

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

At Unley Community Childcare Centre, we are committed to providing a healthy, nutritious and varied menu for babies and children; a positive, safe eating environment; teaching children about food and nutrition; and communicating with families about children's nutrition and meeting dietary considerations.

Rational

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, cooperate and learn. Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. Education and care settings provide many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from Educators and other children (Early Years Learning Framework).

Strategy

PROVISION OF A HEALTH NUTRITIOUS MENU

- Food provided will be consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia (NHMRC) and will provide at least 50% of the Recommended Daily Intake of key nutrients.
- Menu planning will take into account the dietary, cultural, religious and health needs of children at the Centre, with an emphasis on introducing children to multicultural meals.
- The Centre will provide a main meal and two other meals. Morning fruit snack is provided by parents who contribute one whole piece of fruit that is then prepared by our chef in the kitchen. (Pre-cut fruit cannot be accepted as the Centre needs to know that the preparation followed correct hygiene standards).
- The Centre provides lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack, all accompanied by water.
- Information on what each child has eaten is recorded by the educators daily on an information whiteboard located in each room. The Centre will also provide children with healthy fluids such as milk and water which will be offered with meals and throughout the day.
- Each room has daily access to water (self-help). Full cream milk will be provided to children from 12 months (once it has been introduced at home). Rice milk will be provided for children with dairy intolerances/allergies.
- The Centre's menu is displayed on the wall next to the kitchen
- The meals will be low in salt and sugars and minimise the use of colourings and preservatives.
- Due to current information on the prevention of choking, nuts, raw carrot, apples, popcorn, corn chips, raw celery and hard chunks of meat, (meat is to be cut into small pieces) will not be served to children. Depending on a child's age and chewing ability e.g. under two years of age, we will ensure that grapes, prunes and apricots are cut in half. Even though raw apple can be served to children over 4 years of age we will not do so as we have a mixed age group.

- The menu is planned and prepared by our cook. It is based on recommendations by the Start Right Eat Right Program and although it is now defunct, it still provides good recommendations of the nutritional requirements for babies and young children. The menu is discussed so that any concerns and/or ideas can be voiced before each menu cycle begins.
- All employees have training in hygiene and food safety on a yearly basis.

FEEDING PRACTICES

Meals are made age appropriate for babies less than one year. Baby's 'first tastes' (smooth and pureed foods) will be around 6 months of age, followed by mashed or chopped food and then progressing to finger food around 7-12 months of age. From 12 months of age, when babies have developed their eating patterns, they are encouraged to try meals from the daily menu. Independent eating and drinking will also be encouraged, for example using a spoon from about 12 months, a sip cup from about 6 months and drinking from a cup at about 21 months.

The Centre promotes breast milk as the first food for babies from 0-6 months and we encourage mothers to breast feed at the Centre. We offer support and information when parents return to work (see Breast Feeding Policy). If expressed breast milk is provided, we will follow the correct guidelines on storage, thawing and warming. Correct guidelines for the storage and warming of infant formula will also be followed. If a child requires infant formula during the day, it will be necessary for parents to supply the required number of bottles, already made up with boiled water and the formula in a separate formula container with the Child's name clearly labelled. Expressed breast milk also needs to be clearly labelled with the name and date. For health and safety reasons, children will be discouraged from drinking while walking and/or resting for sleep.

MEAL TIME AND THE EATING ENVIRONMENT

We will aim to make meal times a pleasant experience for all children by encouraging positive eating habits, role modelling by Educators, respecting children's food preferences and not forcing them to eat if they do not wish to. We will celebrate cultural events and practices, supervise and sit with the children during meal times, and where possible eat and enjoy the same food. By doing this the children are educated about healthy choices. Children will be seated while eating and are encouraged to serve themselves and clear away their own dishes where appropriate. Food will not be used as a reward or punishment.

SPECIAL DIETS

Requests for individual dietary needs, cultural or religious reasons will be catered for as much as possible. Families will be asked on enrolment to fill out a modified diet care plan if the child has a known food intolerance or if the family has a request that I could not consume certain foods. If the child has an individual food allergy the family will be required to provide an ASCIA action plan for allergic reactions or epi pen, filled out by a doctor or nutritionist which will include information about medical conditions and any recommended emergency procedures (Risk Management Plan). These forms must be completed before

commencing care at the Centre. Along with these forms the required medication must be provided with the required chemist label stating the Child's name, DOB and required dosage. A child who develops these conditions while at the centre will be asked to keep their child at home until forms are completed. Communication between educators and the cook is essential to determine what alternatives will be used for that child's meal.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Food allergy occurs most often in infants, toddlers and young children. Many children outgrow the allergy. The most common food allergies are to: peanuts, cow's milk, egg, tree nuts, soy, sesame seeds, wheat, shellfish and fish.

