

**FOOD, NUTRITION & BEVERAGES, DIETARY REQUIREMENTS POLICY Version 1.15**

**Regulation 168 (2) (a) (i)**

**Goal:** *To provide children with food and drink that is safe, varied, nutritious and culturally diverse.*

Good nutrition and good eating habits are of great importance to young children, it helps them to grow, develop and maintain healthy bodies. The food provided by the Children's Centre makes a significant contribution to children's 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 Department of Health and Ageing guidelines.

Food provided is developmentally appropriate for children and encourages independent eating. Filtered water is the main drink and available at all times. Cooled boiled water is provided for babies. Food is provided in a safe and hygienic manner at the Centre and takes in to account special dietary needs and cultural considerations. Educators and Cooks will participate in food safety and food handling training through the Bug Busters course or I'm Alert training and this will be updated every two years. The Children's Centre does not permit families to bring food to the Centre unless discussed with an Educator and / or the Cook.

Food is prepared with no added salt, limited sugar and the addition of fats is kept to a minimum.

Precautions to prevent and treat choking are taken. It is known by all Educators and implemented that children are to be seated whilst eating and Educators do not give food to children who are laughing or crying. Food linked with a high risk of choking is minimised by:

1. Cutting meat into small pieces and removing excess fat; grating, cooking or mashing all hard fruits and vegetables
2. Ensuring that we do **NOT** give foods that have small hard pieces like celery, apple or carrot unless grated, very finely sliced or cooked.
3. Ensuring that we do **NOT** give nuts, corn chips or whole grapes.

The Children's Centre will provide a main lunch time meal for the children who are in the Children's Centre long day care program and Between Session care program for Preschool children. Morning and afternoon snacks include a variety of fruit, vegetables, dips, crackers and cheese, accompanied by water. Breakfast options are available before 7.45 am.

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|--|----------|
| Breakfast with milk and / or water <b>before</b> | 7.45 am  |
| Morning snack with water                         | 9.30 am  |
| Lunch with bread, milk and water                 | 11.30 am |
| Preschool afternoon snack                        | 2.00 pm  |
| Long Day Care afternoon snack with water         | 2.30 pm  |
| Raisin bread or other snack                      | 4.30 pm  |

The main menu is planned by our Cook and is based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Each fortnight the menu will include four red meat dishes, (beef and lamb), three white meats (fish, pork and chicken), four serves of high fibre wholemeal bread and at least two vegetarian dishes. Each day will include two dairy serves and at least two serves of fruit, one serve of vegetables, one meat or alternative, two bread and cereal serves and not more than 1.5 serves of fats & oils.

**MEALTIME AND EATING ENVIRONMENT**

**Goal:** *To provide a safe, supportive and social environment in which children enjoy eating.*

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 and to learn family and community values and culturally inclusive perspectives.

Other considerations:

- Children will be supervised whilst eating at all times and remain seated.
- **To reduce potential choking hazards, children are not permitted to leave the Centre with food in their mouth or hands.**

- When possible, Educators will sit with children and eat the same food.
- Educators will promote a positive, relaxed, social eating environment with children.
- Educators promote positive discussion about the foods being served to children.
- Educators will provide positive encouragement and role modelling.
- Educators will discuss food from a variety of cultures and celebrate food events and practices from a variety of cultures.
- Educators will talk about health and nutrition.
- Educators will encourage self-help and where necessary, assist children at meal / snack times.
- Educators will provide food to children and the child will choose what they eat and how much.

### **FAMILIES AND NUTRITION**

**Goal:** *To communicate effectively with parents and carers about their child's food and nutrition.*

- The menu works on a 4 week rotation and is reviewed every 3 months by the Cook.
- The menu is displayed near the kitchen and at the Preschool sign in desk to inform parents and carers about the food, drinks and snacks offered each day.
- Parents are informed about how much their child has eaten.
- Children's and families' opinions are considered when planning the menu.
- Families have access to menus and recipes.
- A positive relationship between families, children and the Children's Centre Cook is encouraged and new recipes are always welcome.

