



## **Policy 2.15**

# **Nutrition**

Good nutrition is vitally important to young children, and encourages the establishment of life long healthy eating habits. It helps them to grow, develop and maintain healthy bodies. Our Centre contributes 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.

## **Goal**

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

## **Food Provided By the Centre**

- Food provided is consistent with the daily dietary guidelines set out in the Start Right Eat Right program. (This government program is no longer running however we value these guidelines and continue to follow this program)
- When possible we source produce from our vegetable gardens.
- Menus aim to provide at least 50% of the recommended daily dietary intake for key nutrients for children. Our centre has a weekly menu which is reviewed regularly.
- Food provided will be diverse and include seasonal and locally available fresh produce.
- Food provided is developmentally appropriate for children and encourages independent eating.
- Filtered tap water is the main drink and is available at all times to support good dental hygiene.
- Food provided takes into account special dietary needs e.g. vegetarian meals are planned once a week.
- Children with allergies/food intolerances will be catered for.
- Guidelines on feeding children up to 12 months of age are available.
- Food linked with a high risk of choking is minimised. In regards to hard fruit and vegetables such as apple or carrot it is now appropriate to very finely slice them to serve to children under 4 years of age. Celery is finely diced and cooked; grapes are cut into halves. Children 4 years of age and older are able to have larger chunks of hard fruits and vegetables, but it is still very important that they are seated and supervised.
- Food will be prepared and stored hygienically.
- Staff will receive training in nutrition, food safety and food handling.
- Ready to eat food is not touched with bare hands. Gloves or tongs are used.
- Parents of children on special diets are asked to provide details of any special food needs . We will display a photograph of children with dietary requirements.
- **We do not have birthday cakes from home**, in order to prevent issues for children with high allergy needs and to address concerns around food hygiene. Special occasions will be acknowledged and celebrated in other ways; for example singing "Happy Birthday", giving of stickers.
- A meal from another culture is offered at least once a week.



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### **Food Brought from home in the Preschool / Kindergarten**

- Families will be provided with guidelines on food, and suggestions for nutritious and safe foods, from *the Right Bite Food and Nutrition Policy*.
- All families are asked to familiarise themselves with the Nutrition policy upon enrolment.
- If discouraged foods are brought to the Centre, a note indicating this will be placed in the child's lunchbox, with a suggested alternative.
- Discouraged foods include- chips, chocolate, lollies, cordial and sweet drinks, flavoured milks, sweet biscuits. Natural popcorn will only be allowed for children over 3.
- Filtered tap water will be the main drink and will be available at all times.
- Parents will be advised when their child is not eating well, or of any concerns e.g. insufficient food brought.
- Children should sit down to eat. Our Staff will supervise children at snack time and during mealtimes.
- Children will be taught about food and nutrition using the *right Bite Food and Nutrition Policy* and through food awareness activities and programs; for example "Eat a Rainbow" (of fruit and vegetables), 2 & 5, regular cooking experiences, and discussions about healthy eating and physical activity.

### **Two Wells Community Children's Centre is a Nut Free Centre**

*So, nuts, peanut paste, Nutella or bars containing nuts are not to be brought into the Centre.*

Children and staff will wash their hands before handling food or eating meals and snacks.

- Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils or sharing foods.
- Parents are to supply freezer blocks in their child's lunch box.
- Food will always be available in case of an emergency, or if children are hungry between meals and snacks at educators discretion.
- Food awareness activities will be chosen from a variety of cultures particularly reflecting those cultures in our own community and will be included in the program.
- Foodstuffs are to be used sensitively for play purposes, or at the discretion of the Director.

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

- Mealtimes will be treated as a social occasion. In childcare, staff members will sit with the children and interact with them to encourage good eating habits and an appreciation of a variety of foods. Children will be encouraged to be independent and to help themselves.
- The importance of good healthy food will be discussed with children as part of their daily program.
- The provision or denial of food will never be used as a form of punishment or reward under any circumstances.
- Children will be encouraged to try new foods, but will never be forced to eat. Their food likes and dislikes and the families' religious and cultural beliefs will always be respected.



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

- The weekly menu is clearly displayed in the foyer and in the Childcare room, outlining the food and drinks to be provided daily, including snacks.
- Families receive information about the Centre's Food and Nutrition Policy at the time of enrolment in the enrolment package.
- Parents and /or guardians are asked to provide details of any special diet in relation to their child.
- Families that use the Centre are advised of their children's food intake each day that they are in the Centre, or as requested by families.
- Details of foods and serves eaten are provided to parents as appropriate (daily for parents of babies and younger children).
- Nutrition information is accessible to families, in appropriate languages where possible.
- Families have access to menus as displayed in the foyer.
- Good communication with the Cook will be maintained on new and important food matters.

**Goal:** *To teach children about food and nutrition, guided by the Rite Bite food and Nutrition Policy.*

- Food will be used as a learning experience, and at times the children will take part in activities involving its preparation. Food will be one resource used to introduce children to other cultures, and parent participation is welcomed.
- Learning about food will be incorporated into many areas of the Curriculum *such as Early Years Learning Framework: outcome 3.*
- Teaching children about food and nutrition makes an important contribution to lifetime food habits, to learning and to a healthy society.

## **Meeting Other Dietary Considerations**

**Goal:** *The special needs of children with food allergies, food sensitivities, medical diets or diets favoured by religious beliefs will be catered for in consultation with parents and the appropriate medical professionals.*

*If a child has special dietary needs:*

- At the time of enrolment, families can discuss with the Director and Centre Cook, the options for dietary support.
- All efforts will be made to accommodate the special dietary needs of each child – to ensure his/her optimum health and wellbeing.
- The parent needs to ensure they have filled out the enrolment form allergy/ dietary section.
- Parents will be asked at enrolment to provide the Medical/Allergy Plan in the case of Anaphylaxis management that needs to be signed off by a medical practitioner.

The Centre will work with families to best accommodate the child's dietary needs.

- A First Aid Action Plan detailing the food sensitivity and any emergency procedures which need to be adopted if the sensitive food is eaten will be drawn up.
  - The child's photo and allergy will be displayed in the kitchen and in the childcare and preschool room for easy identification.
  - The Centre will review the plan and its relevance, in consultation with parents/carers,



twice yearly and if the child's needs change.

- Parents and Staff can be directed to obtain further information about the management of a food allergy/sensitivity.

## Infant Feeding

- The Centre supports and promotes breastfeeding.
- We will follow the recommended procedures for storing, thawing and warming of breast milk and infant formula. (These guidelines are in the Staying Healthy in Childcare Guidelines and we have a separate policy outlining this area)
- We will follow the recommended schedule for introducing solids in the *Start right Eat Right and/or Right Bite Food and Nutrition Policy*.
- We will follow the lists of fluids allowed for babies and children.
- Our Centre encourages communication with parents with regards to feeding and solids progression as per the *Start right Eat Right and/or Right Bite Food and Nutrition Policy*
- Other services using the Centre's facilities such as Playgroup and OHSC will be expected to comply with the intent of this policy.

**Governing Council Member's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Director's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Two Wells Community Children's Centre's Common Seal*

**Date Reviewed:** May 2015

**Next Review Due:** May 2017

**Sources:** Staying Healthy in Childcare (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)  
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/ch43.pdf>  
Start Right Eat Right  
<http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/startrighteatright.htm>  
Right Bite Food and Nutrition Policy, DECD  
Go for 2 & 5  
SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership  
Queensland Health Service: Your Child Care Centre's Food and Nutrition Policy  
<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/healthieryou/allaboutfood.asp>