



Acacia Kindergarten

Nutrition Policy

Our kindergarten is required to meet legislation to encourage and support healthy eating habits for children as part of *The Right Bite Healthy Food and Drink Strategy for SA Schools And Preschools*. It is essential that our service partners with families to provide education about nutrition, and promotes healthy eating habits for young children to positively influence their health and wellbeing. We believe in providing a positive eating environment that reflects nutritional requirements, cultural and family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children.

Healthy eating benefits the children in many ways to include:

- Supporting appropriate growth and physical development and activity.
- Provides adequate nutrients for daily energy and cognitive development.
- Supports good health in childhood through to adulthood and can reduce risk-factors associated with some chronic diseases.
- Develops appropriate social behaviours around food and mealtimes.
- Promotes healthy body-image and supports children to develop appropriate and positive relationships with food and their body's.
- Supports appropriate oral health and development.
- Supports children to understand that foods with 'lower nutritional' value (such as high-sugar processed foods) can be appropriate as part of a balanced nutritious diet.
- Encourage enjoyment and confidence around a broad range of foods and food environments.

Curriculum

Our service will:

- Support children to develop knowledge and skills that encourage nutritional diversity and healthy food choices.
- Encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences, including growing, preparing and cooking a wide variety of foods to expand children's experience and confidence with a wide range of foods.
- Integrate nutrition across the curriculum where possible, focusing on the Learning outcome: 'Children have a strong sense of wellbeing' (EYLF, 2022).
- Align with the SA Department of Education's *Eat a Rainbow* and *The Right Bite Strategy*.

The learning environment

Children at our kindergarten will be encouraged to:

- Have fresh, clean filtered tap water available at all times and are encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day.
- Be encouraged to bring their own named water bottle.
- Bring a lunchbox from home which contains foods that can be eaten at snack and meal times.
- Will eat routinely at scheduled break times, seated within a group environment.
- Are encouraged and supported to independently manage their food and containers.

Our kindergarten:

- Understands and promotes the importance of regular eating for children, including breakfast before they arrive.
- Endeavours to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Discourages lunchbox sharing, encourages and models appropriate social eating behaviours to include sitting together for mealtimes, , appropriate handwashing and cleanliness, managing food waste/scraps, appropriate and positive language around foods such as how they benefit our bodies, and avoiding all food shaming language (“good/bad”, “healthy/unhealthy”, related to fat/weight).
- Respects each child’s appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, we do not insist they eat.
- Recognises that some children may have specific dietary requirements for many reasons including medical conditions, sensory aversions or social challenges. We endeavour to support these children and their families with their nutritional intake, to further develop appropriate social mealtime behaviours and improve confidence and enjoyment around a broader range of foods. Where families are receiving guidance from health professionals such as a speech pathologist or dietitian, we welcome additional information about the child’s needs where applicable.
- Is a breastfeeding friendly site.

Food supply guidelines

Healthy Snack Time:

- Initiated by the Department of Education to encourage fruit and vegetable intake to provide children with vitamins, minerals and fibre that support health and promote oral development (e.g. chewing, swallowing).
- More regular intake of fruits and vegetables can encourage acceptance and enjoyment of these foods to support a healthy well-balanced diet into adulthood.
- Parents and carers are asked to supply fresh fruit or vegetables for healthy snack time. Where a child doesn’t eat any fruits or vegetables or the carer finds it hard to provide these foods for any reason, please discuss the individual child’s needs with staff to find an appropriate alternative.

Packed Lunchbox:

- Children are expected to bring their own lunchbox from home that includes their lunch and several snack foods, as well as a healthy fruit/vegetable snack as mentioned above.
- Families are encouraged to pack nutritious and unprocessed foods. Examples include a sandwich, wrap, fruit, vegetables, yoghurt, cheese, crackers.
- We ask families to please limit processed and packaged snacks. Home cooked options may be an appropriate alternative, such as low sugar baked goods. Chocolate and other confectionary is not appropriate.
- Staff will encourage children to consume their lunch food and less processed snacks first, using positive and non-shaming language and respecting the child’s autonomy.
- Any concerns regarding lunch items will be discussed with parents/carers directly, and not be discussed with the child, as this may cause confusion or shame around foods.
- We do not allow any juice, flavoured milk or soft drink due to their high sugar content, and ask that families only send water in drink bottles.
- We ask families to limit food packaging as much as possible to help us reduce rubbish/waste disposal as part of our focus on sustainability.

We are an allergy aware kindergarten

We work towards 'allergy awareness' as recommended by Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia and the National Allergy Strategy. An 'allergy aware' approach focuses on implementing a range of appropriate risk minimisation strategies instead of a food ban policy. We also use these opportunities to teach children about the importance of not sharing food, hand washing, signs to look out for if a child has an allergy and what to do in these situations. There may be times we ask parents to limit a certain food in lunchboxes depending on the severity of the allergy and our ability to control exposures. Unfortunately, children can present with an allergy to any food(s) and it isn't possible to continually exclude all allergens from education facilities so we hope to minimise any exclusions unless absolutely necessary.

Please contact us to discuss your child's allergies and any additional concerns. We will work with each family to develop an appropriate plan in accordance with the *National Allergy Strategy Best Practice Guidelines*.

Celebrations

Our kindergarten will ensure a healthy food supply for activities, celebrations and events. We celebrate birthdays at kindy in various ways and kindly ask that families DO NOT send foods or other items on birthdays. We understand that 'fun' foods such as cake are important for special events and celebrations, but unfortunately not all families may be able to send something, and this can create confusion and exclusion. We would love to know if your family has a special way of celebrating birthdays and can use the opportunity to learn about other cultures and languages within our kindergarten family.

Communication

Our Nutrition Policy is provided to all families as part of the enrolment package and families are invited to provide feedback as part of our ongoing policy review.

Occasionally we may share information with families about healthy eating through our newsletters, social media or Seesaw. We welcome any feedback, questions or concerns and are happy to support you with any challenges related to food provision at kindergarten.

Sources

Eat for Health // *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*:

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/australian-guide-healthy-eating>

Government of South Australia // *Eat a rainbow*:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/healthy+eating/healthy+eating+at+different+ages+and+stages+of+your+life/healthy+eating+for+kids+and+teens/eat+a+rainbow+resources>

Government of South Australia // *Right Bite Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy For SA Schools And Preschools*:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/healthy+communities/schools/right+bite+healthy+food+and+drink+supply+strategy+for+sa+schools+and+preschools>

Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia // *Schooling & Children's Education and Care*:

<https://allergyfacts.org.au/allergy-management/schooling-childcare>

National Allergy Council // *National Allergy Strategy Best Practice Guidelines for anaphylaxis prevention and management in children's education and care services*:

https://allergyaware.org.au/images/cec/NAS_Best_Practice_Guidelines_CEC_April_2022.pdf