole boards and pool table for other optional activities are available in the multipurpose room.

During Spring, Summer and Fall months, the Youth Center also provides outdoor physical and educational activity through participation in the tilling /preparation, planting, watering, weeding and harvesting of the Raised Bed Gardens.

Our Shelter Unit is the only eligible of 5 living units to go off grounds for physical activity and exercise. They are often taken on hikes (weather permitting) on nearby township walking trails, and are also taken to Pocopson Park to participate in other games and activities.

Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

In addition to classroom instruction, The Youth Center also offers the following special programs and activities facilitated by Youth Center Staff and Collaborating Organizations that also foster not just healthy eating, but healthy habits and lifestyles as well.

- The Garden Program: Consists of 10 raised beds. Residents are given instruction on and participate in tilling and prep of soil, planting, watering, weeding, harvesting, donating, cleaning and eating of produce.
- Holcomb: evidence based programs providing Drug and Alcohol prevention education.
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Heads Up Drug Program; Heroin Education And Dangerous Substance Understanding Program
- Cruisin' Smart; by Bryn Mawr Rehab about dangers of drugs, alcohol and distracted driving and traumatic brain injury
- AHHAH ; Trauma informed Yoga and The Brains, Grains, and Healthy Tissues Program.

Community Partnerships

A partnership with Trellis for Tomorrow resulted in the successful building of our 8 raised bed gardens. On a yearly basis, advisors from Trellis for Tomorrow come to the Youth Center to advise and assist in the planning and planting of our raised beds.

Trellis for Tomorrow includes our residents in every step of the gardening process, so that they may learn as much as is possible about how the food they eat is grown. It is also an opportunity for residents to taste test new vegetables they may never have tried before, and they also get to eat the ‘fruits’ of their labor as an afternoon snack and at dinnertime.

In May of 2017, the Youth Center was notified that Trellis for Tomorrow was also awarded grant money to be used at the Youth Center to build a ‘Butterfly Garden” and a ‘Hoop Garden’. The Butterfly Garden will continue to provide education on gardening skills while giving back to nature, and the ‘Hoop Garden” will allow the gardening of vegetables to continue through the winter months. The Hoop House was installed in 2019 from a grant given to Trellis for Tomorrow.

Additionally, the Chester County Health Department, Holcomb and AHHAH, continue to partner with the Youth Center to provide various health related activities and programs for the residents of the Youth Center.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

As an RCCI, the Youth Center is limited in its ability to involve the general community in Health Promotion activities or events because of the state and federal mandated confidentiality required for all of its’ residents.

Families of the residents are informed of all Wellness policies through a Parent Handbook that is given to every parent at the time of resident’s admission to our facility.

Pamphlet’s describing our Wellness Policy and Practices at the Youth Center are placed in our lobby and are available to parents as well as visitors other visitors to CCYC.

Upon final approval of our Wellness Policy, the policy will be displayed on the Youth Center's website for the general public to view.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The County of Chester has a Wellness Policy and Program that is offered to all County employees. Since Youth Center employees are employees of Chester County, they are entitled to attend and encouraged to attend any and all programs offered through the County Wellness Program.

The Youth Center will have a staff wellness subcommittee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources and performs other functions that support staff wellness. The subcommittee leader's name is Carrie Avery, Program Coordinator.

The Youth Center will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

Examples of strategies the Youth Center will use include:

1. Bi-Monthly email notification for all Youth Center staff to see, the Wellness programs and activities that are being offered by the County.
2. Promote through posters, healthy eating choices and recommended physical activities for good health.
3. Provide healthy options in the snack and beverage vending machines.
4. Provide on-site training for staff that includes wellness promotion, both thru healthy eating and exercise.