

Healthy food and nutrition policy

National Quality Standard Area 2 | Children's health and safety

Children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that safeguards and promotes their health, safety, and wellbeing.

At Trinity Gardens Children's Centre, we believe that working in partnership with families/carers and the community is necessary to achieve positive learning and development outcomes for children. We know the importance of establishing lifelong, healthy eating and drinking habits in young children and therefore we are committed to working with families and relevant family services, to establish these habits for the benefit of all our children.

Rationale

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for nutritious, food and beverages and dietary requirements (regulations 168). At Trinity Gardens Children's Centre, we promote safe, healthy eating habits in line with the Right Bite Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for South Australian Schools and Preschools and relates to the Department for Education (DfE) wellbeing strategy. Learning about healthy lifestyles in the children's everyday routines and experiences is part of the program at our site. A strong sense of health and wellbeing supported by good nutrition and an active lifestyle provides children with confidence, energy and optimism that contributes to their ability to concentrate, co-operate, and learn.

Research supports our belief that that early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong, healthy eating and drinking habits and can benefit the children in three ways:

1. Short term: maximises growth, development, activity levels and good health.
2. Long term: minimises the risk of diet related diseases later in life.
3. Good nutrition contributes to good health and wellbeing and this is vital for positive engagement in learning activities.

Therefore:

- staff at our centre model and encourage healthy eating behaviours
- food and drink are consumed in a safe, supportive environment for all children
- parents and caregivers are encouraged to supply healthy foods that fit within the Right Bite strategy for their children at preschool
- our program includes experiences that extend children and family/carer knowledge about healthy eating and drinking and its importance.

Curriculum

Our food and nutrition curriculum:

- Is consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia, and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.
- Includes activities that provide children with knowledge, attitudes and skills to make positive healthy food choices and learn about the variety of foods available for good health.
- Includes opportunities for children to develop practical food skills like preparing and cooking healthy food.
- integrates nutrition across the Early Years Learning Framework relating to the Developmental learning outcome: 'Children develop a sense of physical wellbeing' and the National Quality Standard – QA2 Children's Health and Safety
- Lunchtime is part of the curriculum and children are encouraged to talk about food and nutrition in a positive, relaxed, social, eating environment where safe, self-help skills are promoted.

The learning environment

Children at our centre:

- bring their own drink bottles of water and are encouraged to drink water regularly through the day. Children's bottles are replenished as necessary
- will eat fruit, vegetables and/or a healthy age appropriate snack alternative at snack time in the morning and at lunch at tables or picnic style on mats - (weather permitting)
- eat in a positive, social environment with staff who model healthy eating behaviours
- use the gardens to learn about and experience growing, harvesting and preparing nutritious foods

Our site:

- Understands and promotes the importance of breakfast and regular meals for children
- Teaches the importance of healthy meals and snacks as part of the curriculum
- Ensures healthy food choices are promoted and are culturally sensitive and inclusive
- Is a breastfeeding friendly site

Food supply

Families are asked to provide healthy food for their child to eat. Lunches are stored inside but are not refrigerated; therefore cool packs are required and are to be supplied by families.

Our centre has the following guidelines for families for food brought from home

Our centre:

- encourages healthy food and drink choices for children in line with the Right Bite strategy
- encourages food choices which are representative of the foods of the local community
- ensures healthy food choices are promoted and are culturally sensitive and inclusive
- ensures a healthy food supply for centre activities and events in line with the Right Bite strategy
- displays nutrition information and promotional materials about healthy eating

Morning/afternoon tea/Fruit and vegetable/Snack time

Generally, the less packaging in a lunch box the healthier it is for children. Fresh fruits, vegetables or a healthy age appropriate snack alternative is recommended for snack time. We ensure that fruit and foods are age appropriate, are of the size and texture to reduce choking (as per healthy eating guidelines). We understand that from time-to-time families may run out of fruit and we understand some children have very specific food preferences. A healthy sandwich (multigrain or wholemeal bread), with savoury filling, dried fruit, or plain unsalted crackers (e.g., Vitawheats) are acceptable.

This:

- o Provides children with important minerals and vitamins
- o Encourages a taste for healthy foods
- o Encourages healthy food and drink choices
- o Encourages chewing which promotes oral muscle development
- o Ensures healthy food choices are promoted and are culturally sensitive and inclusive

Foods unsuitable for fruit time

Items such as highly processed packaged foods which are high in sugar and salt such as - cakes/pastries, chips/corn chips, lollies, sweet biscuits, or any items containing nuts or nut products – this includes muesli bars are not suitable for fruit time. At times other foods may need to be excluded due to children's specific medical requirements. Families will be notified through the newsletter, Seesaw app and white board.

