

## Sturt St Early Learning Centre

### Nutrition Policy

**Link to CCQA Principles** Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) Quality Practices Guide (2005) – Principle 6.1 and 6.2

#### References / Sources

- Guidelines for Food and Nutrition Policy in Child Care Centres: [www.chdf.org.au](http://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](http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs)
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand : [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Planning Nutritious Child Care Centre Menus: Nutrition Checklist and Support Materials. 2nd Edition, 2005 : SA childcare and nutrition partnership 2005

#### INTRODUCTION:

Sturt Street Community Early Learning Centre (The Service) is responsible for providing a safe, healthy, caring and nurturing environment for children from infancy to 5 years. We aim to not only provide adequate nutrition but also to promote and encourage 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. The Service believes 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, the Service believes 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 Service recognises that parents have overall responsibility for their child's nutrition, the Service believes it has an obligation to provide adequate nutrition proportionate to the time spent in care.

The nutrition policy is placed into the information package that parents receive on enrolling their children in the centre. The policy is reviewed regularly and kept up to date with any new information regarding nutrition for babies, toddlers or children.

This nutrition policy will be displayed in the kitchen area, which is open and can be easily viewed by staff and parents/caregivers. This policy will also be put into the policy folders which are available for viewing in every room as well as the staff room. It is the leadership's responsibility to ensure that information is kept current and up to date, and that reliable sources have been sourced.

To ensure that the centre is kept informed of current nutritional information the centre's cook and Director have attended the Start Right Eat Right training course.

#### 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 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.

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- 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 communicate with families about their children's nutrition, and their likes and dislikes of food.

### **Menu Planning**

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

- the nutritional needs outlined in the Start Right / Eat Right Program,
- 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 under 18 months; low fat milk and dairy products are used for all children over 18 months,
- mono-unsaturated and Omega-3 fats are recommended and used,
- low salt foods are used and no salt is added to foods,
- foods containing Calcium and Iron are offered daily , and
- artificial colourings are flavours are avoided.

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

### **Food Safety**

1. **Nut Allergies:** As many children have allergies to nuts in particular, nuts and nut products are not used in the Service. Parents are asked not to provide nuts for their children whilst at the centre. Please refer to nut and allergens awareness policy.
2. **Choking hazards:** Due to the risk of choking whole grapes and hard foods such as chunks of raw vegetables eg carrots are not offered to children. Raw apples and celery are not offered to children 4 years and under Sultanas are not offered to children under 2 due to the risk of choking or inhalation. Fat on meat is removed also, before or after cooking due to the increased risk of choking.

### **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 – eg food allergies or food intolerances. We seek written information from a medical practitioner regarding allergies and intolerances using a health care plan, (Appendix 1)
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. (Appendix 2)

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## **Feeding Infants.**

1. Breastfeeding is encouraged for all infants in the first 12 months. The Service 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 Start Right Eat Right recommended procedures for the storing, thawing and warming of breast milk and infant formula.  
For a copy of these guidelines please refer to (appendix 3)
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 Service follows the Start Right Eat Right recommended schedule for introducing solids to infants.
3. It is particularly important to have good communication with families during the time when children are being introduced to solids. Staff 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.

## **Meal Times.**

1. Meal times are considered part of the educational curriculum and overall learning environment of the Service. 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 staff 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. 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. All children are encouraged to try their main meal before being offered bread. The Service will not offer food substitutes as this does not encourage a nutritionally balanced diet, or model appropriate future lifestyle habits.
4. Children are offered more food once they have eaten the first serve, and staff will continue to provide food for the child until they indicate they do not want any more.
5. A late snack will be offered to the children that are at the centre after 5pm.
6. Children's eating habits are observed and reported to parents when they arrive to pick up their child. If there are any concerns throughout the day a phone call is made to parents to discuss concern. The child's daily food intake is recorded, on the daily sheet for the under 2's room and on the white board for the over 2's room.

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 Service aware of any dietary requirements upon enrolment, and
- observe the nut and allergens awareness policy.

## **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 when providing any food to share for special occasions. If birthday cakes are provided, simple and wholesome cakes with moderate sugar levels are recommended – for instance banana, apple and carrot or plain sponge cakes. A list of ingredients must accompany the cake. Cakes containing alcohol, coffee or nuts will not be served to children. Suitable alternative foods to cake are low fat ice cream served in a plain cone, fruit platter or dips and crackers.

Centre staff will provide other ways of celebrating birthdays that will help children feel special.

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## 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 see Food Safety Plan (Appendix 3).
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. Staff 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 and covered with a hat or bandana.
8. All staff will be trained in food hygiene and complete the Bug Busters program as a group or individually. Questionnaire's are given to staff to assess their knowledge and understanding of food handling and hygiene. Staff complete this program within two months of starting at the centre.
9. Staff, especially the cook, will be encouraged to access workshops reflecting new hygiene and food preparation legislation.

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This policy will be reviewed every two years.

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