

BALHARRY MEMORIAL CHILDREN'S CENTRE

HEALTHY EATING/NUTRITION POLICY



NQS link: Quality Area 2.2.1 Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child.

Philosophy

The Balharry Memorial Kindergarten and Rural Care centre believes that good nutrition is important for children's physical, intellectual and emotional development. We aim to ensure that snack and meal times will provide positive learning experiences for children. All children will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. The centre will support families to provide healthy meals and snacks for their children, appropriate to the duration and times of care.

1. Food Brought from home

Goal: To ensure children have food and drink that is safe, varied, nutritious and culturally diverse.

Procedure

- The policy is communicated to staff and parents through the enrolment and induction packages.
- Parents and caregivers are encouraged to supply healthy foods that fit within the **Right Bite** strategy for their children at preschool and rural care.
- The Centre will encourage meals to be nutritionally balanced, low in sugar and fat with no added salt, consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- At enrolment, parents will be provided (via email, upon request) with written guidelines on the amount and type of food to send. (As per **Start Right Eat Right and Right Bite** information sheets).
- Families will be asked to provide details of any special diet in relation to their children. Parents are to fill in a 'special diet form' (or indicate on the enrolment form) for non-medical diet requests eg for cultural or religious reasons or vegetarianism.

If the parent or caregiver suspects a child has food allergies or sensitivity/intolerance a 'modified diet care plan' completed by a doctor or dietitian, is required.

- Where children/staff or volunteers have food allergies confirmed by a medical practitioner, every attempt will be made to follow the medical recommendations and ensure it is communicated to those who care for the child, including relief staff and volunteers. (Refer to **Health Support Planning Document**.)
- If staff are concerned about the adequacy or appropriateness of food provided for a particular child, they should make their concerns known to the Director.
- Communication with families will be personal and non-threatening and parents will be provided with additional information about food needs for children, if required.
- Food will be prepared and stored hygienically. All perishables will be labeled and stored in the refrigerator until served. (See Policy on **Food Storage and Handling** and **Recommendations for storing, thawing and heating breast milk and formula**).
- All staff will have food safety and handling training. (Refer to **Food Safety and Hygiene Policy**.)
- Drinking water will be available at all times. For fluids brought from home should follow recommendations from the brochure **Fluids for 1-5 year olds March 2011**.
- On special occasions, families will be asked to provide healthy foods unless it is stated as a 'Red food' day. (**Right Bite strategy for preschools and schools**) All families are asked to speak with the Director in regards to bringing in birthday cakes, where possible alternatives are encouraged eg fruit platters, low sugar muffins etc.

2. Mealtimes and the learning environment

Goal: To provide a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating

Procedure

- Children will be supervised whilst eating at all times.
- Meal times will be treated as social occasions. 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 assisted where required but will be encouraged to be independent and to help themselves wherever appropriate.
- Staff will provide positive encouragement and role modelling
- Meal times are set to a regular schedule - morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack (rural care); but individual needs will be accommodated and children who are hungry between meals will be offered small nutritionally appropriate snacks.

- Children will be encouraged to try new food but will never be forced to eat. Their food likes and dislikes and the families' religious and cultural beliefs will always be respected.
- The provision or denial of food will never be used as a form of punishment.
- Precautions to prevent and treat choking are known by all staff and implemented. (Refer to ***Preventing Choking on Food Brochure.***)
- The garden will be used to provide opportunities to learn about growing, harvesting and preparing nutritious foods.

3. Families and nutrition

Goal: To communicate effectively with parents, carers and families about their child's food and nutrition

Procedure

- Written guidelines for children's nutrition needs and appropriate foods for their daily needs will be provided to families at enrolment.
- Recipes in the centre will be available to parents in newsletters or via the notice boards.
- Parents will be encouraged to provide recipes and ideas for cooking experiences.
- Parents and caregivers of infants and toddlers will be advised of their child's food intake each day. Parents and caregivers of older children will be advised as appropriate.
- Information on food and nutrition, age appropriate diet, food handling and storage will be displayed at the site and provided to families during the year.
- Staff support breastfeeding. If a child is not breastfed, support for appropriate formula/bottle feeding will be provided.

4. Curriculum

Goal: To provide a curriculum which encourages and assists children to develop their knowledge and skills about food and nutrition and to develop their sense of wellbeing?

Procedure

- Cooking may be part of the children's learning program. Children will be encouraged to have hands-on experience in cooking
- Children will have the opportunities to become familiar with foods from a range of cultures.
- Cooking experiences will be low in sugar and fat with no added salt.
- The importance of healthy food and food safety will be discussed with children as part of their daily program.
- Staff support and promote healthy eating and physical activity.
- Preschools can provide some RED category products a maximum of twice a term for special occasions. (Refer to ***Right Bite Food and Drink Spectrum.***)

Resources available as needed

Special diet form
Modified diet care plan
Thawing, warming and storing breast milk and formula
Introducing solids; Infant feeding advice
Preventing choking on food
Fluids for 1-5 year olds March 2011.

Sources

'Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia'
Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
Start Right Eat Right resource kit for Child Care centres (April 2008)
DECS Right Bite easy guide to Health Food and drink supply for SA schools and preschools (2007)
DECS Health Support planning in schools, preschools and child care services (2001)
Preventing choking on food – Centre for Health Promotion (August 2011)

All policies and procedures will be reviewed yearly by staff, families and Governing Council as per Policy Procedures and will be available to all staff, families and visitors.