

## **Synergy Services Children's Center Wellness Policy**

The policies outlined are intended to create an environment that protects and promotes the health of the children and youth we serve. Synergy is committed to providing nutrition education, regular physical activity, and access to nutritious foods to the youth we serve. Synergy recognizes the relationship between client well-being, safety, and achievement as well as the importance of a comprehensive shelter wellness program. Therefore, Synergy's Children's Center shelter will provide developmentally appropriate and sequential nutrition and education as well as opportunities for physical activity. The wellness program will be implemented in a multidisciplinary fashion and will be evidence based.

### **Wellness Committee**

The Children Center will establish a wellness committee while maintaining the confidentiality of the children in care. Therefore, the wellness committee members will consist of the Children's Center Connections Team staff. Staff include Jonathan Woods (Assistant Program Manager), Janee Mabry (Assistant program manager), Blaine Ellis (case manager), Hannah Hauber (case manager) Kaitlin Arnett (therapist), Sadie Renander (therapist) Rebekah Perry (Education Manager), and Jeneva Wyatt (Kitchen Manager). The Connections Team meets bi-weekly and will review this policy, as well as its implementation, as needed. If available, a qualified, credentialed nutrition professional will be a member of the wellness committee.

Committee meetings dates and agendas will be posted on Synergy's Outlook calendar in advance of each meeting and advertised in a manner designed to reach committee members. Meetings, records and votes of all the wellness committee will adhere to the requirement of the Missouri Sunshine Law.

### **Wellness Program Coordinator**

The Board designates the following individual as wellness program coordinator: Heather Barry, Children's Center Program Manager. Only Synergy staff who are members of the wellness committee may serve as wellness program coordinators. The wellness coordinator, in consultation with the Connections Team wellness committee, will be in charge of implementation and evaluation of this policy. The wellness program coordinator will be responsible for ensuring that the Children's Center is in compliance with this policy.

### **Nutrition Guidelines**

It is the policy of Synergy Services that all foods and beverages provided free of charge sold to the Children's Center clients during the school day on any property under the agency will meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) school meal and snacks in nutrition standards. These nutrition standards apply to all food and beverages provided to children. In addition, the snacks standards apply to all food and beverages provided to children outside the reimbursable school meals program during the school day.

### **Nutrition Education and Promotion**

Synergy will disseminate nutrition messages and other nutrition-related materials received from the USDA to clients, staff, and the community (as appropriate) through a variety of media and methods. The wellness program coordinator, in consultation with the wellness committee, will develop procedures that address nutrition education and promotion.

- Nutrition education is provided weekly or as needed through daily interactions with clients during meals and preparation of meals.
- Additional nutrition education is provided by Kitchen Manager during weekly cooking groups
  - Nutrition education promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, low-fat dairy foods, healthy food preparation methods and accurate portion sizes.
  - Clients have the opportunity to prepare (if age is appropriate to do so) and taste foods that are low in saturated and trans fats, sodium and added sugar.
  - Education regarding adequate nutrient intake and healthy eating practices is provided.
- Staff are strongly encouraged to model healthful eating habits.

#### **Nutrition Standards for Food and Beverages Served at Synergy**

- Synergy participates in the USDA meal program.
- Three meals and three snacks are offered daily.
- Meals include a variety of healthy choices while accommodating special dietary needs.
- All reimbursable meals meet nutrition standards set by the USDA.
- Meals are served in the Synergy's Children's Center dining room under appropriate supervision.
- Clients have access to hand washing facilities before meals and snack; staff remind, help support, and teach clients to make use of them.
- Low-fat milk and water are offered at each meal. 100% fruit juice is offered at breakfast.
- Youth and staff have access to free, safe, fresh drinking water at all times. Water cups and bottles are available in the kitchen are for clients to access.

#### **Physical Activity**

The Children's Center seeks to offer a wide array of recreational, developmental, vocational, cultural, and educational activities to assist with skill building and to teach quality use of free time. Children are involved in a variety of age and developmentally appropriate on-site and community activities. Additionally, there are both indoor and outdoor play spaces for children to utilize during scheduled free play time. Staff will supervise recreational activities at all times. The appropriate staff to child ratio is maintained at all times during any activity both at and away from the shelter. First aid and emergency response kits and other emergency supplies and medications needed by participants are under the control of the designated group leader at all times.

- Daily physical activity is encouraged.

- Advocates plan and implement recreation activities to include physical activities throughout different times of their shifts.
- Clients have access to the indoor and outdoor play areas daily. Monday-Friday planned physical recreation activities are conducted by the staff both on site and in the community.
- All sports and outdoor equipment used in the program is selected on the basis of safety factors and is regularly checked or tested to ensure it is up to the agency's standards, which comply at a minimum with applicable national standards of the equipment in use.
- Clients have access and are encouraged to take part in recreation activities both indoor and outdoor at different community recreation locations such as Synergy's YRC Gym, Gladstone Community Center, Parks, and other recreational spaces advocates are able to locate

### **Other School-Based Activities**

The wellness program coordinator, in consultation with the wellness committee, will be in charge with developing procedures addressing other shelter/school-based activities to promote wellness.

### **Assessment**

The Children's Center wellness program will be assessed at least once every three years. The assessment will measure the agency's level of compliance with implementing the local wellness program, including compliance levels in shelter's nutrition program; the extent to which the agency's policy compares to model wellness policies; and a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the program. The wellness program coordinator will report the results of assessments to the committee and to the Director of Domestic Violence Services. The results of each assessment will also be made to the public agency's CO-Executive Directors. The wellness program coordinator will make recommendations for modifications to the wellness policy in accordance with these assessments, and the committee, in consultation with the Director of Domestic Violence Services will revise the wellness policy as it deems necessary based on these recommendations. Administrative procedures will be revised accordingly.

### **Records**

The wellness program coordinator will maintain records necessary to document compliance with law, including a copy of the policy; documentation of community involvement, including sign-in sheets or other documentation of the names of those who provided input to the committee and documentation of triennial assessments.

Adopted: (AdoptDate)

Revised:

Legal Refs: §§ 167.720, 610.010 - .030, RSMo. The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 - 1760 National School Lunch Program, 7 C.F.R. Part 210

Program Location: Synergy Services, Inc. 400 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Parkville, MO 64152  
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