



Waikerie Children's Centre  
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## **NUTRITION & HEALTHY FOOD POLICY**

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### **Rationale**

Waikerie Children's Centre aims to provide children with food and drink that is safe, varied, nutritious and culturally diverse.

Good nutrition is of vital importance to young children. It helps them to grow, develop and maintain healthy bodies. Children's centres can contribute to the development of good eating habits by providing a variety of foods for children to taste and enjoy. These foods often become the basis for lifetime food choices. The Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents recommend that children eat a wide variety of nutritious foods, and that care is taken with children's food so that it is safe and hygienic.

For children in long day care, the food provided by the centre makes a significant contribution to their overall intake of energy, vitamins, and minerals. It is recommended that in each full day of care, each child is provided with at least 50% of their recommended daily intake for key nutrients and that these foods are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents and the guidelines of Nutritional Australia.

Our preschool service follows these guidelines but also promotes 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 DFE wellbeing strategy.

We believe that early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong, healthy eating 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.

Scheduled meals for childcare are:

- Morning Fruit
- Lunch
- Afternoon Snack
- Late Snack

Scheduled meals for preschool children are:

- Lunch

Preschool children also have a healthy morning and afternoon snack that is provided by parents in a sealed lunchbox.

### **Food supply for children using the preschool service (SNACK TIME)**

Within our preschool program we:

- encourage healthy food and drink choices for children in line with the Right Bite strategy
- ensure a healthy food supply for preschool activities and events in line with the Right Bite strategy

### **The following guidelines are for families that bring food from home for preschool children:**

Parents and carers are encouraged to supply fresh fruit and vegetables at fruit time to:

- Provide children with important minerals and vitamins
- Encourage a taste for healthy foods.
- Provide water only
- Encourage chewing which promotes oral muscle development
- Plain custards and cheese are also acceptable.
- Use the fridge provided when necessary

**FOODS UNSUITABLE FOR PRESCHOOL FRUIT TIME:** include packaged and processed foods (including rollups, muesli bars etc), cakes, sweets, flavoured custards or any product containing traces of nut.

Due to the risk of young children accessing other children's bags and due to some children having severe allergies, **it is strictly prohibited to bring any type of food (fresh, packaged, home-made or purchased) into the childcare rooms.** Children in childcare who are using the preschool service at different times throughout the day are able to store their food in the preschool room fridge. The only exception to this policy is in the provision of breastmilk / infant formula for babies, which must be provided by parents/caregivers.

Donation of any type of food to the Waikerie Children's Centre needs to be discussed with the Director or Cook before being brought to the Front Desk.

### **Waikerie Children's Centre will use the following guidelines to plan the menu and other food provision practices:**

- Food provided is consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia (NHMRC 2003) AND Nutritional Australia Guidelines.
- Compliance with Area 2 of National Quality Standard-'Children's Health and Safety'- A centre providing good quality care will

ensure written nutrition, health and safety policies are available to staff and parents.

- Complies with DFE regulations
- Menus aim to provide at least 50% of the recommended dietary intake for key nutrients for children, and will be reviewed every 6 months.
- Food provided is developmentally appropriate for children and encourages independent eating.
- Tap water is the main drink and is available at all times.
- Food provided takes into account special dietary needs.
- Guidelines on feeding children up to 12 months old are available.
- Food linked with a high risk of choking is minimised.
- Food is provided in a safe and hygienic manner.
- Staff will receive training in nutrition and food safety and food handling.
- Additional food is available to children who are hungry.
- Guidelines for foods for special occasions eg: birthdays, celebrations, theme days and fundraising are as follows:

## **Special Occasions**

Waikerie Children's Centre will adhere to the following guidelines when celebrating special occasions at the Centre.

Given our current climate of childhood obesity it is timely that the Centre formulates a policy on food focussed activities. This endeavour is not to reduce the importance of the occasion but rather serves to enhance celebration through alternate activities.

Guidelines for the provision of food for Special Occasions:

- Food will not be the focus for Special Occasions.
- Birthdays will be celebrated using a variety of non-food activities (eg placemat, special hat etc)
- Easter will be celebrated without the provision of chocolate Easter Eggs to children. Alternative activities will be provided.
- Christmas will be celebrated in various ways without focussing on the provision of food.
- Specific Cultural events will be recognised through non-food activities.

## **Educators and Food**

Waikerie Children's Centre Educators are free to make their own food choices when not in children's company. However, they will be required to model good food choices and behaviours when with children. Educators are to be aware of the medical conditions and allergies of each other when eating in the staff room and use good hand washing procedures before returning to work.

