



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

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Division of Public Health

August 20, 2020

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Food Service at Child Care Centers with School-Age Children at Remote Learning Sites During the State of Emergency Due to COVID-19

**PURSUANT TO:** Rules Governing the Sanitation of Child Care Centers  
15A NCAC 18A .2800

**SOURCE:** Ed Norman, Branch Head, Children's Environmental Health

**DISCUSSION AND RATIONALE:**

Due to the expanded remote learning centers based on Section .3100, *Care For School-Age Children During State Of Emergency*, licensed child care centers have school-age children attending during the school day. The increase in school-age children in licensed child care centers has created regulatory issues surrounding proper storage of lunches sent from home as well as serving lunches to coincide with the children's school day. Remote learning centers at licensed child care centers that have school-age children attending may not have adequate refrigeration space to store lunches sent from home. Additionally, in order to accommodate remote learning schedules for school-age children, meal service periods may need to extend beyond previous service periods.

Administrative Rule 15A NCAC 18A .2804(f) requires potentially hazardous foods brought from home to be refrigerated at 45°F (7°C) or below. Rule .2806(f) requires the temperature of potentially hazardous food provided by the center to be 45°F or below, or 140°F or above at all times, including field trips, catering events, outdoor service, **except during necessary periods of preparation and service.**

**RESPONSE/INTERPRETATION:**

Lunches sent from home for school-age children will not require refrigeration when students are attending the child care center for remote learning purposes. Lunches for school-age children shall be stored with the child's personal belongings, above the floor and protected from potential sources of contamination. Improper storage of school-age children's lunches shall be marked under #5 on the *Sanitation Standards Evaluation Form for Child Care Centers* and will be a violation of 15A NCAC 18A .2806.

During remote learning operations for school-age children, the period of **necessary service** for meals may need to be extended to allow for children to eat meals within the time designated by their remote instruction. This period shall not exceed 3 hours, and then the food shall be discarded. The child care center must provide a written procedure which outlines this necessary service period and proper disposal. Exceeding the period of necessary service for school-age children's lunches shall be marked under #4 on the *Sanitation Standards Evaluation Form for Child Care Centers* and will be a violation of 15A NCAC 18A .2806.

**REFERENCES:**

Rules Governing the Sanitation of Child Care Centers 15A NCAC 18A .2800

*NOTE: Position statements are policy documents to clarify how to interpret or enforce a law or rule. They are not enforceable on their own but are intended to promote uniform interpretation and enforcement of the underlying law or rule.*

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