

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

Policy Statement

The Centre aims to provide a well-balanced and highly nutritious diet, with an emphasis on introducing children to a wide variety of foods. This policy addresses other aims of the Centre including providing a safe and positive eating environment, teaching children about food and nutrition in the Centre curriculum, communicating with parents about all matters relating to food and nutrition and meeting any other dietary considerations of the children in care at the Centre. The policy is available to parents in the Parent Policy Handbook which is displayed in the front foyer. The legislative requirements of a Start Right Eat Right Program and the Education and Care Services National Regulations have been taken into consideration in the formulation of this policy.

How the Policy will be Implemented

Food provided at the Centre will be based upon the Australian Dietary Guidelines for children and adolescents. It will provide at least 50% of the recommended daily intake of key nutrients for children.

Any request for variation from these guidelines due to a food allergy or intolerance will need to be medically confirmed in writing by a General Practitioner or Pediatrician. Depending upon the severity of the allergy or intolerance of the child, a 'Modified Diet Plan' may also be required. Staff will need to know the individual/category of food to which the child has reacted and could react, the nature of previous reactions, the potential for a further reaction to be worse and whether the reaction is likely to change over time. Information about the need to seek medical assistance if the child inadvertently consumes the food to which they have previously demonstrated intolerance, must also be provided. In the instance of a suspected food allergy emergency, staff will immediately call 000 and follow the First Aid Procedure.

When children are on special diets, parents will provide as much detail as possible about suitable foods. This information is to be provided in the dietary section of the enrolment form, and this information is updated each time a child moves to another room, as well as when parents notify of any changes. Parents may be asked to supply some of the food requirements for children on special diets, depending on the nature and extent of foods excluded and substitutes required.

The use of added sugar and salt will be kept to a minimum and preservatives and colourings will be avoided where possible. Low fat and moderate fibre foods will be included in the menu.

The Centre will provide a main meal at lunch time, morning and afternoon tea snacks and a late afternoon snack. Parents are required to supply breakfasts for their children that are in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines. This includes cereals that have low sugar content, such as Weetbix and porridge. Bread and muffins that are moderate in fibre are also acceptable. Cereals high in sugar, such as Nutri-grain, Cocoa Pops and Fruit Loops will not be served to children. Breakfast for children will be served between 6.30 a.m and 7.15 a.m., to be completed by 7.30 a.m.

Parents are to supply a piece of fruit or vegetable each day that their child attends.

Water and milk will be offered by staff throughout the day. Water will be available at all times. No other fluids will be offered to children, including soft drinks, sweet syrups such

as Ribena, juice, cordials or sweetened milk.

Full cream milk will be used. Skim milk (less than .5% fat) will not be served at all. If it is necessary to substitute cows milk for soy milk, only soy milks that are fortified with calcium will be used.

Foods linked with a high risk of choking (such as carrot, celery and apple) will be cooked, mashed or blanched, and will not be served to children raw. Meat will be presented in a developmentally appropriate manner for safety purposes. High risk foods such as popcorn, nuts, corn chips, whole grapes, hard and sticky lollies will not be provided.

Children will be supervised at all times when eating.

The Cook and the Director/s will have undertaken Start Right Eat Right training every 4 years, in addition to basic hygiene courses. All staff will complete the FoodSafe video and workbook on commencement of employment and on a regular on-going basis.

Menu preparation will be a team effort of the Cook, Director and staff in consultation with project officers from the 'Start Right, Eat Right' program. Parents and guardians will be consulted and asked to share family, religious and cultural values and experiences to enrich the variety and enjoyment of food provided. A rotating menu will be prepared after consultation has occurred, and a new menu will be created at the beginning of each season which will incorporate meals suitable for that season.

The menu, presentation of food and eating implements will reflect a wide variety of cultures, in particular the cultural backgrounds of families and the local community. Meals will be appetising and provide variety in colour, texture and taste.

