



State of North Carolina
Department of Health and Human Services

For Release: Immediate
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Division of Child Development and Early Education Statement:

RALEIGH— The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is actively reviewing the events in Hoke County regarding a child's lunch and its nutritional value. As DHHS continues to gather the facts of the case, we have determined that no employee of DHHS, nor the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) or its contractors, instructed any child to replace or remove any meal items. Furthermore, it is not DHHS' policy to inspect, go through or question any child about food items brought from home. The facts we have gathered confirm that no DHHS employee or contractor did this.

In an effort to meet nutritional requirements, if a meal brought from home is missing item/s to meet nutritional guidelines, the missing item/s can be added to the child's lunch from the cafeteria menu for the day.

"The overarching goal is to ensure all children are eating healthy meals each day and are ready to learn," said Dr. Deb Cassidy, Director of DCDEE. "If this means offering an additional food item to a child to achieve that goal, this agency is meeting its objectives. We are working to help children who bring an unhealthy lunch to school, like cola and sweet treats, balance their meals with healthier additions."

DCDEE consultants and contractors visit Pre-K classes and child care centers throughout the state to advise educators of the requirements of the USDA Meal Guidelines, which are: 1 serving of milk; 2 servings of fruit/vegetable; 1 serving of grains/bread; 1 serving of meat/meat alternative. This same information is offered to parents and caregivers.

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