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## **Food and Nutrition Policy**

### **Background**

Neta Kranz Kindergarten would like to promote good nutrition and healthy eating habits in a supportive environment. To help achieve this, a food and nutrition policy has been developed with the assistance of staff, the Governing Council and the Whyalla City Council OPAL program.

Early childhood is an important time for developing lifelong habits of good nutrition and healthy eating. Healthy eating has both short and long-term benefits for children. In the short term it contributes to healthy growth and development and aids in preventing childhood obesity and dental problems. In the long term, it minimises the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

### **Aim**

Neta Kranz Kindergarten will:

1. Promote healthy food and drinks to children.
2. Teach children about healthy eating and be positive role models.
3. Promote safe eating practices.

### **Strategies (to achieve the aim)**

1. Promote healthy food and drinks to children:
  - a. Provide information to parents regarding the Dietary Guidelines for Children and healthy lunchbox ideas/ healthy snacks.
  - b. Ensure that all cooking activities involve healthy foods.
  - c. Healthy food choices and non-food items should be considered for fundraisers. Limit fundraisers involving unhealthy/ non-core foods to once per year.
  - d. Ensure that water is freely available to children at all times. Parents/ carers are advised not to provide cordial/ juice or other sugar sweetened beverages.
2. Teach children about healthy eating and be positive role models:
  - a. Healthy eating is a focus in programming each year, including healthy cooking.
  - b. Staff will eat healthy food with the children to be positive role models.
  - c. If staff choose to eat unhealthy food, this must not be eaten in front of the children.
3. Promote safe eating practices:
  - a. Hygiene practices will be reinforced with children. (eg washing hands before eating)
  - b. Children's lunch boxes may be stored in the refrigerator.
  - c. Children must sit down when eating.
  - d. Neta Kranz Kindergarten is a nut-free centre, and take appropriate measures to ensure safety of children that have food allergies.

## **Shared Fruit Time**

Shared fruit time is part of every morning/ afternoon session at Neta Kranz Kindergarten. Parents are required to provide a piece of fruit or a vegetable to share at fruit time. All fruit/vegetables are collected and prepared to be shared as a group during snack time. This snack is limited to either fruit or vegetables for the following reasons:

- To provide children with important nutrients.
- To encourage children to try healthy foods and promote healthy eating habits.
- To encourage chewing to promote good oral motor development.
- Most children will eat fruit/ vegetables if they are in an environment where other children are eating these foods they may be more willing to eat these foods at Kindy then they are at home. Parents will be encouraged to provide fruit/ vegetables even if their child will not eat them at home. Feedback will be provided to parents regarding their children's eating habits at Kindy if this is the case. A referral can be made to a Dietician at the Whyalla Hospital and Health Service if fussy eating is a continued problem.

## **Lunch Care**

Parents and carers of children who are at the Kindergarten for lunch are encouraged to pack healthy lunches consisting of a variety of foods from the five food groups. A variety of foods from the five food groups will help children meet their nutrition requirements for the day.

Parents and carers will receive information brochures regarding appropriate and inappropriate lunch-box foods. (Information includes 'Get up & Grow Lunch box ideas' and Cancer Council 'Healthy Shoppers Guide').

As Neta Kranz Kindergarten encourages healthy food and drink choices, parents/ carers are advised not to pack food or drinks high in fat, sugar and salt in children's lunch boxes for the following reasons:

- Children will quite happily eat healthy food, however will often choose less healthy options if they are given the choice
- Children who do not have 'treats' in their lunch box may become envious of other children with treats (peer pressure)
- Healthy eating habits are easy to model if all children are doing the same thing
- High fat/ sugar/ salt foods contribute to short and long term health problems (previously mentioned) and are discouraged as everyday foods
- High fat/ sugar/ salt foods are generally low in important nutrients necessary for growth and development. If these foods are eaten at the expense of more nutrition foods, children will miss out on important vitamins and minerals.

Please note: this is a nut-free kindergarten due to the fact that some children can have a life-threatening reaction to nuts/ nut products (including peanut butter, muesli/ nut bars and other snack items) - please read the labels carefully.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

To make birthday celebrations inclusive for everyone, parents are asked to not provide cake for their child's birthday. This reinforces the healthy eating policy and does not exclude children who have food allergies/ restrictions. Birthdays will still be celebrated at the centre. Celebrations include a special time during 'mat-time' in which the child is a focus, a pretend cake with candles for the child to blow out and a birthday song.



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### Foods preferred under the Australian Guide for Healthy Eating

- Sandwiches
- Pita bread, flat bread, mountain bread rolled up with sandwich fillings
- Cracker biscuits: saladas, cruskits, vitawheats, saos, rice crackers or snacks and rice cakes (with less than 200mg salt/100g)
- Cheese: cottage cheese, cream cheese, fruit cheese, cheese sticks
- Dried fruits
- Tinned/container fruit in **natural** juice
- Fresh vegetables (raw, cooked, mashed, grated) i.e. capsicum, cucumber, mushrooms, snow peas, sprouts, cauliflower
- Small container of yoghurt, fruche
- Hard boiled eggs
- Cold meats: beef, lamb, pork, ham, chicken, fish (tuna, salmon)
- Vegetable based dips
- Cold pasta, baked beans

### Drinks

Water is supplied at all times and children are encouraged to drink during fruit times, therefore drink bottles are not required at kindergarten.

### Foods that do not meet the standards of the Australian Guide for Healthy Eating

Parents and carers are requested not to provide the following foods and drinks for lunch as they provide little goodness (vitamins and minerals).

Some foods are high in fat, while others are high in sugar and promote tooth decay. Other foods are soft and don't promote chewing for healthy teeth, gums and face muscles, which will affect a child's speech.

- Sugary sandwich spreads eg honey, jam, chocolate spread hundreds and thousands
- Pies, pasties and sausage rolls
- Chips (potato, corn, rice) including cornchips, twisties, burger rings etc
- Muesli bars
- Fruit bars, roll ups, fruit straps, fruit metres etc
- Chocolates
- Lollies
- Soft drink, cordials, flavoured mineral water
- Fruit juice, fruit box
- Flavoured milks
- Biscuits
- Cakes, buns, pastries
- Dunkaroos/Dig Its
- Nut Products of any kind, including peanut butter
- Flavoured custards

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