

Workshop

3

# Cupcakes for Lunch?

## Creating Food & Nutrition Policy for Early Care & Education Programs



### Key Concepts

- Early care & education programs develop nutrition policies to assist in meeting children's nutrition needs & communicate program values & practices.
- Policies are most effective when consistently shared with families & implemented by staff.

## Participants will . . .

1. List reasons a program should develop nutrition policies.
2. Write examples of nutrition policies.
3. Demonstrate how to communicate and justify program policy to stakeholders.

### *Prepare*

#### *Read*

- Chapter 5 from Rethinking Nutrition

#### *Gather*

- Copies for two activities
  1. W3 Nutrition Values
  2. W3 Four-Part Response
- Copies of six handouts
  1. W3 PowerPoint
  2. W3 Policy Planning
  3. W3 National Guidelines
  4. W3 Active Early & Healthy Bites Parents
  5. W3 Active Early & Healthy Bites Providers
  6. W3 Evaluation
- Newsprint and marker
- Paper and pencils
- Registry Certificates

### *Timed Agenda*

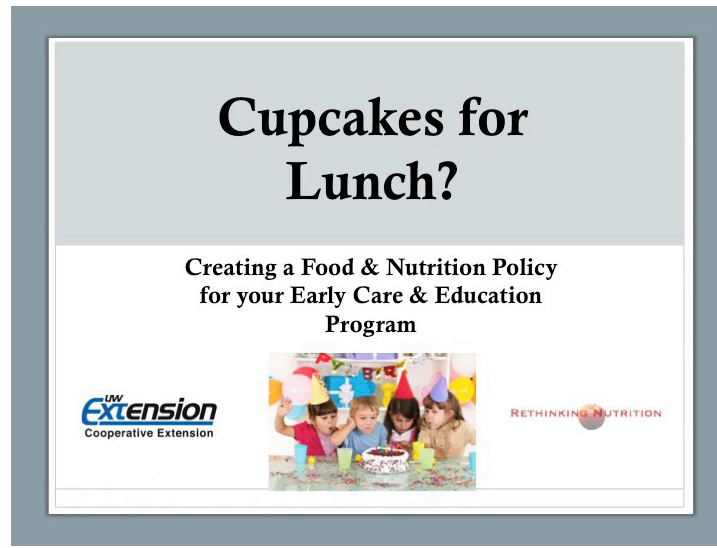
Activity	Minutes
Preparation	30-60
Introductions	15
Slides 1-8	25
Slide 9-11	20
Slide 13	20
Slide 14-15	10
Slide 16	25
Closing (Slides 17-19)	5

#### *NOTE:*

*Workshops are designed to last a total of two hours. Recommended timing is also listed by each slide.*

#### Sources

1. Nitzke, S., Riley, D., Ramminger, A., & Jacobs, G. (2010). Why we implement food and nutrition policies. *Rethinking nutrition: Connecting science and practice in early childhood settings* (pp. 101-118). Saint Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.



### *Introduction ~ 15 Minutes*

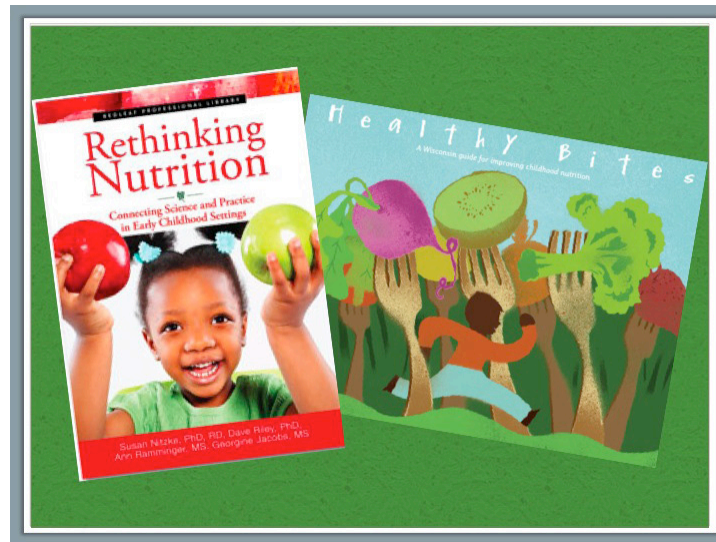
- **DO:** Have slide visible when participants arrive and leave up while completing introductions.
- **ASK:** Please introduce yourselves. Tell us your name, your program name, the ages of the children you work with, and something you love about food or meals.
- **DO:** Let each participant answer your question. You could write some of the information for all the group to see - for instance, a list of the things participants share that they love about food or meals.
- **TELL:** Today we're going to explore how nutrition policy can communicate your program's nutrition values and practices.