## Mealtimes and the eating environment

Waikerie Children's Centre aims to provide a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating.
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Mealtimes and the eating environment play a large role in the nutrition outcomes of children. It helps children:

- to learn and form good food habits which become eating habits for life
- to learn a positive attitude about food
- to try a variety of foods, and
- to learn family and community values and culturally inclusive perspectives.

When planning the Centre's mealtimes, consideration is also given to food safety as well as educator role modelling and family and cultural values and practices.

Waikerie Children's Centre will use the following strategies to provide a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating.

- Promote and encourage correct hand washing procedures with educators and children.
- Children will be supervised whilst eating at all times.
- Educators will sit with children and, where possible, eat and enjoy the same food.
- Educators will promote a positive, relaxed, social eating environment with children.
- Educators will promote positive discussion about the foods being served to children.
- Food will not be used as a punishment or reward, whether by its provision or denial.
- Educators will provide positive encouragement and role modelling.
- The food preferences of the children will be respected and menus will be adapted.
- Cultural food events and practices are celebrated.
- Educators discuss food from a variety of cultures.
- Educators talk about health and nutrition.
- Educators encourage self-help and, where necessary, assist children at mealtimes.
- Precautions to prevent and treat choking are known by all educators and implemented. Please refer to the factsheet "Preventing choking on food" that is attached to this policy. Children will be seated and supervised and food offered will be grated or chopped finely to prevent choking.

**Links to the National Quality Standards Area 2: Children's Health and Safety** focuses on safeguarding and promoting children's health and safety.

*Element 2.2:* Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.

*Element 2.2.1:* Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child.

## **Families and Nutrition**

Waikerie Children's Centre aims to communicate effectively with parents, carers and families about their child's food and nutrition.

The foods children are eating and how much food is eaten is of interest and sometimes concern for families. Educators are in a good position to provide parents/carers with general information about children's nutrition, or to identify and discuss issues that may benefit from referring the parent and child to a health professional (such as a GP, Paediatrician or Dietitian-Nutritionist) for further assessment and advice.

Waikerie Children's Centre will use the following strategies to communicate effectively with parents, carers and families about their child's food and nutrition.

- The weekly menu is displayed and published online, outlining the food and drinks to be provided daily, including snacks.
- Families' opinions are considered when planning the menu.
- Details of foods and serves eaten are provided to parents as appropriate (eg daily for parents of babies and younger children).
- Nutrition information is accessible to families, in appropriate languages where possible.
- Families receive information about the centre's food and nutrition policy prior to enrolment.
- Families have access to menus and recipes via newsletter and at anytime.
- Food intake by children will be recorded daily for parents.
- A positive relationship is encouraged with the centre's cook

**Links to National Quality Standards Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and community** focuses on developing relationships through communication, consultation and collaboration to achieve quality outcomes for children.

*Element 6.1.1:* There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families.

*Element 6.1.2:* Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions

*Element 6.2.1:* The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

**SOURCED FROM:**

Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia, NHMRC, 2003.

Australian Government Guidelines Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood.

Nutritional Australia

National Quality Standards

## Curriculum

Waikerie Children's Centre aims to teach children about food and nutrition.

Studies have shown that day care contributes to children's learning, behavioural development and school achievement.<sup>2</sup> Teaching children about food and nutrition makes an important contribution to lifetime food habits, to learning and to a healthy society.

Food and talking about food and good nutrition is a tool to develop:

- Literacy and numeracy skills (through eg: food stories, 'reading' recipes and packets, cooking, food songs)
- Fine and gross motor skills (through food preparation eg: shredding lettuce, cutting pastry, kneading, cooking and gardening)
- Social skills (eg: eating together, dramatic play such as 'shopping', feeding toys, food puppets, sharing food and cooking)
- Awareness of other cultures (eg: theme days, stories, recipes, food implements)
- Cognitive skills (eg: food related excursions, food in science, food cycles; food and the environment and gardening).

As children learn best through experiences, learning about food can be incorporated into many areas of the curriculum.

The Waikerie Children's Centre will use the following strategies to teach children about food and nutrition.

- Nutrition activities will be included in planned curriculum and spontaneous programming.
- Food activities will be sourced from a variety of cultures.
- Mealtimes will be treated as an opportunity for social learning.
- Children will be provided with practical food preparation experiences.
- Food safety and risk assessments will be discussed with children.
- Children will be taught mealtime behaviour such as appropriate social etiquettes, serving and clearing.
- The Centre's menu will be linked to programmed activities.

