

Nutrition Policy

Link to NQA Principles National Regulations 78 – 80 , 168 Quality Area 2 Children's Health and Safety ; Standard 2.1.3; Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented. Standard 2.2.1 Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child. ; Standard 5.2.3; That food is being used appropriately and not as a reward or punishment.

References / Sources

- Guidelines for Food and Nutrition Policy in Child Care Centres: www.chdf.org.au
- Feeding and nutrition of infants and Young children: World Health Organisation 2000
- Australian Breast feeding Association Guidelines
- National Health and Medical Research Council (2003). Food for Health: Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia.

- SA Department of Health, Environmental Health Service, Food Policy and Programs Branch.

www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand : www.foodstandards.gov.au
- Planning Nutritious Child Care Centre Menus: Nutrition Checklist and Support Materials. 2nd Edition, 2005 : SA childcare and nutrition partnership 2005
- Preventing Choking on Food : Information for Families and carers; SA Health fact Sheet 2011

The policy is reviewed annually as part of the Food Safety audit.

CONTEXT:

Sturt Street Community Children's Centre is responsible for providing a safe, healthy, caring and nurturing environment for children from infancy to 5 years. We aim to provide adequate nutrition in addition to promoting and encouraging the establishment of good food habits early in life. Fostering healthy eating habits and activity patterns in childhood can reduce the prevalence of lifestyle diseases. We believe that well-nourished and active children are more likely to be alert, vigorous and happy.

As children in long day care can receive 50% of their food intake while in care, we believe we have a unique opportunity to develop positive food attitudes and practices through role modelling and teaching. Consequently, meal times are viewed as part of the children's daily learning experiences. Eating with other children helps promote self-reliance and social skills. It encourages children to acquire a greater knowledge of and liking for a variety of foods.

While the Centre recognises that parents have overall responsibility for their child's nutrition, the Centre believes it has an obligation to provide adequate nutrition proportionate to the time spent in care.

Information about nutrition is in the parent handbook. We advise all parents of our nutrition and food safety policy as part of the enrolment process – with the Director, Assistant Director and Team leaders ensuring that this advice is provided when discussing children's dietary and nutritional needs.

The Centre's Cook and the Director ensure that they are up to date with current nutritional and food safety information by attending training yearly and liaising with our food safety auditor at annual visits and in between visits as necessary. We read updates from The Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents and ensure these are available for all staff.

Aims:

- To meet the nutritional needs of the children whilst in care by ensuring that each child receives sufficient and adequate food to enable full participation in the day's activities.
- To encourage good eating habits by providing a nutritionally balanced diet based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children.
- To communicate effectively with families about their child's food and nutrition and encourage parents to participate in the nutrition program.
- To reflect our multicultural diversity in the menu by including foods and dishes from many cultures.
- To take account of children on special or different diets e.g. religious or medical reasons, or a vegetarian lifestyle.
- To serve attractive, well presented meals, in a relaxed and pleasant environment which encourages independence and the development of social skills.
- To maintain high levels of hygiene and food safety.
- To provide up-to-date resources and information on nutrition for parents, staff and children and to integrate nutrition education into the curriculum.
- To evaluate the nutrition program and food service regularly taking into consideration feedback from parents and children.
- To promote the benefits of breastfeeding by providing information about breastfeeding, facilities for nursing mothers and the recommended storage thawing and warming of breast milk.
- To provide a healthy, nutritious and varied menu for babies and children.
- To provide positive experiences for children to learn about nutrition, experience different foods and to be involved in food preparation and positive meal time routines

Menu Planning

We offer regular and frequent meals and snacks. The cook plans the menu, taking into account;

- the menu will provide at least 50% of the Recommended Dietary Intake for key nutrients.
- the availability and cost of different foods,
- the colour, flavour, texture and taste of foods to provide a wide variety of meals which are attractive to children,
- the dental health of the children by avoiding foods which are sugary and sticky and cause dental decay,
- the program and events planned for the week,
- water and milk are offered to drink,
- full-cream milk is used for children in the 0-3 room; low fat milk is used for all children in the preschool room.
- mono-unsaturated and Omega-3 fats are recommended and used,
- low salt foods are used and with no salt added to foods,
- foods containing Calcium and Iron are offered daily , and
- artificial colourings and flavours are avoided.

The menu is planned on a 2 week cycle incorporating; 4 red meat dishes; 1 fish dish; 3 chicken dish; 2 vegetarian meal high in protein i.e. beans



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Feeding Infants.

1. Breastfeeding is encouraged for all infants in the first 12 months. The Centre offers families advice about the benefits of breast feeding and also offers nursing mothers a quiet space to feed their child and facilities for the storage of breast milk.
2. We follow The Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents recommended procedures for the storing, thawing and warming of breast milk and infant formula.
3. It is recommended that solids be introduced to infants' diet from 6 months, beginning with smooth and pureed foods introducing one new food at a time. The Centre follows The Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents recommended schedule for introducing solids to infants.
4. It is particularly important to have good communication with families during the time when children are being introduced to solids. Educators will communicate to parents the types, amounts and textures of foods offered to children during care and will seek this information from parents as well to help maintain consistency between feeding practices at home and in care.

Food Safety

1. **Nut and Egg Allergies:** As many children have allergies to nuts and eggs in particular, nuts and eggs and nut and egg products are not used at the Centre. Parents are asked not to provide nuts or eggs for their children whilst at the Centre.
2. **Choking hazards:** Due to the risk of choking whole grapes and hard foods such as chunks of raw vegetables e.g. raw carrots are not offered to children. Raw apples and celery are not offered to children under 4 years. When offered to children apples are thinly sliced or grated. Fat on meat and sausage skin is removed, before or after cooking due to the increased risk of choking.