## Rethinking Nutrition Workshop Series

1. **Yummy Carrot Sticks: How Children Learn to Like Nutritious Foods**
  - Avoiding food power struggles, Role modeling healthy eating
2. **What's for Snack? Nutrition to Support Healthy Growth**
  - Good nutrition, Lifelong food habits, Obesity
3. **Cupcakes for Lunch? Creating a Food & Nutrition Policy for Your Early Care & Education Program**
  - Nutrition policy, Family food practices
4. **Count, Read, Share: The Meal Table as a Learning Center**
  - Mealtime learning activities, Life skills, Social skills

### *Workshop Description ~ 1 Minute*

- **TELL:** Today's workshop is shown in orange and is the third in a series about nutrition in early childhood education and care settings.
- **NOTE:** Facilitators, you can add more details regarding whether the other workshops will be offered. For instance, if there is interest, we'll hold the other workshops in the months ahead. We have arranged Registry credit for each of these.

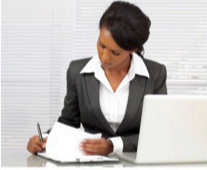


### *Workshop Description 2 ~ 1 Minute*

- **TELL:** This workshop series is based on this book, which was written by 2 professors at the University of Wisconsin along with 2 Wisconsin early care and education professionals. If you want to take a look at it, I'll have a sample copy up front after the workshop, and also some information on how to purchase a copy. Throughout the workshop, we also reference Healthy Bites, which was written in Wisconsin and focuses primarily on nutrition and supporting a healthier environment for children in the early care and education settings. Healthy Bites is available free online.
- **NOTE:** Facilitators, you may also want to pass the book around the room to allow people time to explore the book.

## Shared Responsibilities

- More working mothers and two-income families
- Children spend large portion of their day in early care and education settings
  - 8 hours per day
  - 2 meals
  - 2 snacks
- Family and child care share responsibilities of caring for children.



### *Shared Responsibilities ~ 2 Minutes*

- **READ:** slide, then:
- **TELL:** Child rearing, food and nurturing has been traditionally linked to family systems and family's traditions and cultures. However, early care & education centers and programs are increasingly responsible for feeding and nurturing young children as more than half of women and mothers are in the workforce. Not only are early care & education providers responsible for some of children's nurturing and feeding but they are responsible for large portions of children's days and food intake – on average, 8 hours per day, 2 meals and 2 snacks. As parents and caregivers share child rearing responsibilities, policies play an important role in providing concrete examples of programs' values and helping to minimize misunderstandings and conflicts.

## Why develop policies?

- Families
  - Alignment of values
  - Statement of program's intentions
  - Clear communication
- Staff
  - Guide staff training
  - Assist in meeting children's needs
  - Talking points with families
  - Avoid conflict when challenging beliefs



### *Why develop policies? ~ 3 Minutes*

- **TELL:** Both families and program staff benefit from thoughtful and well-communicated policies. Policies and rules accomplish two things. First, they make us more comfortable because we know what to expect. Having clear nutrition policies in place can help families feel comfortable that a program shares their values, promises to act in a specific way, and wants to be open in communicating the program's beliefs and practices. Second, policies help us change behaviors. For example, if you want parents to stop sending candy with their child, a policy or rule can make this easier. In this way, a written policy can help you avoid problems. Policies can help in consistent staff training and behavior, remind staff of the aspects of early care & education the program deems essential, and also give staff a foundation to explain their practices to parents and families.

What challenges or conflicts might families and early care & education providers face in sharing the responsibility of feeding children?

### *Challenges or Conflicts ~ 3-5 Minutes*

- **TELL:** As we just discussed, one of the goals of having a policy is to reduce conflict between families and child care providers.
- **ASK:** Thinking about your experiences, what kind of conflict might arise around families, child care and food? (Have participants brainstorm for 1-2 minutes and write answers on board or large piece of paper, then move on to next slide.)
- **NOTE:** If participants need prompting you could ask: 1) How might culture-based dietary needs (i.e., religious, vegetarian/vegan, ethnic) influence nutrition at an early care & education program?, 2) What might happen if a family's ideas of good nutrition differ from a child care program?, 3) How might families and early care & education providers feel differently around activities around food (example: playing with food in the dramatic play area)?