**Links to the National Quality Standard Area 1: Educational program and practice focuses on ensuring that the educational program and practice is stimulating and engaging and enhances children's learning and development.**

Standard 1.1: An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child's learning and development.

Standard 1.2: Educators and co-ordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child.

Within the standards lie elements that are used to ensure that children are learning about healthy food, lifestyle and nutrition.

**SOURCED FROM:**

<sup>2</sup> Zortich B, Roberts I, Oakley A (2003), Day Care for Pre-school Children, The Cochrane Library, Issue2, Oxford: Update Software Ltd

## Other dietary considerations

### Guidelines for procedures on special diets

In terms of special diets in childcare and preschool, the following indicators are required to meet NQS requirements for Quality Area 2: Element 2.2.1.

#### Indicators of meeting the standards of care:

- Children with special dietary needs have adequate and appropriate food provided either by the Centre or by the children's families.
- Where a child has special dietary needs for health or religious reasons, the Centre seeks detailed information for families and evidence of advice from an appropriate health professional.

Furthermore, DFE have a '**Health Support Planning Process**' recommended for schools, preschools and child care centres. The process recommends four steps.

- **Step 1: Before enrolment:** provision of general information to families and a supportive environment for children and students
- **Step 2: When a need is identified:** collection of individual health care information (and agreement about interim measures).
- **Step 3: The planning process:** negotiation of an individual health support plan.
- **Step 4: Monitoring and review:** ensuring health support plans are current and effective.

- As part of **Step 2**, DFE recommends the Centre asks the parent or guardian to provide written information from a medical professional (and if necessary, an emergency plan) for children

with special health needs. The care plan should document recommended emergency and routine health and personal care support for the child. For example, information about:

- *predictable emergency first aid associated with, for example, anaphylaxis (severe, life threatening allergy) or diabetes*
- *routine supervision for health care safety, such as supervision or medication*
- *personal care, including eating and drinking provisions.*
- Information about medical conditions (such as asthma, epilepsy and incontinence) must be provided by a doctor or, in some cases, a clinical nurse consultant working under the direction of a doctor.
- A therapist (for example, a Dietitian or a Speech Pathologist) will usually document information about therapeutic care such as special diet information and mealtime assistance.

See 'Health Support Planning for Schools, Preschools and Childcare Centres at the following website address: [www.chess.sa.edu.au/](http://www.chess.sa.edu.au/)

The following procedure, goals and strategies have been formulated in line with the NQS and DFE guidelines above.

### **Special Diets**

**When a parent or carer requests that special dietary needs be catered for their child the following steps will be taken:**

- Families will be informed about what dietary support can be provided before enrolment.
- The ability of the centre to cater for any special dietary needs will be at the centre's discretion. In some instances parents/carers may be asked to provide some/all of the food required for their child. Further discussion and negotiation may be required between the centre and the parents/carers, and should be mediated on a case by case basis to ensure that wherever possible their specific needs are accommodated. Where this is not possible, all other options will be explored to ensure they are not unfairly disadvantaged.
- If the child has individual dietary needs, the parent or carer will be asked to provide a **health care plan**, written by a relevant health professional eg: Doctor, Paediatrician, Specialist, and Dietitian. The care plan should include information (provided by a Doctor/Paediatrician/Specialist) about medical conditions and any recommended emergency procedures, as well as information and nutrition intervention required (provided by a Dietitian), so that the centre cook can accurately cater for the special dietary needs.
- Special diets for cultural, health preferences or religious reasons will be discussed and negotiated with parents/carers to the best of the centre's ability. A "Special Diet" form, obtainable on enrolment, must be completed before commencing care.



- The health and safety of the child is foremost and any concerns about the child's dietary intake will be discussed with parents/carers.

**When a parent or carer suspects that a child has a food allergy or food sensitivity (food intolerance) the following steps will be taken:**

- A food allergy should be confirmed by a specialist (eg Paediatrician or Immunologist) or a General Practitioner. A food intolerance should be confirmed by a Paediatrician, Immunologist or Dietitian. The specialist should provide detailed information about the allergy or sensitivity and details of any emergency procedure required.
- A Dietitian's input is strongly recommended. A Dietitian can provide information about foods that may be eaten and foods to avoid for the period of time that the special diet is needed. Parents or carers are to obtain detailed written information on the diet from a Dietitian. Either a "Modified Diet Care Plan" or "Special Diet" form, both obtainable from the Centre, must be completed and returned prior to the child commencing care.
- Negotiate with parents what food they are prepared to provide for their child while the child is on a special diet, and what the Centre will provide. Parents have a role to keep staff informed of any dietary changes.
- Check how long the child will be on the special diet.
- Regularly check with the parents to see if the child still requires the special diet. Review of a Special Diet will occur every 6 months with forms reissued to parents for any updates.
- Dietary restrictions for children with true food allergies must be taken seriously as ingestion of allergenic foods can be life threatening.
- Waikerie Children's Centre is a nut-free Centre.
- All staff will be informed of any emergency procedure necessary for the child, and display this procedure when appropriate.