When a person has an allergy, they may not react to the first exposure but only to subsequent exposures. Initial exposure sensitises the body causing the production of subsequent antibodies. When the food next enters the body, the antibodies recognise the protein and the body releases certain chemicals causing allergic reaction. A reaction can be mild, moderate or severe and will occur every time, even in tiny amounts, there is exposure to the allergen. A severe allergic reaction, known as anaphylaxis, can be life threatening and the person must have lifesaving adrenaline to administer.

FOOD INTOLERANCES

Food allergies should not be confused with food intolerance. Food intolerance is when a person can tolerate a small amount of the food or tolerate the food over a minimum amount of days before experiencing unpleasant or irritating symptoms. Intolerance is a reaction to a build-up of the naturally occurring chemicals or additives in foods.

RISK MINIMISATION

Risk minimisation practices will be carried out to ensure that the centre is to the best of its ability is providing an environment that will not trigger an anaphylactic reaction in a child. We will do this by ensuring:

- The centre is nut aware and excludes all nut products from the centre by educating employees and families.
- Employees are aware of the possibility of accidental contamination of foods with allergens from other foods through the preparation, cooking and use of serving utensils that are not separated or washed thoroughly after use can result in the next dish containing the allergen.
- Employees discretely supervise and monitor the children during eating times always referring to the food allergy chart.
- All children with allergies and intolerances are offered food similar to other children.
- Employees do not offer foods to a child with an allergy where the ingredients are unknown. Where possible the employee will speak to the cook about unknown ingredients.
- Update allergy charts monthly and notify the cook of changes i.e. of room rotation.

- Ensure all employees, students and volunteers are made aware of the children with food allergies.

If a child no longer needs to be on a special diet

The child will continue with the special diet until the Centre receives a signed and dated letter from a doctor or parent/guardian stating that the child no longer needs to be on a special diet.

Food from Home

Families can supply cakes or treats for special occasions, such as children's birthdays or last day in care but an ingredient list must be supplied and the food must be sent home with the children and not consumed at the centre. To celebrate children's birthday's families can supply party hats, party plates, a fun little gift for all the children for example stickers and pencils.

Dental Care

Through providing a nutritious menu, Unley Community Childcare Centre promotes high standards in dental care. The foods we offer are recommended by the Australian Dental Association and Women's and Children's Hospital. Our dental plan works in conjunction with our nutrition policy.

Due to the difficulties and hygiene concern regarding the storage and daily use of toothbrushes for children, this Centre is not comfortable in including this activity in our program. We have researched the issue with the Australian Dental Association and the Women's and Children's Hospital and their strong recommendations support our policy.

Apart from the menu itself, the other activities we do to support the healthy development of children's teeth are to offer water throughout the day and especially encouraging children to have water after the completion of their main meal. Cheese may also be offered at snack times to coat the teeth with calcium, which assists in the development of healthy teeth. The centre will actively seek, maintain and provide families and their children with current oral health and nutrition resources from recognised authorities.

We will encourage and support families in seeking dental care by providing leaflets and pamphlets in the foyer.

We keep in contact with the SA Dental Service and they sometimes come out to visit the children at the centre. Educators will involve the children in educational experiences about dental care and hygiene.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The policy is reviewed approx. every 12 months, with input from families, management committee and employees and can be found in the policy folder in the office and hallway. Updates on nutrition are passed onto employees during meetings or uploaded to the centres share drive. Information is passed onto families either verbally, via Storypark, email or the centre newsletter.

If families are concerned about their child's eating at the centre we will discuss this with families to resolve concerns.

Legislative Requirements

Food Safety Standards for Australia 2001
Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991
Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018
South Australia
Food Act 2001
Food Regulations 2002

Sources

The Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council Department of Health and Ageing
Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing Get Up and Grow Healthy eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood
Start Right Eat Right
Food Act 2001
Food Regulations 2002
Work Health and Safety Act 2012
Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012
Food Safety Standards for Australia 2001
Early Years Learning Framework
Education & Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018
Australian Dental Association
Child and Youth Health
Women's and Children's Hospital

NQS

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| QA2 | 2.1 | Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted. |
| | 2.1.3 | Health eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child. |

National Regulations

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| Reg | 77 | Health, hygiene and safe food practices |
| | 78 | Food and beverages |
| | 79 | Service providing food and beverages |
| | 80 | Weekly menu |
| | 90 | Medical conditions policy |
| | 91 | Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents |

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| | 162 | Health information to be kept in enrolment record |
| | 168 | Education and care service must have policies and procedures |

EYLF

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| LO3 | Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing. |
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Date Reviewed: Feb 2020

Next Review Date: Feb 2021

| Revision Date | Summary of Changes |
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| 03/2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated in line with the National Quality Framework Feb 2018 Updated in line with Education and Care Services National Regulation Reviewed in line with the EYLF Additional information regarding Related Policies Reviewed in line with professional best practice Reviewed in line with Unley CCC practices and procedures |
| 28/2/20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated in line with centre practices Updated to include correct dietary forms and the need for prescribe medication to be kept on site |