## Why Nutrition Policy?

- Children may get majority of nutrition from ECE center.
- Good nutrition promotes development.
- Adult interactions with children during meals and snacks.



### *Why Nutrition Policy? ~ 1-2 Minutes*

- **TELL:** As I mentioned earlier, many children spend 8 hours per day and eat 2 meals and 2 snacks at their child care location. That means that children are getting the MAJORITY of their nutrition from their childcare center. Food is one of the basic human needs (along with sleep, shelter, and water), however, research now shows us that providing the bare minimum (like *Oliver Twist's* gruel and water) isn't enough. Children need a variety of healthy foods and they also benefit from having social interactions at mealtime and sharing meals and learning about food from adults. “[We can] not only protect children from harm but also promote optimum physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth.” (Rethinking Nutrition, p. 105)

## Cultural and Dietary Reasons for Nutrition Policy

- Food allergies (I.e., nut or gluten intolerances)
- Medical (I.e., diabetes)
- Developmental (I.e., cannot feed self)
- Ethnic or cultural (I.e., vegetarian)
- Religious (I.e., Kosher foods or fasting)



### *Cultural and Dietary Reasons ~ 2-3 Minutes*

- **TELL:** In addition to all the benefits of good nutrition for children, families and individual food needs and beliefs are vastly different. Many of the conflicts between families and child care providers around food arise because of cultural, dietary or medical reasons. And that's exactly why a nutrition policy is so important. Policies provide concrete examples of program's values and serve as a starting point for families and programs to discuss their different food beliefs and values.

What do you think should be included in a nutrition policy for an early care & education setting?

### *What do you think ~ 5 Minutes*

- **DO:** Pass out W3 Policy Planning handout.
- **TELL:** You may be thinking – okay, so having a nutrition policy is important but what goes into it? I have some examples and tips for us to go through later but, first, we’re all going to brainstorm what YOU think should be included in a nutrition policy for an early child care setting. Given your experiences, what nutrition values and responsibilities should child care providers make sure to outline in a policy? I’m going to pass out a hand-out that provides some categories to think about in nutrition policy planning. I’d like you first to spend some time thinking about your own work with children and what you think should be included in a policy. Jot down some ideas. Even if you have no written policy at your care center, you probably have a lot of unwritten preferences and expectations. After writing them down, I’ll have you all share them with the group and we’ll write them down for the group to see.
- **NOTE:** After giving participants a short time to write down their ideas, ask for examples from the group. Write these suggestions on the board or a large sheet of paper where participants can see it and refer to their list throughout the workshop or ask participants to write their examples on the board.

## National & Local Examples

- National & local early childhood organizations have developed nutrition policy guidelines:
  - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
  - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Head Start
  - Healthy Bites (WI Departments of Public Instruction, Health Services, and Children & Families)
- Use as helpful frameworks for developing local policy.

### *National Examples ~ 5 Minutes*

- **TELL:** We just demonstrated that there is a lot of ground to cover in nutrition policy. Since good nutrition is essential to children's optimal development, we owe it to children, their families, and our communities to be very thoughtful and comprehensive in our policies and intentions about children's nutrition. You all just came up with an excellent list of topics to include in a nutrition policy, but we quite possibly missed something. Both the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services have spent time developing guidelines for what should be included in nutrition policies for young children. Healthy Bites is a book that walks you through policy creation. I'm going to pass copies of them around so you can get a feel for the detail they provide and on the back of the handout you just completed are the web addresses for these documents. If you are working to develop a nutrition guideline, use these documents as frameworks for developing your own policy! You don't have to reinvent the wheel!
- **DO:** Pass out copies of W3 Active Early & Healthy Bites Parents, & W3 Active Early & Healthy Bites Providers. You could also print single copies of the documents listed on the back of W3 Policy Planning and pass them around the room.

