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<b>Ref #:</b> 1304.23 (c); 1304.23(c)(4)	<b>Policy Council Approval Date:</b> 8/28/07	<b>Revision Date:</b> 4/12/07

**COMPONENT: NUTRITION**

**SUBJECT: MEAL TIME ACTIVITIES**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:** Food-related activities, including meal times, provide opportunities for the development of positive attitudes toward healthy foods; for decision-making, sharing, communicating with others; and for the development of fine motor skills. Children also learn appropriate eating patterns and meal time behavior when they observe adult behavior at family-style meals.

**PROCEDURE:** Staff will help to ensure that nutritional services contribute to the development and socialization of children by providing meals in a pleasant area that encourages socialization. Child-sized furniture and utensils will be provided, giving special consideration to children with disabilities.

All Head Start children and assigned classroom staff, including volunteers, will eat together family style and share the same menu to the extent possible. Adults may not eat foods that are not on the menu in the presence of the children. Classroom staff requiring special diets due to medical or religious reasons must have a statement from their health care provider stating what food(s) is to be excluded from their diet, and which food(s) may be used as substitutes. Medical statements will be kept in the employee's file at the Head Start Central Office.

According to the Guidance set forth in the Head Start Performance Standards (1304.23(c)(4) "Family style meals are implemented in a variety of ways. For example, children and adults may prepare for the meal by clearing the table and setting places, sharing conversation during the meal, and cleaning up afterwards. In some cases, children and adults serve and pass food among themselves. In the event classroom staff are unable to have their meals at the same time as the children, other designated staff members may eat and converse with the children at meal times. In all cases, children are seated when eating and each child makes his or her own food choices based on individual appetites and preferences."

Classroom staff will provide opportunities for the involvement of children in food-related activities according to lesson plans.