**Parents or staff can be directed to obtain further information about the management of food allergy or food sensitivity.**

- Nutrition Department (Children, Youth and Women's Health Service) Phone: (08) 8161 7233
- Community or private Dietitian/Nutritionist
- Local Doctor
- Allergy specialist eg: Immunologist or Paediatrician
- Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Allergy Unit. Phone (02) 9515-8244  
Email: [allergy@email.cs.nsw.gov.au](mailto:allergy@email.cs.nsw.gov.au)

## **Other dietary considerations**

### **Guidelines for procedures on infant feeding**

Adopting the following guidelines means our centre will be using best nutritional and food safety practices and advice as outlined by:

- Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia (National Health & Medical Research Council, 2003).
- Infant Feeding Guidelines for health Workers (National Health & Medical Research Council, 2003).  
(NB Both of the above references are incorporated in the one document at:  
<http://www7.health.gov.au/nhmrc/publications/files/n34.pdf>
- Child and Youth Health [www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com)
- Australian Breastfeeding Association [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)
- Feeding and nutrition of Infants and Young Children (World Health Organisation, 2000).

**Waikerie Children's Centre actively supports breast feeding mothers to comfortably feed their infant on the sofa in the Nursery. Waikerie Children's Centre supports the provision of breast milk to infants and will follow the recommended procedures for storing, thawing and warming of breast milk and infant formula.**

### **Storing Breast milk**

- Expressed breast milk (into a clean sterile container) should be name and date labelled (date of expression) and refrigerated at 4°C or lower at the back of the fridge where it is coldest. Breast milk that will not be used within two days should be frozen.
- **Tips for parents:** Breast milk should be transported to child care in an esky with a freezer brick, and placed immediately in the back of the refrigerator upon arrival (or in the freezer if still frozen and to remain so).

### **Frozen Breast milk**

- Frozen breast milk can be kept for 2 weeks in the freezer compartment of a one door refrigerator, or 3 months in a freezer section of a fridge with separate door.
- If some milk has thawed it should be used within 24 hours. Do not refreeze it.
- **Tips for parents:** Breast milk should be transported to child care in an esky with a freezer brick, and placed immediately in the back of the refrigerator upon arrival (or in the freezer if still frozen and to remain so).

### **Thawing frozen Breast milk**

- Breast milk can be thawed in the fridge or at room temperature in a warm water bath.
- Breast milk that has been thawed in the fridge but not warmed should be used within 24 hours, and should not be refrozen.
- Breast milk that has been thawed outside the fridge in warm water can be used immediately, or stored in the fridge for up to 4 hours

### **Warming Breast milk**

- Breast milk should NEVER be microwaved. It destroys the immunological properties in the breast milk.
- Breast milk that has been thawed outside the fridge in warm water can be used immediately, or stored in the fridge for up to 4 hours.
- If the baby has begun feeding, any unused breast milk should be discarded.

### Storing Infant Formula

- Infant formula should be name and date labelled and stored immediately in the centre at the back part of the fridge where it is coldest (not in the fridge door where it is warmer).
- Discard the contents of *partially used* bottles after 1 hour. Reusing half empty bottles is risky once they have been heated and sucked on.
- Throw out any *unused* formula after 24 hours
- **Tips for parents:** the safest way to transport formula is to take the cooled, boiled water and the powdered formula in separate containers and mix them when needed. When it is necessary to transport prepared formula (or expressed breast milk) it must be icy cold when leaving home and be carried in an insulated pack to keep it cold.

### Warming Infant Formula

- Microwaving infant formula is not recommended by the NHMRC for safety reasons; they do not heat the milk evenly and may create hot spots in the milk, which could burn the baby's mouth.
- Bottle warmers can be used, but they must have a thermostat control. Bottles should only be warmed in this way for *less than 10 minutes*.
- Waikerie Children's Centre will not warm either breast milk or infant formula in a microwave, bottle warmers only will be used.

### **Recommended schedule for introducing solids**

As part of the nutrition and health policy the Waikerie Children's Centre's menu will follow the recommended schedule for introducing solids. These are guidelines only and will be discussed with parents considering the child's needs.

