

Feeding of Infants

Child Care Learning Centers: 591-1-1-.15(2)(a) – Feeding of Children. Center Personnel shall hold and feed infants less than six (6) months of age and older children who cannot hold their own bottles or sit alone. Baby bottles shall never be propped; the infant’s head shall be elevated while feeding.

Family Child Care Learning Homes: 290-2-3-.10(6) – Infants under six months of age and older children who cannot hold their own bottles or sit alone shall be held during feeding. Baby bottles shall never be propped and the infant's head shall be elevated while feeding.

Rule Type:
Non-Core Rule

Intent of the Rule

To ensure comfort and support, aid digestion, and prevent choking when feeding infants. To provide support and to foster independence, development, and social interaction.

Clarification

Child care program staff should be aware of complications, such as choking, associated with an infant’s drinking in a reclining position and with falling asleep with a bottle of breast milk, formula, milk, juice, etc. in the mouth. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the former may increase the incidence of ear infections and the latter may result in the accelerated decay of teeth. Also, providing comfort and holding during feeding is associated with supporting infants’ emotional and social development.

Indicators

- ✓ Child care program staff must hold and feed infants less than six (6) months of age and older children who cannot hold their own bottles or sit alone.
 - Reminder: Staff should not bottle feed more than one infant at a time.
 - TIP: Plan for additional staff during feeding times for infants who cannot hold their own bottles or sit alone.
 - Organizational Tip: Post a milestone chart that reflects each infant’s developmental abilities. The chart will serve as a resource that will enable staff to know which infants need to be held for feedings.

- ✓ Child care program staff must not prop bottles.
 - Reminder: Bottle propping can cause choking and aspiration and may contribute to long-term health issues, including ear infections, orthodontic problems, or speech disorders.
 - TIP: Infants benefit from the physical and emotional closeness that comes from meaningful interactions with a caregiver during feedings. Propped bottles eliminate interactions and contribute to developmental delays in infants.
 - Organizational Tip: Plan for additional staff to help with duties relating to infant care so that staff responsible for feeding infants can focus on that task only.

- ✓ Child care program staff must elevate the infant's head while feeding.
 - Reminder: Caregivers should hold infants in the caregiver's arms or sitting on the caregiver's lap.
 - TIP: Elevating an infant's head during feeding decreases the amount of air the infant is likely to take in, lessening the chances of the infant having painful gas and acid reflux.
 - Organizational Tip: Have adult-sized seating available on which caregivers can sit while feeding infants.

Resources:

Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition

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