Food Storage and Preparation

1. Hygiene standards, as per legislation, are adhered to at all times. The kitchen, including food preparation areas are kept hygienically clean as per Centre's Food Safety Plan.
2. Regular audit and maintenance of facilities is undertaken to reduce the risk of hazards – see Food Safety Plan.
3. Fruit and vegetables are washed prior to being cut up and served to children or used in cooking.
4. Educators and children wash their hands before and after meals or when preparing food.
5. Tables are washed with soap and water before and after meals or food preparation.
6. Food scraps are collected and disposed of in a hygienic manner.
7. Staff who are preparing food will have their hair tied back neatly.
8. All staff will be trained in food hygiene and complete the Bug Busters program as a group or individually every 2 years. Educators to complete this program within one month of starting at the Centre.
9. Educators, especially the Cook, will be encouraged to access workshops reflecting new hygiene and food preparation legislation.

The Curriculum

Meal Times.

1. Meal times are considered part of the educational curriculum and overall learning environment of the Centre. Meal times are an enjoyable part of the children's daily learning experiences. Children can be involved in mealtime tasks.
2. During meals and snacks, children sit in groups with educators in a calm and pleasant atmosphere. Children are required to remain seated whilst eating and care is taken to ensure children are well-supervised.
3. Food Allergy cards for each room, clearly show pictures of the children with food allergies and their dietary needs. These are to be placed on each lunch table at meal times, and referred to by the supervising educator prior to serving any food. Children with food allergies will be served their food before the general meal is placed on the table.
4. A positive approach is to be used to support children to try a range of food. The focus needs to be on what children are eating rather than over emphasis on what they are not eating. The Centre will not offer food substitutes, unless by arrangement with families as part of an eating plan, as this does not encourage a nutritionally balanced diet, or model appropriate future lifestyle habits.
5. Children are offered more food once they have eaten the first serve, and educators will continue to provide food for the child until they indicate they do not want any more.
6. A late snack will be offered to the children that are at the Centre after 5pm.

Families and nutrition.

We encourage parents to:

- promote sensible eating habits with their children,
- be a part of the educational programming by joining cooking activities or special events
- provide the Cook with favourite recipes,
- give feedback on the menu which is displayed in each room,
- make the Centre aware of children's dietary requirements upon enrolment by filling out a special diet form. This is kept in the kitchen for the Cook's reference, with a copy in the child's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that any changes to special diets are provided in writing as soon as possible.
- Observe the nut and allergens awareness by not bringing in foods to the Centre containing these allergens.
- Children's eating habits and food intake are monitored by educators.
 - In the 0 - 3 room information re food intake and timing of meals is provided each day to parents on the daily information sheet.
 - In the Kindy/Preschool room any issues re food intake are reported as they arise through verbal feedback or a phone call or a written note in the child's note pocket.
 - Across all areas where there are concerns about children's eating, educators will make a time to meet with parents about the issue and where necessary document special arrangements. Parents are notified if their child has not eaten during the day, or of concerns about repeated patterns of eating that are detrimental to the child.



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Food experiences:

Children will have the opportunity to take part in experiences and learning about nutrition such as cooking experiences, picking herbs and vegetables from the school garden, reading posters, books and other texts that focus on nutrition and learning important information about nutrition and food safety through songs and rhymes.

Special Diets:

Information is sought from parents about their children's diets on enrolment.

1. **Medical reasons:** Children may require a special diet due to medical reasons – e.g. food allergies or food intolerances. We seek written information from a medical practitioner regarding allergies and intolerances using a health care plan.
2. **Non medical reasons:** Parents may request a special diet due to cultural/religious or lifestyle preferences. We ask parents to fill out a special diet form in these instances to enable us to document and plan for these preferences. Parents also have the option to provide meals and food from home.

We will provide for children's diets with alternative meals which will be clearly labelled with the child's name when delivered to the child care rooms. Where possible, menu planning will occur so that children's food allergies can be catered for through the regular meal i.e. for a child who attends once or twice per week it may be possible to ensure that all meals served on those days suit the child's needs. Food allergy sheets with children's photos and dietary needs are produced for each room to be referred to at each meal time. These are regularly updated and monitored at times when children are transferring between rooms and also when new children are enrolled.

Processes for ensuring dietary needs are followed.

1. At lunch time, before any food is served to table: the educator will seat children and check the food allergy sheet for the room.
2. Children with dietary needs will be served their special meals first before the main food bowls are placed on tables.
3. When a regular educator is absent and relief educators are working, the team leader will ensure that dietary needs are followed by allocating children with food allergies to a permanent educator over the lunch period; and ensuring that the relief educators are alert to the processes of using the food allergy sheet and checking with regular educators if they are at all uncertain.
4. When the Cook is absent, the Team leader will check that the relief cook understands food allergy provision for children on that day, and follows processes of individually labelling special meals and ensuring that these are ready to be served promptly at meal times.

Special Occasions

The Service understands that food is often used to signal celebration in many cultures, however parents are asked to consider nutrition and food safety by not providing any food to share for special occasions. Educators will provide other ways of celebrating birthdays that will help children feel special.



Fund raising and family events:

At our Centre we believe that all events and activities promoted through the Centre need to keep nutrition and food safety as a high priority. Therefore in planning for events healthy nutritious options will be provided.

Policy name:	Nutrition Policy – page 5 of 5
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