	NAEYC Accreditation Criteria	Head Start Performance Standards
<b>Family-Centered Practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Written menus are posted for families</li> <li>Procedures are in place to support breastfeeding</li> <li>Families are provided with documentation of food consumed by infants and children with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff and families work together to identify each child's nutritional needs</li> <li>Families and relevant community agencies are involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating nutritional services</li> <li>Parent nutrition education opportunities are provided</li> </ul>
<b>Nutritional Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching staff sit and eat with children and engage in conversation</li> <li>Snacks are served family style when possible</li> <li>Teaching staff engage in reflective practice to improve their practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food is not used as punishment or reward, and each child is encouraged, but not forced, to eat or taste the food</li> <li>Adults eat family style, with all toddlers and preschool children sharing the same menu to the extent possible</li> <li>A variety of foods are served, which broadens each child's food experiences</li> </ul>
<b>Food Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children under four years are not given foods that may cause choking, such as popcorn, whole grapes, and hard pretzels</li> <li>Formula or human milk is warmed in 120 degree water for 5 minutes or less</li> <li>Food is prepared in accordance with the USDA CACFP guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children under one year old should not be fed honey</li> <li>In programs that serve infants and toddlers there must be proper storage and handling of breast milk and formula</li> <li>Evidence of compliance is posted, along with all applicable federal, state, tribal, and local food safety and sanitation laws</li> </ul>

### *National Examples ~ 5 Minutes*

- TELL:** Here are some examples of the policies included in these national guidelines. (Either read out loud or give group some time to read silently.) (NOTE: You could print this slide as a handout of its own if you think it is hard to read or would like participants to have it to take home.)
- ASK:** Looking back at the list we created are you surprised by anything on these lists? What might be one item you'd like to add to your nutrition policy?

## Before Writing Policies

1. Know state licensing regulations.
2. Gather family information.
3. Assemble an inclusive team.
4. Be general but specific.
5. Be comprehensive.



### *Before Writing Policies ~ 5 Minutes (Continued on next page)*

- **TELL:** Before you begin writing or revising a policy for your program, you'll want to gather some information. First, know your state licensing regulations regarding food and nutrition and how those regulations apply to your program. Second, talk to families or conduct a family nutrition survey to gather information about family traditions and special needs.
- **ASK:** What are some questions you might want to ask families? (Possible answers: Do you have any special food traditions we should know about? Does your child have any allergies or special food needs? What do you think is important for us to teach your child about food and meals?)
- **TELL:** Third, don't write the policy alone – gather a team of people who represent all sorts of people linked to your program.
- **ASK:** Who might you include on the policy writing and input team? (Possible answers: families, caregivers representing all age groups of children, nutritionists, food preparation staff, administrators, and other experts, such as pediatricians)

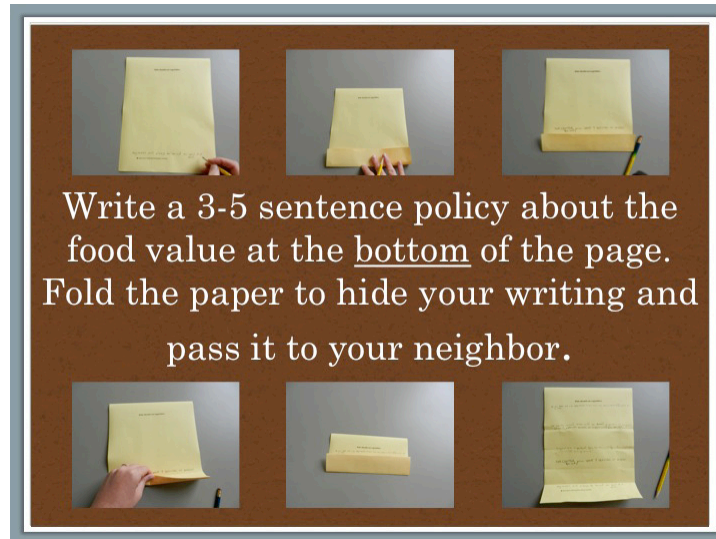
## Before Writing Policies

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### *Before Writing Policies ~ 5 Minutes (Continued)*