The menu will be varied and changed regularly. It will be prominently displayed on the Parent Notice Board in the reception foyer, the kitchen and in each section.

Meal times will be treated as social occasions. Staff and children will wash their hands before and after handling food and eating. Staff members will sit with the children and interact with them to encourage good eating habits and an appreciation of a variety of foods. Children will be encouraged to try new foods, but their individual food preferences will be respected. Children will be assisted where required, but will be encouraged to be independent and to help themselves wherever possible.

Food will be used as a learning experience and opportunities will be provided for children to take part in activities involving food preparation. Other activities which may be presented to the children include theme days for particular cultures of foods e.g. Chinese multicultural food day, growing herbs and strawberries, making nutritious food posters and telling stories and singing songs relating to nutritious food. Staff will be respectful of other cultures and sensitive to food wastage when using food for art purposes.

The provision or denial of food will never be used as a punishment. If children have not eaten their main meal, they will still be offered extra bread and butter and fruit.

Parents and guardians will be advised of their child's food intake each day verbally and on a communication board which informs parents of the foods provided that day and the quantities their child consumed. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns or progress/achievements relating to food and nutrition with staff.

Staff will provide parents with nutrition information via pamphlets, newsletters and

noticeboards with regard to the importance of good nutrition and balanced, varied meals. Recipes for meals are made available to parents and families on request.

Food will be prepared hygienically and stored in a manner that reduces risk of contamination.

Birthdays and other Celebrations

Birthday cakes are available for purchase by completing a Birthday Cake Request form. The birthday cakes are prepared

Food hygiene and safety issues specific to infants (0 - 1 year). **Infant Formula and Breastmilk**

Staff will encourage parents to continue breastfeeding or using infant formula until babies are 12 months of age. Parents are welcome to breastfeed their child in the staff room, or any other room in which they feel comfortable. If extra fluids are needed, cool boiled water will be offered in the first instance.

Fruit juice, cordial, cows milk, soy milk and milk additives will not be given to infants, except when special dietary requirements require so and upon consent of the parents. Notification of this in writing must be supplied to the Director by a qualified medical practitioner. Cool boiled water is given regularly throughout the day.

All bottles stored at the Centre will be labeled with the contents, name of child and date of preparation/expressing.

It is the parents' responsibility to provide sufficient infant formula that has been prepared strictly according to the instructions on the container.

It is the responsibility of breastfeeding mothers to defrost frozen breast milk before bringing it to the Centre as it cannot be microwaved and will curdle if put in boiling water. It may be heated slightly in lukewarm water after being removed from the refrigerator.

Formula, cows and soy bottled milk will be stored in the coldest part of the refrigerator (not in the side of the door), for a maximum of 48 hours. All milk and formula will only be heated once, they will not be reheated. All milk and formula will only be heated using a bottle warmer or a microwave. Any milk not used within an hour of heating will be discarded.

Babies are to be in a semi-up right position when drinking from a bottle. Staff must not allow an infant to take a bottle to bed.

The Procedure for Heating Formula is to be followed by staff at all times.

Solid Foods

Staff will liaise with parents to obtain information about the range of solid foods and textures that their infant baby is managing from approximately 6 months of age. Parents will advise staff when a new food may be introduced. Staff will recommend parents follow the 'Start Right Eat Right Recommended Schedule for Introducing Solids to Infants' however parents will make the decision as to what foods their child is ready to accept. Information regarding a baby's food intake over the day will be provided to parents.

References:

Nutrition Checklist for Planning Long Day Care Menus, SA Nutrition Partnership, 2002

Menu Assessment and Planning Guide for Long Day Care Centres, Health Department of Western Australia

Norberg, M & Young, R. 1997 Caring for Infants: Food and Nutrition for 0 - 1 year olds in Long Day Care Centres, Central Sydney Area Health Service and the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services

'Feeding your Baby in the First Year, Women's and Children's Hospital, September 2004

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