Lunch time

A variety of healthy, culturally appropriate choices are recommended to be sent in a lunch box. These could include sandwiches, flat bread, rolls with protein and vegetables, grains and other carbohydrates such as rice, cous cous, pasta, lentils, accompanied with vegetables, dumplings, salad etc.

Families are encouraged to use our traffic light guide at the end of this policy document to assist you in making good choices.

Food safety

Our site:

- o Promotes and teaches food safety to children during food learning/cooking activities
- o Promotes and encourages correct hand washing procedures with children
- o Does not reheat children's food
- o Checks that an adequate cool pack is included in lunch boxes.

Guidelines for Children with specific Dietary Requirements

We liaise with families to ensure a suitable food supply for children with health support plans that are related to food issues (e.g., allergies, dietary requirements, diabetes, chewing restrictions, cultural and religious etc.).

Special occasions and birthday guidelines

Birthdays are an important celebration in a child's life, and very exciting. Traditionally food is a significant part of these occasions. However food allergies and cultural beliefs can make the sharing of birthday cakes and other food, difficult and not all the children can be involved, some may even be at risk.

Where it is appropriate, in an effort to include all the children, we will celebrate birthdays in the following ways;

- A pretend birthday cake, with candles for the child to blow out, will be shared

- Staff and children will sing Happy Birthday to the child

Allergy aware

It is a requirement that all food brought to the centre does not contain nuts. At times, when there are children enrolled who have an anaphylactic allergy to nuts, eggs, and egg products in particular an alert is sent out to families, notification of the risk is made visible to staff and families through a specific notification, in newsletters and placed on appropriate information boards. High risk allergic reactions mean that there can be serious and even fatal consequences for these children if they come into contact with these ingredients. Parents and caregivers are asked to provide lunchbox foods that do not contain nuts or nut products.

Working with families, health services & industry

Our centre:

- Invites and encourages parents and caregivers to be involved in the review of our whole of site food and nutrition policy
- provides information to families and caregivers about the Right Bite Strategy through a variety of ways including:
 - newsletters
 - policy development/review
 - information on enrolment
 - pamphlet/poster displays

Supporting information

References/Resources

Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

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

Eat well SA Schools and Preschools – Healthy Eating Guidelines (2004)

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/teaching/projects-and-programs/eat-well-sa/developing-healthy-food-policies-schools-and-preschools>

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Part 4.2 – Children’s Health and Safety

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.2>

Early Years Learning Framework (2009)

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>

Food Standards Australia New Zealand

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

National Quality Standard 2.1 (2017)

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-2-childrens-health-and-safety>

Right Bite Easy Guide to Healthy Food and Drink Supply (2008)

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/>

ACECQA – Creating a positive mealtime routine

<https://acecqa.gov.au/newsletters/acecqa-newsletter-issue-2-2019>

Education and Care Services National Regulation 168(2)(a)(i)
Education and Care Services National Regulation 77, 78.

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Traffic Light Guide to Healthy Eating

Green Lunch should always come from this category

Sandwiches (cheese, meat, salad, vegemite, avocado)	Fresh or dried fruit
Vegetables- carrot, cucumber sticks	Baked beans
Cheese, unsalted crackers, crisp breads	Savoury muffins
Sushi, cold rolls	Rice and meat meal
Rice & pasta dishes	Homemade pizza

Amber Sometimes foods

Flavoured yoghurt	Cakes
Muesli Bars (No Nuts)	Sweet biscuits

Red Please do not send these foods with your child to the centre

Whole nuts, peanut butter, Nutella	Juices, Cordial & Soft drinks
Packet chips	Fast food
Lollies	
Chocolate	

Portion size	Environmental issues	Recognising needs
<p><u>Snack time</u> - Children need a small piece of fruit.</p> <p><u>Lunchtime</u> - You know your child best, so please consider what your child may eat. Providing more food than your child is likely to eat encourages waste. Remember a child's stomach is the size of their palm.</p>	<p>We want to give children positive environmental messages.</p> <p>We encourage reusable packaging or no packaging</p>	<p>If your child has specific needs or has been ill, please speak to the Educators.</p>

No Nuts, we are an allergy aware site