

# Writing policies and procedures: not as scary as it seems

All organizations have policies and procedures that guide how decisions are made and how the work is done. When the documents are well-written, they ensure consistency and quality of service.

Even when policies and procedures are not documented, they still exist—guiding decisions and actions of those engaged with the organization. Unfortunately, unwritten policies and procedures for standards of care can easily be compromised, leading to multiple interpretations and inconsistent results.

## Policies and procedures

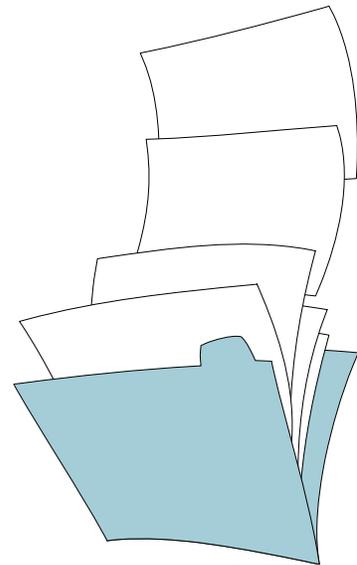
Are policies and procedures the same thing? No, they are not. Policies are the guiding principles by which service is provided. They provide the guidance or the “what” to do. Procedures describe, within the policy, how the service will be provided. They specify what will be done, when, and by whom, and what records are to be kept. They are the recipe for putting policies into action.

### Policies are the:

- ✓ Description of the service’s commitments to key determinants of quality.
- ✓ Guiding principles of an organization.
- ✓ Broad guidelines to decision making.

### Procedures are:

- ✓ Based on the organization’s policies.
- ✓ The recipe as to how things get done.
- ✓ Specific step-by-step directions.



## Sample policies and procedures

**Policy:** Health-promoting nutrition and physical activity choices will be integrated into the daily lives of individuals served by this organization.

**Procedures:** Employees will:

- Discuss health-promoting nutrition and physical activity goals at each individual's service plan meeting.
- Seek out and participate in health-promoting community activities with the individuals they support. Examples include walking competitions, weight-loss challenges, and Special Olympics.
- Plan menus that follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Model healthy nutrition behaviors when they're with the individuals they support.
- Provide community integration opportunities that focus on physical activity rather than food.
- Assure all meals and snacks provide a healthy dietary contribution.
- Provide nonfood incentives for positive behavior.
- Eat meals with the individuals served by this organization.
- Integrate local foods into the menu plan by having a backyard garden or visiting a farmers' market.
- Offer at least 30 minutes of daily physical activity for each individual.
- Role model healthy physical activity behaviors when you're with the individuals you support.
- Take part in physical activities with individuals served by this organization.
- Do household chores and activities with individuals, when appropriate, but only if they are actively involved in the process.
- Seek input of individuals when selecting physical activities.

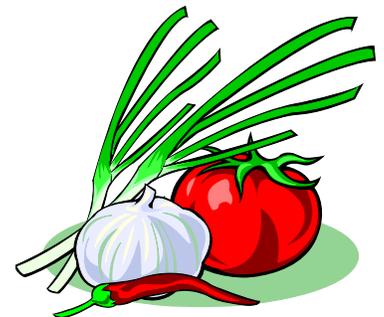


*Below are few more sample procedures that address health-promoting nutrition and physical activity.*

## Sample nutrition procedures

### Food product selection

- Use fewer processed foods and instead, more whole, fresh foods.
- Do not add salt to foods while cooking.
- Use an herb shaker instead of salt to add flavor to foods.
- Keep the salt shaker off the table during meals.
- Offer residents at least five different fruit and vegetable servings a day.
- Offer a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Use fresh or frozen vegetables, and fresh, frozen, or canned fruit in natural juice.
- Serve whole-grain bread, pasta, cereal, and brown rice.



- Use low-fat dairy products.
- Use lean meats if serving meat.
- Reduce use of processed meats (e.g., bologna, hotdogs, etc.).
- Increase number of times fish is served per week.
- Increase use of nonmeat protein sources such as dried beans, peas, and legumes.
- Serve milk, water, or 100 percent juice at meal time.
- Limit the use of sugared, artificially sweetened, and caffeinated beverages.
- Serve 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice instead of fruit beverages or drinks.
- Offer snacks that consist of fruits, vegetables, and/or whole grains instead of high-fat, high-sugar, or high-sodium snack foods.
- Modify favorite recipes to increase nutrient values of food and decrease fat, sugar, and sodium.

### **Menus, preparation, and serving**

- Plan menus on a weekly basis.
- Post menus in an easily accessible location.
- Monitor portion sizes for appropriateness for each individual.
- Limit use of fast food to two or fewer times a week.
- Encourage residents to select reasonable portions and/or healthier food options when eating out.
- Implement and adhere to special diets based on a physician's or dietitian's orders.
- Include all residents, when applicable, in all aspects of menu planning, food purchasing, meal preparation, serving, and cleanup.



### **Food Safety**

- Follow food safety procedures when purchasing, preparing, and storing food items.
- Use appropriately sized ice packs when packing lunch coolers.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Thaw foods appropriately—either in the refrigerator or the microwave and not on the counter or sink
- Avoid cross-contamination by using designated cutting boards: one meats and another for fruits and vegetables.
- Wash utensils and food prep surfaces with hot, soapy water after use.
- Monitor dishwasher for proper water temperature and make sure it is working properly.
- Monitor refrigerator and freezer temperatures at least weekly. Refrigerator temperatures should be above 32 degrees and below 40 degrees F. Freezers should be at 0 degrees F or below.
- Store ready-to-eat foods above raw meat in the refrigerator.
- Date leftovers before putting them in the refrigerator.
- Refrigerate perishable foods immediately after serving. Discard any perishable foods that have been left out at room temperature for more than two hours. When in doubt, throw it out!

## Sample physical activity procedures

### Physical activity support

- Include a physical activity component in everyone's Individual Service Plan. Review and update annually.
- Promote physical activity in all aspects of resident's lives.
- Do household chores and activities with individuals, when appropriate, but only if they are actively involved in the process.
- Generate a list of daily living activities/household chores that residents can participate in. Encourage residents to participate to the best of their abilities.
- Offer residents at least three 10-minute physical activity options or one 30-minute option daily.
- Purchase games that include an activity component for inside or outside play. Purchase active games for video game systems such as dancing, bowling, yoga
- Research at least every few months what physical activity opportunities are available within a reasonable distance and at a reasonable cost.
- Involve family members and volunteers to provide more physical activity opportunities for residents.
- Survey individuals you support at least monthly to determine a list of their favorite physical activities and schedule them more often.
- Participate in community walks/runs based on the interest of residents.
- Include community integration activities that provide physical activity opportunities (e.g., attending a community dance, volunteering for a food shelf, or joining a walking or biking club).
- Include seasonal activities in the physical activity routine (e.g., picking apples at the orchard, raking leaves, or planting a garden).



### Active Living

- Change the channel on the TV manually. Lose the remote.
- Park farther away from buildings and walk to the door
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator whenever possible
- Conduct local errands by either walking or riding a bicycle, not using a vehicle
- Create a garden and encourage residents to be responsible for their plantings
- Limit the amount of time spent in front of a TV or computer screen
- Network with other facilities and create physical activity opportunities based on resident's interests and abilities

