

May 15, 2012

Dear Administrator:

Included with this correspondence is a Delacare Rule Guidance and Technical Assistance Bulletin. The purpose of the Bulletin is to provide clarity regarding Rules 339 F & G and 345 contained in Delacare Rules for Early Care and Education and School-Age Centers.

The primary reason for the issuance of this document is to **advise Centers which do not provide meals that they will not be cited as non-compliant with Rule 345 for the foods provided by a Parent or Guardian which do not meet the current USDA/Child and Adult Food Program meal pattern requirements. Nor are these Centers required or expected to take food provided by a Parent away from a child.** This Bulletin does not require Centers to alter the practices they have had in place regarding meals.

Centers must still provide parents and guardians with a written policy concerning food service. This policy must cover all specific items listed in Rule 345 and may include additional requirements, conditions or consequences imposed by the Center. It is recommended that the policy should be clear on all of the requirements, conditions and consequences.

Research continues to support the importance of healthy eating to enhance growth and development and as a preventive strategy to reduce the onset of medical conditions throughout a lifetime. It is clear that positive, healthy patterns developed very early in life are key to long term health. The growing rates of obesity in children are leading to a serious health crisis in the onset of Type 2 diabetes. The cause of the dramatic increase in diabetes in children has been attributed to eating habits and lack of physical activity. Centers shall provide education to the parents/guardians concerning healthy eating and the USDA/Child and /adult Food Program meal pattern requirements so that parents can provide meals which support healthy growth and development. Resources to help in educating parents are provided in the Bulletin.

Thank you for the great efforts you have made to educate children, families and Staff about the benefits of healthy eating, physical activity and reduction or elimination of screen time activities. Your efforts are making a difference as we have heard from several Centers. These efforts will have a lifelong positive effect on the health of the children you serve.

Sincerely,

Patricia Quinn, Administrator