



## Mecklenburg County Health Department



### Bottle Storage

The following applies to bottles of **(formula)** and **(breast)** milk in childcare centers:

- The “One-hour rule” no longer applies to used bottles.
  - **Note:** The “One-hour rule” was guidance provided to childcare centers in the past and was not an official regulation.
- Once the meal is complete, a used bottle (**cannot**) be re-served to the child at the childcare center.
- Examples of when the meal is considered complete:
  - A child has consumed all or a portion of a bottle and the child is sleeping in his/her crib.
  - A child has used all or a portion of a bottle, the child is playing, and caregivers are working on another task

**Note:** Contact the Health Department if you have any other meal completion examples.

- In order to meet each child’s needs, it is up to the center to determine each child’s feeding schedule. For example, if a child is not completing their bottle, the center and the child’s parent(s) typically will discuss the situation and determine if feeding times need to be adjusted or if additional bottles are needed throughout the day.
- Once a bottle has been removed from temperature control (refrigerator), the bottle must be served within **one hour**. Example: An unused bottle is removed from the refrigerator and placed in the bottle warmer, once the bottle has been removed from the refrigerator, the caregiver has **one hour** to serve the bottle
- Used formula and breast milk should not be placed back into any facility refrigerator. If used bottles of breast milk and formula are placed back into a refrigerator the center takes on the risk and potential violations associated with the practice.
- Once the bottle has been used it should be placed in the child’s cubby. Any leftover formula/breast milk can either be discarded at the center or left in the bottle for parents. Due to the growth of bacteria in used bottles, the Health Department does not recommend that parents use any leftover formula/breast milk. If a parent wishes to re-use any leftover formula/breast milk later in the day after the child leaves the center, it is a best practice to have the parent provide a cooler of ice to store the used formula/breast milk.
- The attached Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute document has been approved for use in childcare centers by the Children’s Environmental Health Branch

Questions? Please call 704-336-5101.

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