

Nutrition Policy

Date: 1995, Revised 15/09/2004, Revised 24/09/07, Revised 5/03/08, Reviewed 7/02/11, Reviewed 14/02/14, Reviewed 12/05/17

Signed By Management Committee _____ **Date** _____

Aim:

To encourage and develop good nutrition practices in conjunction with parents in order to promote health and strong bodies.

Background:

Good nutrition is an essential ingredient of quality childcare. It is essential for normal physical and emotional growth and has implications for future healthy adulthood. A child develops life long eating habits as a result of early eating experiences.

Responsibilities:

As carers of children we have a commitment to each child to ensure that they are eating healthy nutritious food whilst in our care. The most important factor of the Centre's Nutrition Program is to ensure that children are exposed to a variety of foods, that a balance of all types of foods is provided and that foods not deemed to be of high nutritional quality are eaten sparingly. The Centre will distribute the Nutrition Policy to parents at enrolment time.

We recognise that parents using our Centre have busy lifestyles, balancing work and family commitments and that providing food can be a considerable burden of both time and cost, nevertheless it is the responsibility of the parents to provide healthy nutritious and balanced meals.

Related Policies

- Hygiene Policy
- Food Preparation Policy
- Food Safety Plan
- Peanut & Tree Nut Policy
- Dental Policy

Specific Aims:

1. To meet the nutritional needs of children whilst in our care.
2. To provide where possible for children on different diets, eg religious, medical, vegetarian, allergy, etc.
3. To maintain good hygiene standards.
4. To provide attractive and well presented meals.
5. To ensure that mealtimes are relaxed, pleasant and timed to meet the needs of the children.
6. To incorporate nutrition education into the program appropriate to the age of the children.
7. To prohibit the use of food as a punishment.
8. To not use food as a reward based incentive.
9. To encourage independence and social skills at mealtimes.
10. To communicate with parents about their child's food intake.
11. To ensure that the nutrition program is regularly evaluated.
12. To motivate staff to maintain good personal nutrition.
13. To serve food with a high nutritional value.
14. To promote socially acceptable behaviour and table manners.
15. To encourage children to use eating utensils effectively, appropriate to their age.
16. To respect the cultural and religious wishes of parents.

Implementation:

Parents are encouraged to provide a variety of nutritious foods in small quantities every day for lunch and afternoon tea, to enable their child to choose what and how much they want to eat. Children need nutritious meals and snacks as they have small stomachs and can eat as much at a snack-time as a meal. Examples of appropriate foods include; fruit, vegetables, breads, cereals, cheese and yoghurt.

Some foods are not appropriate to eat every day as they do not contain vitamins and other nutrients useful for overall health. If children eat these foods on a daily basis they often do not eat enough of the basic foods required for healthy nutrition, examples of these types of foods include; Meat Pies, Sausage Rolls, Mini Pizzas, Instant Noodles, Jellies, Jam/Honey Sandwiches, Plain Sweet Biscuits, Dairy Desserts e.g. Chocolate, Yogo, teletubby custard. These types of foods should not be sent more than once per week.

Inappropriate foods are those that contain high concentrations of colouring, sugar & fats. If staff notice these types of foods in a child's lunch box they will be sent home.

General Procedures

1. The Centre will provide morning tea which will normally consist of a variety of seasonal fruit. The centre will also provide milk and/or water throughout the day. Lunch and a snack for afternoon tea need to be provided by the families within the guidelines of this policy.
2. Water will be available at all times and will be provided to all children on waking.
3. Water provided to children in the Nursery will be boiled and cooled before being given to the children.
4. All dairy products provided by the Centre will be full cream.
5. Children will wash their hands before handling food, eating meals and snacks and participating in cooking activities
6. Foods that may be a choking hazard will not be served to the children and should not be brought in eg. Nuts (Refer Peanut & Tree Nut Policy), Popcorn, whole grapes (it is advised that grapes be cut in half for younger children) and yoghurt sultanas. Staff will have some discretion as to what foods may be considered a choking hazard and these will be sent home.
7. Nuts and products such as peanut butter, Nutella, nut food bars and any other products that have nuts or peanuts listed in the ingredients will not be allowed within the Centre to prevent reactions in allergic children and staff. Products labelled as "May contain traces of Nuts" are acceptable (*Refer to Peanut & Tree Nut Policy*).
8. Afternoon Tea will be served no later than 3.30 pm and a snack will be available for the children at the Centre after 5.00 pm if required.
9. Information on nutrition and dental care will be available to parents.
10. Parents will be informed regularly of the importance of well balanced lunches and will be provided with information on suitable foods to pack for their children.
11. Parents will be discouraged from providing so called 'Junk foods' for their child. Staff will have some discretion as to what is considered "Junk Foods" and these will be sent home.
12. Parents will be invited to at least one social occasion per year where food will be served.
13. Multicultural differences will be recognised and accepted.
14. Food awareness activities will be chosen from a variety of cultures.
15. The policy will be distributed to parents at enrolment time.
16. Children will be provided with opportunities to participate in food preparation activities.
17. Nutrition awareness activities will be included in the teaching curriculum.
18. The foods being eaten by the children will be discussed with them.
19. The weight of infants will be measured as an activity to demonstrate physical growth.
20. Special occasions may be celebrated with culturally appropriate foods. Parents will be encouraged to bring a plain birthday cake to celebrate their child's birthday.

Meal Time Procedures

21. Food will never be used as a form of punishment
22. No child will be forced to eat. Staff will consider reasons for their behaviour eg. medication, emotional trauma, tiredness etc. and communicate with parents to develop strategies to deal with this situation.
23. All children will sit when eating and drinking at meal times. No child will be allowed to walk around with dummies/bottles. No bottles will be given to children in bed. If a child's normal routine is to take a bottle to bed, it will be given to them immediately prior to bed.
24. Children will be encouraged to rinse their mouths (Swish & Swallow) after meals. (*Refer Dental Policy*)
25. Fruit will be provided by the Centre and offered to the children at various times throughout the day.

Serving Food Procedures

26. All children will be encouraged to pour their own drinks, wherever possible.
27. Gloves or tongs will be used at all times when serving foods.
28. No food will be served directly onto tables or floor. Food will be served on an appropriate surface, eg. Plates, serviettes, lunchboxes or directly onto child's hand.
29. Educators will sit with children during mealtime and will assist children to feed themselves when necessary.

NB: University Preschool & Childcare Centre supplies all drinks for the children. Parents are requested not to bring Poppers, Juice Bottles, Cordials, or flavoured milk drinks.

In the case of children with allergies or special dietary requirements there maybe exceptions to this policy. Parents should discuss this with their child's Room Leader.

Source Material

Australian New Zealand Food Authority www.foodstandards.gov.au

Australian Dietary Guidelines (2017) *Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council*
Department of Health and Aging, www.eatforhealth.gov.au

Capital Health Network, Connect Up 4 Kids, <https://www.chnact.org.au/connect-up-4-kids>

Toni Christie (2014) *The Essential ECE Handbook, User Friendly Resources* pg78,

Dieticians Association of Australia www.daa.asn.au

Michael van Straten & Barbara Griggs (2001) *Super foods for Children*, Dorling Kindersley Ltd
Nutrition Australia www.nutritionaustralia.org
Professor Frank Oberklaid (2004), *Health in Early Childhood Settings*, Pademelon Press pg128,

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