

# Helping Hand Home for Children

## Wellness Policy

Helping Hand Home for Children is deeply committed to promoting a culture of wellness by supporting good nutrition, regular physical activity, and positive lifestyle practices as essential elements of each child's development and healing. We strive to create a safe, nurturing, and health-conscious environment where children can thrive physically, emotionally, and socially. By integrating healthy meals, structured and unstructured physical activity, mental health supports, and consistent education about wellness into our daily routines, Helping Hand Home empowers children to build lifelong habits that support resilience, academic growth, and overall well-being.

The Helping Hand Home Wellness and Health Support Committee is responsible for guiding, implementing, and monitoring all wellness-related efforts across our programs. This committee establishes strategic objectives, recommends best practices, and oversees wellness policy compliance with a particular emphasis on health equity, nutritional adequacy, and the prevention of childhood obesity and related health challenges. Working collaboratively with our residential team, health professionals, families, and community partners, the committee ensures that wellness initiatives are developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and inclusive of all children served. The committee also commits to regularly evaluating and refining wellness practices to meet the evolving needs of our youth and fulfill our mission of comprehensive, compassionate care.

### **A. Nutrition Requirements:**

1. Helping Hand Home for Children (the Home) will participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program. Food served in the Home's dining room will meet all nutrient standards established by the USDA. The Food Services Department will provide snacks that meet the federal nutrition guidelines for after school programs.
2. Students will be given adequate time to eat all their meals.
3. Students will eat their meals with therapeutic childcare specialists who will encourage them to eat healthy foods and will reinforce good eating habits.

4. Health Department staff will alert the Food Services Manager of any food allergies that affect any of the Home's Children, and food service staff will adjust the individual child's diet accordingly.

## **B. Education Requirements:**

5. Helping Hand Home will provide a consistent message of Nutrition and wellness in our campus.

6. Employees will receive training about Nutrition and wellness.

7. Communication channels such as bulletin boards will display child-friendly education materials on nutrition and wellness.

8. Training sessions about healthy eating and well-being developed by the Health Department staff will be given to all children, along with enrichment activities after school and on weekends on subjects such as cooking, gardening, and healthy eating habits.

## **C. Physical Activity:**

9. Children will engage in daily physical activity as a vital part of their development and well-being. Activities will include:

- Structured physical education classes
- Unstructured recess/free play
- After-school recreation programs

10. A minimum of:

- 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day for school-age children
- 30 minutes of physical play for preschool children

11. Programs will be inclusive of all ability levels. Adapted activities will be offered to children with physical, cognitive, or behavioral challenges.

12. Screen time will be limited and used only for educational purposes or specific reward systems with physical activity integrated throughout the day.

13. Weekend programming will include hikes, group games, dance sessions, or other movement-based enrichment.

#### **D. Mental and Emotional Wellness**

14. Staff will be trained in trauma-informed care and strategies for promoting resilience, positive behavior, and emotional safety.

15. Daily wellness check-ins and weekly group counseling or reflection circles will be offered to support emotional well-being.

16. A full-time mental health professional or contracted behavioral health partner will be available for counseling and wellness plan development.

17. Mindfulness exercises, yoga, journaling, and quiet time will be built into the daily schedule.

#### **E. Staff Wellness**

18. Staff will have access to:

- Monthly wellness challenges and incentives
- Mental health support and burnout prevention training
- Ergonomic workspaces and designated break areas

19. Staff meals/ snacks will align with the same nutritional values promoted for children.

20. Wellness updates and professional development in health and self-care will be shared in staff meetings and e-newsletters.

#### **F. Implementation and Monitoring:**

21. The Food Services Manager will be responsible for monitoring implementation of all Nutrition guideline. The Residential Services Director will be responsible for monitoring implementation, educational and physical activity policies and procedures.

22. A **Wellness Advisory Committee** will meet biannually to:

- Review progress toward wellness goals

- Recommend updates or changes to the wellness policy
- Coordinate family and community wellness input

23. The **Wellness Implementation Team**, comprised of the Chief Program Officer, Food Services Manager, Residential Services Representative, Education and Intake Manager, Nurse, Enrichment Activities Coordinator, and a student will meet quarterly to:

- Monitor policy adherence
- Evaluate food menus, activity logs, and educational delivery
- Review feedback from children, staff, and families

**Helping Hand Home for Children Wellness committee**

- Vanessa Davila, CPO
- Helene Piquion- Food Service Manager, Chair
- Sonya Cheeves -Program Manager
- Jamie Lounsbury- Education & Intake Manager
- Katie Gardner- Nurse
- Tiffany Fuller- Enrichment Coordinator
- Cashmier D – Student/Client

24. An annual **Wellness Report** will be developed summarizing activities, outcomes, and proposed improvements. This will be made available on the organization's website and distributed at parent meetings.

25. The organization will comply with all federal, state, and local wellness and food safety regulations.

Signed by:



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Tania Leskovar-Owens, Chief Executive Officer, Helping Hand Home for Children