### **CURRICULUM**

**Goal:** *To teach children about food and nutrition.*

- Nutrition activities are included within the planned curriculum and in spontaneous experiences.
- Food activities are sourced from a variety of cultures.
- Mealtimes are treated as a learning opportunity.
- Children are provided with practical food preparation experiences, eg growing and harvesting vegetables, buttering bread, chopping vegetables from time to time, or making other healthy snacks.
- Food safety and handling is discussed with children.
- Children are taught mealtime behaviour such as serving food, clearing their bowls, pouring drinks and table manners.
- The menu may be linked to programmed activities.
- Gardening activities and positive food related experiences including books, songs and stories will be included in the curriculum regularly.
- From time to time, dramatic play experiences will be offered that relate to positive food use.

### **OTHER DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS**

**Goal:** *To meet the needs of children with dietary considerations for their health or for their cultural or religious beliefs.*

#### **Special diets**

Where a special diet for a **health or medical reason** is required, the Children's Centre will seek written evidence and guidelines from the child's health professionals. A 'Modified Diet Care Plan' should be filled in by a Health Professional and given to a staff member which includes a review date, with other relevant details and the child's photo and any emergency procedures required.

Where a child has special dietary needs for **cultural or religious** reasons, the Children's Centre seeks detailed information from families. A 'Modified Diet Care Plan' will need to be provided to the Centre and the cook no later than one week before the child's first day at the Centre. This will ensure that the correct food can be purchased and prepared for the child. The Children's Centre will provide an appropriate alternative where possible, or parents may be required to provide some food depending on the circumstances. The Children's Centre respects families' wishes for the religious and cultural aspects of eating, drinking and food handling.

### **NUT ALLERGIES**

It is promoted by all medical and health authorities that children under the age of six months should not come into contact with nuts of any description. Many people suffer from allergic reactions to nuts that vary from mild, itchy rashes to severe, life threatening reactions. The nut product does not have to be digested to cause an extreme reaction; it may be that traces of nuts come into contact with the skin that can cause the need for emergency medical support and hospitalisation. For example, a child may touch the food product with his / her finger or they may touch someone or an object that has traces of nuts. It is for these reasons that the Children's Centre endeavours to be 'Allergy Aware'.

Peanut paste will not be included on the menu and will not be stored within the building. Other products that will not be served to children are breakfast cereals that contain nuts, muesli bars, and chocolate with nuts, biscuits with nut ingredients, dried fruit and nut mixtures, and satay meals with nut ingredients.

### **BREAST and BOTTLE FEEDING**

Breast milk provides all the nutrition a baby needs for their first 6 months. Keithcot Farm Children's Centre is committed to supporting mothers who breast feed. At all times during the child's day at the Children's Centre, Educators will make every effort to accommodate the mother and child's needs. We can provide a comfortable and pleasant place for breast feeding in the Children's Centre. Parents will need to communicate with Educators about how they will accommodate their child's feeding pattern / routine. A back up plan should be discussed with Educators for situations where the mother is unable to provide breast milk for her child on site (e.g. the child will be encouraged to drink expressed milk or formula from a cup or bottle).

### **Recommended procedures for storing, thawing and warming of breast milk and infant formula**

#### **Expressed milk**

Breast milk should be expressed into a clean sterile container. It should be named 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.

#### **Warming breast milk or formula**

- Breast milk will NEVER be warmed in the microwave. This process destroys the immunological properties in the breast milk.
- A bottle warmer will be used at all times.
- Bottles should only be warmed in this way *for less than 10 minutes*.
- Before giving the child a bottle, the temperature will be checked by inverting the bottle and making sure the breast milk / formula is tepid when placed on the back of the hand or wrist.

#### **Storing breast milk or infant formula**

- Breast milk or formula will only be used on the day it is brought into the Children's Centre
- Formula or breast milk should be icy cold when leaving home and be carried in an insulated pack to keep it cold.
- Infant bottles should be named, covered and stored immediately in the back of the fridge where it is coldest.
- 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.
- The contents of *partially used* bottles will be discarded after 1 hour. Reusing half empty bottles is risky once they have been heated and partly drunk.

All children with bottles will be supervised.

