STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Childcare Bottle and Meal Preparation SOP

Document no.	SOP-CHC-005
Revision	1.0
Owner	Center Director
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Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To prepare and serve bottles and meals safely and accurately, prevent allergen exposure, and keep food and formula at safe temperatures from storage through feeding.

2. Scope

Applies to preparing infant bottles, formula and meals served at the center. Meals prepared and delivered by an outside food vendor are covered by a separate procedure.

Definitions

Allergy action plan	A written plan on file describing a child's food allergy, symptoms to watch for, and the response required if exposure occurs.
Bottle labeling	Marking each bottle with the child's name and the date and time it was prepared or brought from home.
Cross-contact	Accidental transfer of an allergen from one food or surface to another, which can trigger a reaction even in a small amount.

3. Responsibilities

Kitchen Staff	Prepares meals and bottles following recipes, labeling and allergy requirements.
Lead Teacher	Confirms allergy information before feeding, feeds children and reports any reaction immediately.
Center Director	Maintains allergy action plans, approves menus and manages food safety training.

RACI matrix

Activity	Kitchen Staff	Lead Teacher	Center Director
Prepare bottles and meals	R/A	C	I
Check allergy information before feeding	C	R/A	I
Store and label bottles and food correctly	R/A	R	I
Maintain allergy action plans	I	C	R/A

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Labeled bottles and food containers
- Refrigerator with a thermometer for formula and breast milk storage
- Current allergy action plans posted in the kitchen and classroom
- Bottle warmer or safe warming method
- Meal and feeding log

Personal protective equipment

- Disposable gloves for food handling

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Wash hands before preparation** Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before touching any bottle, formula or food.	Kitchen Staff	☐
5.2	**Check the child's allergy action plan** Check the posted allergy action plan for the child before preparing any bottle or meal, confirming there are no restricted ingredients. **Checkpoint:** Every meal and bottle is checked against the child's current allergy action plan before preparation begins.	Kitchen Staff	☐
5.3	**Prepare formula or bottles following instructions** Prepare formula following the manufacturer's instructions on the container, or prepare a labeled bottle brought from home exactly as the parent provided it.	Kitchen Staff	☐
5.4	**Label every bottle and container** Label every bottle and food container with the child's name and the date and time it was prepared, before it goes into the refrigerator. **Checkpoint:** No bottle or container is stored without a name and date and time label.	Kitchen Staff	☐
5.5	**Store bottles and food at a safe temperature** Store prepared bottles, formula and perishable food in the refrigerator immediately, checking that the refrigerator thermometer reads within a safe range.	Kitchen Staff	☐
5.6	**Prevent cross-contact with allergens** Use separate utensils, surfaces and containers for meals containing a known allergen, and clean and sanitize surfaces between preparing different children's food. **Warning:** Never use the same utensil or surface for an allergen-containing food and a child's allergy-safe meal without cleaning in between.	Kitchen Staff	☐
5.7	**Warm bottles and food safely** Warm bottles using a bottle warmer or warm water bath, never a microwave, and test the temperature on your wrist before feeding. **Warning:** Never microwave a bottle. It can create dangerous hot spots even when the outside feels cool.	Kitchen Staff	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.8	**Confirm the bottle or meal matches the child** Match the name on the bottle or meal container to the child before feeding, especially in a room with multiple infants close in age. **Checkpoint:** The name on every bottle and meal is confirmed against the child before feeding begins.	Lead Teacher	☐
5.9	**Feed the child and observe** Feed the child, holding infants for bottle feeding rather than propping the bottle, and watch for coughing, gagging or signs of a reaction. **Warning:** Never prop a bottle. Always hold the infant during bottle feeding.	Lead Teacher	☐
5.10	**Respond to a suspected allergic reaction** If a child shows signs of an allergic reaction, follow their allergy action plan immediately and notify the director and parent right away.	Lead Teacher	☐
5.11	**Discard unused portions correctly** Discard any formula or food left in a bottle or on a plate after feeding rather than saving it for later, following facility food safety policy.	Lead Teacher	☐
5.12	**Log the feeding** Record what and how much was eaten or taken in the feeding log for the parent to review.	Lead Teacher	☐

6. Quality checks

- Every bottle and container is labeled with name and date and time before storage.
- Allergy action plans are checked before every meal and bottle preparation.
- Refrigerator temperature is checked and logged daily.
- No leftover formula or food from a feeding is reused.

7. Records

- Feeding and meal log
- Allergy action plans on file
- Refrigerator temperature log
- Allergic reaction incident reports

8. KPIs

- Percentage of bottles and meals labeled correctly
- Refrigerator temperature compliance rate
- Allergy action plan review completion rate
- Allergic reaction incidents per month

9. Common mistakes

- Warming a bottle in the microwave instead of a warmer or water bath.
- Feeding a bottle without checking the name label against the child.
- Saving unfinished formula or food for the next feeding.
- Preparing a child's meal on a surface just used for a known allergen without cleaning it first.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Alexa Uskova

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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