

Youth Development, Inc.
Head Start/Early Head Start
Child Nutrition

Policy Number: **Effective Date:** 05/11/07 **Page 1 of 3**

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COMPONENT: Child Nutrition

SUBJECT: Choking Prevention and Intervention Policy

OBJECTIVE: This policy is designed to protect children from possible choking hazard while in YDI childcare facilities and/or at YDI sponsored events.

SUPPORTIVE DATA: Choking ranks fourth (4th) as a cause of death to children ages 1 to 9 years of age. In the US, choking from suffocation is one of the leading causes of unintentional injury to children that resulted in death to children less than 1 year in age. Children under 3 are at greatest risk according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

CONTENT: When food or small objects get caught in the throat and block the airway choking occurs. This prevents air from getting to the lungs and the brain. When the brain lacks oxygen for four (4) minutes or more brain damage or death may occur.

Food is one of the most common choking hazards for young children. Infants and young children may attempt to swallow food whole if it is not ground or chopped. If food is cut in large pieces, it may lodge in their throat and cause choking. Therefore, it is important to reduce the chances of choking by not feeding children any round, firm food; chopping, cooking or other manipulation is needed to reduce the risk of choking based on the child's developmental level.

1. YDI has adopted the following recommended Guidelines:

- Keep the following foods from children until 4 years of age:
 - Hot Dogs*
 - Nuts and seeds*
 - Chunks of meat or cheese*
 - Whole grapes*
 - Hard, gooey, or sticky candy*
 - Popcorn*
 - Chunks of peanut butter*
 - Raw Vegetables – cut in rounds*
 - Chewing Gum*
- **Teachers will communicate with the kitchen staff to ensure that texture**

modifications are made and appropriate for each child's developmental level.

- Insist that children eat at the table, or at least while sitting down. They should never run, walk, or lie down with food in their mouths.
- Cut food for infants and young children into pieces no larger than one-half inch and teach them to chew their food well.
- Adults supervise mealtime for infants and young children.
- Be aware of other (older) children's actions. Many choking incidents occur when older brothers or sisters share dangerous foods, toys or small object with a younger child.
- Avoid toys with small parts and keep other small items out of the reach of infants and children.
- Follow age recommendations on toy packages. Age guidelines reflect the safety of a toy and any possible choking hazard as well as the child's physical and mental abilities as various ages.
- Check under furniture and between cushions for small items that children could find and put in mouths.
- Do not let infants and young children play with coins.
- In addition to food, there are household/classroom items that can become a choking hazard. Ensure the environment is safe by keeping these items away from infants and young children:

Latex balloons

Coins

Marbles

Toys with small parts

Toys that can be compressed to fit entirely in a child's mouth

Small balls (diameter 1.75 inches or less)

Pen caps

Small button-type batteries or Magnets

Medicine syringes

Tacks

2. Use of Arts & Crafts Materials including markers and their caps will be closely supervised by an adult.
3. Field trips will not be planned or approved to destinations that serve and/or provide items that are choking hazards.
4. Choking is usually caused by food or an object stuck in the windpipe. A foreign body lodged in the airway may cause a partial or a complete airway obstruction. When a foreign body partially blocks the airway, either good or poor air exchange may occur. If the victim has good air exchange they may be able to make forceful coughing efforts in an attempt to relieve the obstruction. They should be permitted to cough. When the air exchange is poor and the person has a weak and ineffective cough, cannot talk, or breathe, and appears to turn bluish-grey in color they should be treated as if it were a complete airway blockage.

Indicators:

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|--------------------------|---|
| a) Coughing | e) Clutching throat with one or both hands |
| b) Cannot talk | f) Cannot breath or breathing is slow or rapid |
| c) Turning bluish-grey | g) Wheezing, gurgling or making high pitched noises |
| d) Dizzy or light headed | h) Pain in chest or tingling in hands or feet |
5. Staples must be used with extreme caution.
6. What to do if a person starts to choke:

For Adults and Children Older than 1 Year:

Perform the Heimlich Maneuver

If the person is standing, stand behind the person and wrap your arms around his or her waist. Place one of your feet between his or her legs so you can support the person if he she faints.

Make a fist with one hand. Place the thumb side of your fist against the person's belly, just above the belly button but well below the breast bone.

Grasp your fist with the other hand. Give a quick upward thrust into the belly. This may cause the object to pop out. You may need to use more force for a large person and less for a child or small adult.

Repeat thrusts until the object pops out or the person faints.

If the person loses consciousness, gently lay him or her flat on their back on the floor. To clear the airway, kneel next to the person and put the heel of your hand against the middle of the abdomen, just below the ribs. Place your other hand on top and press inward and upward 5 times with both hands. If the airway clears and the person is still unresponsive, begin CPR.

For Babies (younger than 1 year):

The child is too small for the Heimlich maneuver to be successful. The infant should be picked up and 5 back blows should be administered, followed by 5 chest thrusts. Be careful to hold the infant with the head angled down to let gravity assist with clearing the airway. Also be careful to support the infants head. If the infant turns blue or becomes unresponsive, CPR should be administered.

****NOTE**** Choking is an emergency. Call 911 emergency medical services. One person administers care to the victim and another person calls 911. Do not attempt to drive a choking person to a hospital.

PLEASE POST IN THE CLASSROOMS