**Recommended schedule for introducing solids**

| <b>Menu development guide</b>  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Age and Texture</b>   | <b>Suitable Foods</b>   |
| Birth – 6 months   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breast milk / infant formula provides all the nutrition a baby needs for the first 6 months of life.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b><i>'First tastes'</i></b><br/> <b><i>6 months to 7 months</i></b><br/> <b><i>(If needed earlier, can offer solids after 4 months, but NOT BEFORE 4 months).</i></b></p> <p>Smooth and pureed foods</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breast milk/infant formula</li> <li>• Introduction of first solids:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First introduce baby rice cereal (iron enriched)</li> <li>2. Then fruits and vegetables</li> <li>3. Then pureed, well-cooked meat, 'Baby' Yoghurts* and custard*</li> <li>4. Cow's milk* in small amounts in the preparation of foods</li> </ol> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b><i>'Learning to chew and self-feeder'</i></b><br/> <b><i>7-12 months</i></b></p> <p>Mashed or chopped food progressing to finger foods.</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 (e.g. wheat, oats), bread, pasta</li> <li>• Eggs* – (well cooked)</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b><i>'Children's Centre menu with some changes'</i></b><br/> <b><i>1-2 years</i></b></p>   | <p>Offer a wide variety of foods from the Children's Centre menu, some changes in texture or flavour may be needed. Breast milk and/or full cream cow's milk or water as a drink</p>  |

\* There is no evidence that delaying the introduction of highly allergenic solids (e.g. cow's milk, soy, wheat, egg and fish) reduces the risk of developing a food allergy. Introduce these foods in the child's diet at the normal time for introduction of solids as specified above (ASCIA Infant Feeding Advice 2018, available online:

[www.allergy.org.au/images/pcc/ASCIA\\_Guidelines\\_infant\\_feeding\\_and\\_allergy\\_prevention.pdf](http://www.allergy.org.au/images/pcc/ASCIA_Guidelines_infant_feeding_and_allergy_prevention.pdf)

Although this advice also applies to infants with siblings who already have food allergies, families with a high risk of allergy should consult with their doctor if they have any concerns.

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

We acknowledge that families may have different approaches to introducing solids, (e.g. traditional vs. baby led weaning). We will work together with families to best understand and cater for children's developmental feeding needs.

**FLUIDS FOR BABIES AND CHILDREN**

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

***Recommended fluids for babies (up to 12 months)***

- Breast milk and infant formula
- Cooled boiled water
- Soy formula only under medical advice

***Recommended fluids for 1 year olds***

- Breast milk
- Cows' milk (full cream)
- Water
- Other vegetarian beverages (e.g. soy / rice milk) only under medical advice

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

- Reduced fat milk (1.0-2.5% fat)
- Calcium fortified soy milk (full cream or reduced fat)
- Water
- Other vegetarian beverages (e.g. rice milk) only under medical advice

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**TO BE REVIEWED:** March 2021

**SOURCED:** Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003)  
Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003)  
Feeding and nutrition of Infants and Young Children World Health Organisation, 2000)  
Child and Youth Health, South Australia [www.cyh.com.au](http://www.cyh.com.au)  
Australian Breast Feeding Association Guidelines  
Start Right Eat Right – Policy Guidelines/Planning nutritious meals and support materials  
Dental Health Guidelines  
Get Up And Grow - Healthy Eating & Physical Activity for Early Childhood – Australian  
Government Department of Health & Ageing, 2009  
Right Bite Policy – Right Bite Easy Guide to – Healthy Food & Drink Supply for South Australian Schools & Preschools  
Right Bite Manual – Healthy Food & Drink Supply Strategy for South Australian Schools & Preschools  
Eat Well SA – Schools and Preschools: Healthy Eating Guidelines  
National Health and Medical Research Council Eat for Health Guidelines 2015  
ASCIA Infant Feeding Advice 2008  
The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org)  
[Nutrition Australia 2015](#)  
[Department Of Health and Ageing guidelines](#)  
[www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)  
[ASCIA Infant feeding Advice 2018](#)  
[Infant feeding and allergy prevention 2016](#)  
[www.allergy.org](http://www.allergy.org)