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**Peoria City/County
Health Department**

Memorandum

Date: September 17, 2019

Subject: Share Tables in Child Nutrition Programs

To: Peoria Regional Office of Education
c/o Beth Crider – Regional Superintendent of Schools
c/o Dr. George McKenna – Assistant Regional Superintendent

From: Peoria City/County Health Department
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Overview of Share Tables

For various reasons, children may not always want to consume certain food or beverage items included in their meal. “Share Tables” are tables or stations where children may return whole food or beverage items they choose not to eat, if it is in compliance with local and State health and food safety codes. These food and beverage items are then available to other children who may want additional servings (“The Use of Share Tables in Child Nutrition Programs,” USDA Food and Nutrition Service Memo, 2016).

Peoria City/County Health Department Stance on Share Tables

The Peoria City/County Health Department encourages the use of share tables, as long as certain food safety precautions and procedures are utilized for time/temperature control for safety foods and fruits with an edible peel. Each establishment that wishes to start or continue the use of share tables that include time/temperature control for safety foods must complete a Variance Request for Food and Drink and adhere to the conditions of approval that are placed upon the establishment by this Department. A guidance sheet for completing a variance for share tables was created to aid in the process and is included with this memo.

Illinois Food Code Section on Returned Food and Re-Service of Food

Share tables with time/temperature control for safety foods fall under re-service of food as per the Illinois Food Code, Section 3-306.14 Returned Food and Re-Service of Food, which states:

(A) Except as specified in (B) of this section, after being served or sold and in the possession of a consumer, food that is unused or returned by the consumer may not be offered as food for human consumption.

(B) Except as specified under 3-801.11(G), a container of food that is not time/temperature control for safety food may be re-served from one consumer to another if:

(2) The food, such as crackers, salt, or pepper, is in an unopened original package and is maintained in sound condition.

Although the Illinois Food Code prohibits the re-service of time/temperature control for safety foods, the Peoria City County Health Department may approve a variance request to deviate from the Code.

Best Practices for Share Tables

Foods and Drinks that are Acceptable for Share Tables

- Whole pieces of fruit without an edible peel, such as a banana or orange
- Whole pieces of fruit with an edible peel that have been washed and individually wrapped or are washed again prior to re-service to another child, such as an apple or plum.
- Unopened pre-packaged items such as baby carrots or bags of sliced apples
- Unopened milk, if immediately stored in a cooling bin maintained at 41 degrees F or below (for the purposes of Share Tables, a crate or cooler with blue ice may be used to maintain temperatures of 41 degrees F or less)
- Unopened pre-packaged time/temperature control for safety foods such as packaged string cheese or sealed containers of yogurt, if immediately stored in a cooling bin maintained at 41 degrees F or below (for the purpose of Share Tables, a crate or cooler with blue ice may be used to maintain temperatures of 41 degrees F or less)

Foods and Drinks that are Not Acceptable for Share Tables

- Unpackaged items, such as salad without a lid
- Opened, prepackaged items, such as an opened bag of baby carrots or sliced apples
- Opened cartons of milk
- Any unopened, prepackaged, time/temperature control for safety foods that have not been stored at 41 degrees F or less, even if the packages are still intact
- Any unopened, prepackaged, time/temperature control for safety foods that have been stored in a cooling bin, crate or cooler with blue ice, etc., but are found to be at temperatures above 41 degrees F must be discarded at the end of each lunch period.

Best Practice

- Supervise the share table to ensure compliance with food safety requirements
- Display signage outlining share table “rules” and encourage recycling

Next Steps for Schools Incorporating Share Tables with TCS Foods into their Nutrition Program

Complete and submit a Variance for Food and Drink and Submit to the Peoria City/County Health Department by mail, in person, or by email to EH@peoriacounty.org. Guidance is included with this memo.

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding this memo, or if you require assistance in filling out the Variance for Food and Drink. Environmental Health Specialists and Practitioners are available for appointments on Mondays -Fridays, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm to offer food safety guidance and support.