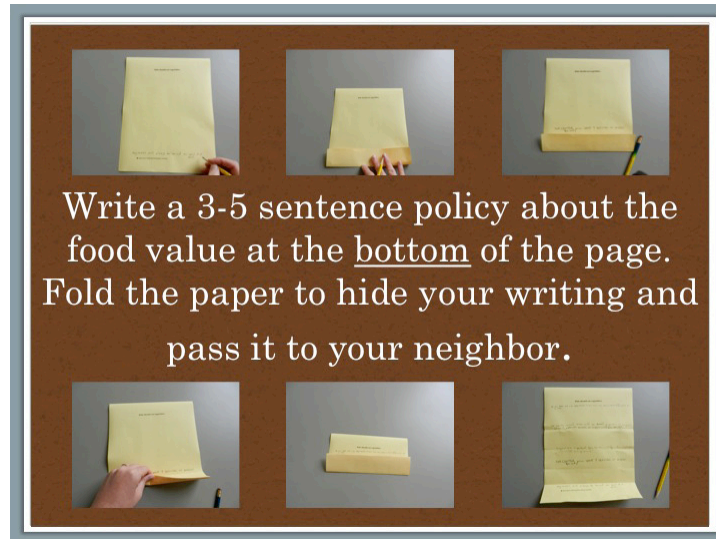
- **TELL:** Fourth, you'll want to keep your policies general enough that they incorporate groups of children, while making provisions for the specific needs of individual children.
- **ASK:** For example, the policy "a meal will include milk unless a medical or religious reason specifies otherwise" describes what will be generally provided – milk – but leaves room for specific instances when a child may have an allergy to cow's milk and may need to consume calcium in some other form. What other general but specific policy examples can you think of?
- **TELL:** Finally, cover all areas of nutrition – planning and practices of nutrition services, production and serving of meals and snacks, family needs, food safety, and sanitation.



### *Write a Policy ~ 20 Minutes (Part 1: 10 Minutes, continued next page)*

- **DO:** You will need enough copies of the W3 Nutrition Values handout so that every participant gets one sheet and you have roughly even groups of each statement. For instance, if you have 24 participants you will need four copies of each of the six nutrition value statements.
- **TELL:** I'm going to split you into groups of six and then pass out sheets of paper that have a nutrition value statement like "kids should eat their vegetables" at the top of the sheet. I'm going to have each of you rewrite that nutrition value statement as a 3-5 sentence policy at the **BOTTOM** of your sheet of paper. When you finish, fold the paper to cover up your writing, and pass it to your left. Once you get a new page, write a policy for that statement, fold the paper and pass it on. By the end you'll have each written 6 policy statements but should have only seen those you wrote yourself. Remember policy statements are general but also specific and clearly communicate values and practices. (Demonstrate folding see image on next page.) Any questions?





### *Write a Policy ~ 20 Minutes (Part 2: 10 Minutes, continued)*

- **TELL:** Great! I could tell you were really working hard on translating those values into policy. Now, we have one more step. If you unfold your paper, you should have six different versions of a policy statement. I'd like you each to find the other people who have the SAME statement at the top of the page. For instance, everyone with a sheet that says "kids should eat vegetables" should gather in a new group. Your task for the next 5 minutes or so is to read through the different policy statements that were written to describe the same nutrition value and decide on one final policy statement. I'll give each group a sheet of paper that has your initial nutrition value statement on top and ask you to write your final policy on that sheet.
- **TELL:** What did you come up with? I'd like a representative from each group to read your first statement and then read your final policy. (Collect final policy sheets from participant for evaluation purposes.)
- **ASK:** Tell me about this process. What was it like to write a policy? What was challenging? Did it get easier?

“Policies alone will not be effective unless they are thoroughly and consistently shared with families and implemented by staff.”

- Rethinking Nutrition, p. 103




### *Policies Along ~ 1 Minute*

- *TELL*: No matter how well-written your policies, they won't make a difference unless they are shared with families and practiced by staff members.

### How to Put Policies into Practice

- Implement policies.
- Train staff.
- Educate families and children.
- Frequently review policies for relevance, effectiveness, and practical implementation.



### *Policies into Practice ~ 5 Minutes (Continued on Next Page)*

- **TELL:** Your first step is to put your policies into practice. If a policy is that a vegetable is served with every meal make sure that you've ordered the correct food and that your menus reflect a vegetable with every meal. Next, it is essential that your staff – all the staff – are on board with the policy changes.
- **ASK:** How might you train staff on the policies and implementation plans? (Possible suggestions: Hold in-service trainings, have training done by experts in the field who aren't selling a product, serve foods that meet the nutrition policy standards, involve staff in activities such as cooking demonstrations or asking staff to brainstorm ways to put a policy into practice)
- **TELL:** Educating families about your policies is also important because more informed families may mean less conflict and confusion around nutrition practices.

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### *Policies into Practice ~ 5 Minutes (Continued)*

- **ASK:** How might you as a child care center inform families about your nutrition policies? (Possible suggestions: Have a party or open house with examples of acceptable treats – this could resemble the snack of the day where everyone brought a different healthy snack, have community members or parents demonstrate cooking healthy meals for the children or talk to the children about healthy food, newsletter)
- **TELL:** Finally, frequently review your nutrition policies for relevance, effectiveness and practical implementation. In other words, check once a year or so to ensure that your policies continue to reflect the values and practices of your program and your families. You may even want to form a committee of staff members, families and community members to make this yearly assessment.