Menu development guide	
Age and Texture	Suitable Foods
Birth – 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breast milk/infant formula provides all the nutrition a baby needs for about the first 6 months of life</li> </ul>
<b>'First tastes'</b> <b>6 months to 7 months</b> (If needed earlier, can offer solids between 4-6 months, but NOT BEFORE 4 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breast milk/infant formula</li> <li>• Introduce first solids:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First introduce baby rice cereal (iron enriched)</li> <li>- Then fruits and vegetables</li> <li>- Then pureed, well-cooked lean meat, poultry and *fish, 'Baby' Yoghurts and *custard.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>*Cow's milk in small amounts in the preparation</p>

Smooth and pureed foods.	of foods
<p><b>'Learning to chew and self-feeder'</b></p> <p>Mashed or chopped food progressing to finger food</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breast milk/infant formula as the main drink</li> <li>• Fruits, vegetables and legumes</li> <li>• Well-cooked lean meat, poultry and *fish.</li> <li>• *Yoghurt with soft lumps, *custard, *cheeses.</li> <li>• Other cereals (eg: wheat, oats), bread, pasta</li> <li>• *Eggs – (well cooked)</li> </ul>
<p><b>'Centre menu with some changes'</b></p> <p>1-2 years</p>	<p>Offer a wide variety of foods from the centre menu, some changes in texture or flavour may be needed. Use the <u>Nutrition Checklist</u> as a guide to food variety but quantities may differ to younger age groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breast milk and/or full cream cows milk as a drink</li> <li>• Water and no more than one small cup of diluted fruit juice from a cup, not a bottle.</li> </ul>

\*Parents may seek dietetic advice regarding the timing of the introduction of eggs, nuts, cow's milk/dairy products, fish and soy if there is a strong family history of allergy.

#### **SOURCED FROM:**

Information adapted from World Health Organisation 2000, 'Feeding and nutrition of infants and younger children' and the Child and Youth Health website: [www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com)

Nutrition Checklist from 'Planning Nutritious Child Care Centre Menus: Nutrition Checklist and Support Materials' (second edition), 2005 by the South Australian Child Care Nutrition Partnership; see website: <http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/childcarenutrition>.

### **Guidelines for fluids for babies and children at the centre**

As part of the nutrition and health policy the Waikerie Children's Centre's will provide a list of suitable and unsuitable fluids for babies (birth – 1 year old) while in care.

Cow's milk is not recommended for babies less than 12 months old because it is a poor source of iron and predisposes infants to iron deficiency. It also has high levels of protein, sodium, potassium and calcium, which have a high renal solute load.

#### **Allowed fluids for babies (birth to 12 months)**

- Breast milk and infant formula
- Boiled water

#### **Suitable fluids for 1 year olds**

- Breast milk
- Cows' milk (full cream)
- Water
- Diluted juice (limit juice to half a cup per day, diluted 1:4)
- (Soy and vegetarian beverages eg: rice milk is not recommended. Only soy formula can be used in specific situations).

#### **Suitable fluids for 2-5 year olds**

- Reduced fat milk (1.0-2.5% fat)
- Calcium fortified soy milk
- Water
- Diluted juice (limit juice to half a cup per day, diluted 1:4)

#### Unsuitable fluids for children (all ages)

- Soft drinks
- Cordials
- Sweet syrups eg: Ribena, Delrosa
- Vegetable juices
- Tea, Coffee, Herbal teas
- Full strength juice (should be limited to half a cup of juice per day, diluted 1:4)
- Sweetened milk

#### Sourced From:

- NHMRC (2003). Food for health. Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia. Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.
- Norberg, M & Young, R> 1997. Caring for Infants: Food and Nutrition for 0-1 year olds in Long Day Care Centres. Central Sydney Area Health Division of Population Health and the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services.
- Nutrition Checklist from 'Planning Nutritious Child Care Centre menus: Nutrition Checklist and Support Materials' (second edition), 2005 by the South Australian Child Care Nutrition Partnership; see website <http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/childcarenutrition>.
- World health organisation (2000) Feeding and nutrition of infants and young children.
- Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers Summary (2004, WA Department of Health and SA Department of Human Services).

## Policy Review and Availability

Waikerie Children's Centre Nutrition and Health Policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Policy and Planning Sub-Committee.

This Nutrition and Health Policy is available to all educators, families and the community at all times in the folder in the reception area, staff induction, website and upon request.

The minimum training requirements for staff in nutrition, food safety and hygiene include attendance at Nutritional Australia Guidelines for the Cook and participation in Food Safe, Food Handler Training Program for all educators. All new staff will undertake appropriate training within one month of commencing employment.

Review date: August 2020

Next Review: August, 2022