



## Y's Owls Preschool Foods from Home Policy

The Hamilton Area YMCA acknowledges the importance of good nutrition in the healthy growth and development of young children. The eating practices developed in childhood tend to shape future food choices in the future. Presenting healthy foods to children in a positive and consistent manner begins the lifelong process of nutrition management. Children often require repeated exposure to new foods, sometimes up to 15 times, before acceptance. As such, our program has established recommendations for parents to follow when packing their child's daily lunch:

- Include at least one fruit and vegetable per meal. Avoid fruits packed in sugar-based syrup.
- Avoid foods that are high in fat, sugar, trans fats, and/or sodium.
- Water is a recommended beverage for children.
- Limit 100 percent fruit juice to six ounces per day, and avoid all sugar-sweetened beverages. Do not provide juice to children under the age of one.
- Provide skim or 1 percent fat milk to children over the age of two.
- Bananas, apples, oranges, clementines, mangos, as well as cubed honeydew, cantaloupe, and watermelon make wonderful choices for dessert. (Remove seeds where appropriate).
- Raw carrots, whole grapes, whole cherry tomatoes, cherries, and popcorn, in a classroom setting, are considered a potential choking hazard. Carrots that are **cooked**, and grapes and grape tomatoes that are **cut in half**, are permitted in the Center. Cherries must be **cut in half and pits removed**. *Popcorn is never permitted.*
- Select breads and crackers with a high proportion of whole grains.
- Provide only healthy selections when bringing in birthday or holiday celebration treats.
- Lunch containers should be labeled with the child's full name.

Due to the high incidence and life-threatening nature of nut allergies in children, the Hamilton Area YMCA Child Learning and Development Center is a "peanut/nut-free" environment. This includes products that include nuts and peanut oil, such as peanut butter and cereals, granola, and baked products made with nuts.

Thank you for adhering to the Policy.