Have you encountered an emotionally charged issue involving food? If so, how did you handle it? What might you have done differently?

### *Emotional Encounters ~ 5 Minutes*

- **TELL:** As we've noted, in order for the most successful experiences for children, early childhood staff and parents must work together. However, sometimes despite our best efforts, there are misunderstandings over nutrition policies and practices. These situations, will usually require more effort by staff to consider the family perspective in child rearing, communicate respectfully where there are differences, and settle on a resolution that is best for the child.
- **ASK:** Have you encountered an emotionally charged issue involving food? If so, how did you handle it? What might you have done differently? (Write responses on the board or white board)
- **NOTE:** In some groups this question could take more than 5 minutes because participants have stories to tell. Make sure to watch the time and cut off the discussion at 5 minutes with a statement like, "I wish we could hear all your experiences but we need time to talk about strategies to use in these situations."

## Four Steps to Clearing Misunderstandings

1. Start by stating the other person's viewpoint.
2. State the program policy and the reason (rationale) for the policy.
3. State a conclusion.
  - Re-assert the rule.
  - Compromise.
  - Change the policy.
  - No decision yet.
4. Follow through.



### *Four Steps ~ 25 Minutes (Continued on next page)*

- **TELL:** Most issues that arise will not be emotionally charged unless we handle them clumsily! Most often, an issue will arise from a parent's question or because you spot something that is against your policies. For example, a vegetarian parent might ask that their child not be exposed to meat in the classroom or you might spot sugary cupcakes in a child's lunch. But what should be your response?
- **TELL:** We are going to practice a four-part response to help you effectively respond to these situations when they arise.
  - First, it is important to state the other person's viewpoint so they know they have been heard and understood. This is always a good idea and makes it more likely that the other person will really listen to you.
  - Second, state the program policy and the reason (rationale) for the policy. You are just reporting the policy in an objective way. Their argument is not with you, but with the policy. In this way, you can de-personalize any conflict, so they are less likely to get angry with you.

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4. Follow through.



### *Four Steps ~ 25 Minutes (Continued)*

- Next, state a conclusion. Some possible options for conclusions are to 1) Reassert the rule by saying “Now that you understand the program policy, can you live with it?,” 2) Compromise is an other option and you may say, “Your situation is a special case, and the program can compromise on this policy without hurting anyone.” 3) In some cases you may be willing to change the policy. For instance, you might tell a parent, “We may need to rethink our policy and rewrite it for everyone’s benefit. Thank you for helping us see the need to do this!” and 4) You might tell a parent that you haven’t made a decision yet but telling them, “I’m not sure how to handle this. I’d like to talk with others. Can we continue to talk about this?”
- Finally, in all cases, it is important to follow through. This may mean that you should schedule a follow-up meeting or include others in the meeting or inform other staff and parents about a policy change.
- **TELL:** We’re going to practice these four steps with a short activity. I’m going to split you into small groups and give you each a short scenario describing a challenge to the nutrition policy. Your task as a small group is to prepare your four part response, write it down on the sheet I provide you and then share your response with the large group. (Split into small groups of 2-4 people. Give each group a different nutrition policy challenge scenario from the W3 Four-Part Response handout. After about 5 minutes, ask the small groups to share their responses with the large group. Thank everyone for sharing responses.)

“When they are thoughtfully developed and shared with families and other key stakeholders, policies provide concrete examples of programs values while minimizing misunderstandings and conflicts that might otherwise disrupt the program’s work and the children’s learning environment.”

- Rethinking Nutrition, p. 101

### *Summary ~ 1 Minute*

- **TELL:** In summary, policies are powerful documents that in a sense should evolve as your child care setting grows and changes. I hope that you are able to take these policy tips and examples and apply them to your program’s nutrition policy.
- **DO:** Hand out copies of W3 Evaluation.
- **TELL:** I’m handing out workshop evaluation forms. Please take a moment to fill this out. Remember there are no wrong answers to these questions, we just want to know what you think. Your answers help us continue to improve this workshop.
- **DO:** Collect evaluation forms as they are completed.



Development of this educational program was made possible by a generous donation from an alumna of the School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison.

### *Acknowledgement*

- *DO*: Have slide visible to participants.