

FOOD SAFETY

Food Safety

Child care centres that prepare daily meals are considered Food Premises and as such, must comply with [Ontario Regulation 562/90 Food Premises](#). For more information about your specific legal requirements contact Algoma Public Health at 705-759-5286 to speak with a Public Health Inspector. When food is not handled properly it poses a risk of spreading disease. It is especially important to practice safe food handling in a child care setting because food borne illness can have a more serious impact on young children.

Food safety is the responsibility of all staff in a child care centre. Staff that handle food must comply with personal hygiene requirements including [washing hands properly](#), wearing clean outer garments and ensuring hair is confined. It is recommended that all staff responsible for food preparation receive [food handler training](#).

Hazardous Food

Hazardous food is food that is capable of supporting the growth of harmful bacteria. Examples include but are not limited to milk, cheese, yogurt, meat, fish, tofu, soup, cakes or pies with cream fillings, and cut fruit or vegetables. There is an increased risk of foodborne illness if hazardous food is not handled properly. Hazardous food must be stored, cooked, and held at safe temperatures. The temperature danger zone is the temperature range between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F). The risk of food borne illness increases the more time food spends in this zone. Refrigerated food must be maintained at 4°C (40°F) or less, frozen food must be maintained at -18°C (0°F) or less, and hot food must be maintained at 60°C (140°F) or greater after cooking. Refrigerators and freezers must be equipped with a thermometer and staff must conduct daily checks to verify equipment is working properly. [Equipment temperature logs](#) should be maintained by staff. It is imperative that hazardous food is cooked to a [safe internal temperature](#) to kill harmful micro-organisms and reduce the risk of food borne illness. A [hazardous food temperature log](#) should be maintained by the child care centre including information such as date, type of food, and final cooking temperature.

It is recommended to have no more than two steps when preparing hazardous food. That is, meals should be cooked and served immediately. Your child care centre should avoid cooling food and reheating left overs on a later date to minimize the risk of food borne illness.

Food from an Inspected Source

All food served at a child care centre must come from an inspected source. An “**inspected source**” is a food premise such as a grocery store, bakery, or restaurant. Food products prepared at the homes of parents/guardians or staff, are not inspected food premises and, therefore, are **NOT** permitted to be served at a child care centre.

Exceptions

- Parents can provide food for their own child for special dietary restrictions. Food containers must be clearly labelled with the child’s name and ingredients.
- Breast milk supplied for a child must be clearly labeled with the child’s name and the date of delivery. Breast milk must be stored in a refrigerator or freezer that is separate from the kitchen area.

Food Brought in From Other Sources

Parents can donate food for a special event (e.g. birthday party) but it must be a non- hazardous food product such as cookies purchased from an inspected food premise and should have an ingredients list. A log book should be maintained for such events including information such as: the type of food brought in, where the food was purchased, name of the person who brought in the food, and the date the food was served.

Catered Food

If a child care centre receives catered food, staff must record the temperature of food when it arrives at the centre in a log book. It is very important food is kept at the proper hot hold or cold hold temperature until it is served. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure hot food is maintained at 60°C (140°F) upon arrival and cold food is kept at 4°C (40°F) when delivered. Food that arrives within the range of 5°C (41°F) to 59°C (138°F) should be rejected because there is an increased risk the food can cause illness. A log book should be maintained to document catered food in a child care centre and should include the following information: the date food was brought into the centre, time of arrival, name of food item, and the temperature of food upon arrival.

Meat and Eggs

Eggs used to prepare meals at a child care centre must be either Grade A or B. Child care centres are not permitted to use ungraded farm eggs. Meat used to prepare meals at a child care centre must be government inspected meat. Wild game or uninspected meat is not permitted.

Food Allergies

Serving food to children with a food allergy is a serious responsibility for staff at a child care centre. To protect children from allergic reactions, staff must make every effort to prevent allergen cross contamination. If a child at the centre has a food allergy, obtain as much information as possible from the parent/guardian regarding the food item. Posting a food allergies chart in the cooking and serving area is recommended. A food allergen chart should include the following information: name of the child, photo of the child, child's classroom, food item the child is allergic to, and the type of reaction the child experiences. For more information on the requirements on posting allergy information, visit the Ministry of Education's website.

Anaphylaxis

- For information regarding use of the Epipen and management of anaphylaxis, refer to www.epipen.com

Food Recalls

Operators must be aware of the foods that they are serving in their child care centre and it is advised that all operators subscribe with the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency Food Recall Notifications](#). Food recall warnings and allergy alerts can prevent consumers from potential and real risks associated with foods. Warnings and alerts can happen to almost all types of foods and may range from physical, biological or chemical contamination. They can be the result of failed testing limits or known human illness. If your centre has any recalled items it is advised to pull from use and returned or discarded as stated in the specific warning and keep a record of the incident.