

3.10

Nutrition

Policy

Montgomery Park Children's Centre goal is ensure that all children attending the centre are provided with nutritional meals that meet 50% of the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) according to the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia. The centre provides snacks and meals for all children that meet their needs and reflect the cultural diversity of the community. The centre also ensures that the children, staff and families have opportunities to increase their awareness of nutrition and foods and use their feedback to review the policy regularly.

The early years and nutrition

Individuals begin to develop food habits during infancy. Attitudes towards food, such as foods that are considered acceptable, or when it is appropriate to eat are formed as a result of early experiences with food. Therefore it is important that children have positive experiences with healthy foods at an early age. Eating a wide variety of foods and being physically active is the best way to meet nutritional needs and to maintain body weight within a healthy range.

Children are provided with:

- Morning tea
- Lunch
- Afternoon tea
- Late snack (if attending after 5pm)

The Service employs a cook who prepares all meals and snacks at the Service. The Service promotes healthy eating habits by emphasising the use of fresh, natural foods with minimal use of salt, sugar, fats, frozen and processed foods. Information on healthy eating and safe food preparation and storage is also available to families through displays near the kitchen and newsletters.

The Service does not provide breakfast for the children, however this may be brought in by families and served to the child up until 8:30am. The Service requests that families consider providing a breakfast of a healthy nature that does not contain nuts.

Weekly menus are displayed prominently in the Service and suggestions or new recipes from parents are most welcome. This policy will be located in the parent handbook and the policies and procedures book.

Drinking milk and water is actively encouraged and water is readily accessible to children and offered regularly. The cook plans menus in advance to reflect season changes and available produce, recognising religious, cultural and dietary requirements of families. Food is prepared and stored hygienically at all times.

The Service is registered and meets all requirements of the Food Safety Act, which includes training for the cook, and the Director as Food Safety Instructors. Staff (including the cook) have the opportunity to attend/receive food safety professional development on an annual basis.

Meal times are seen as an opportunity for developing independence. The Service encourages this by enabling children:

- to assist with setting and cleaning tables
- serving own food
- pouring of drinks (older children)

Meal times should always be pleasant occasions. The Service ensures this by:

- Encouraging children to taste/try all foods, not forcing children to eat.
- Providing attractive, appealing food.
- Discussing nutrition and food in a positive way.

- Planning meal times for children so they are relaxed.
- Encouraging conversation between children.
- Positive role modelling from staff by eating with children.
- Respecting individual children's likes and dislikes.
- Not using food as a reward or for punishment.

Mealtimes should always be a safe environment for children; the staff will implement this by:

- Ensuring all children are sitting when eating
- Encourage and support children to wash their hands before and after meals
- Always providing foods that are safe and minimise the risk of choking i.e. not providing raw apple, carrot and celery to children four years and under.

Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia 2003

The centre will ensure that the dietary requirements of the children are appropriately catered for by implementing the following Dietary Guidelines;

1. Encourage and support breastfeeding

2. Children and adolescents need sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally

- Growth should be checked regularly for young children
- Physical activity is important for all children and adolescents

3. Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods

4. Children and adolescents should be encouraged to:

- Eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits
- Eat plenty of cereals (including breads, rice pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain
- Include lean meat, fish, poultry and /or alternatives
- Include milks, yoghurts, cheese and .or alternatives
- Reduced fat milks are not suitable for children under two years, because of their high energy needs, but reduced fat varieties should be encouraged for older children and adolescents
- Choose water as a drink
- Alcohol is not recommended for children

Care should be taken to:

- Limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake
- Low-fat diets are not suitable for infants
- Choose food low in salt
- Consume only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars.

Care for your child's food: prepare and store it safely.

RDI'S - The minimum recommended daily food serves for children in long day care are as follows:

Food group	Minimum number of serves to be offered in long day care	Equivalent amount of food
Milk and milk alternatives	3	300ml
Bread and cheese	2	60g
Fruit	1	150g
Vegetables	1	75g
Meat and meat alternatives	1	45g
Fats and oils	1.5	7g

Infants

Young children being introduced to solids will have our normal menus adapted to their specific needs, with regular consultation with parents. New foods will only be introduced at the parent/guardians request.

Handling breast milk or formula

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Breast milk or formula provided by parents should be refrigerated until needed
 Warm the breast milk or formula just prior to feeding the infant
 Warm only the amount needed
 Warm breast milk by standing in a jug of hot water (whilst in bottle or packaging)
 Shake and check the temperature of the milk before feeding
 Microwaves will on no occasion be used as a tool to heat breastmilk or formula, all milk will be heated by using hot water.
 Before checking temperature stir or shake the contents.
 If an infant requires extra fluids offer cooled boiled water. Fruit juice is not recommended and will not be served at the centre.

Introduction of solids

0-6months

Diet is liquid.
 Breast milk or infant formula as required

6-12 months

Foods can be pureed or sieved.
 Start with 1-2 teaspoons after a milk feed
 Introduce one new food every 3 days
 Avoid adding sugar, spices or fat to food

6-9 months

Foods should be minced mashed or grated
 Offer food before a milk feed three times a day
 New foods should be introduced gradually
 Finger foods can be introduced from eight months
 Be aware of foods that can break into small pieces in the mouth

9-12 months

Meat is minced, other foods chopped or mashed.
 Slowly introduce full cream milk foods
 Offer three small meals per day with snacks between meals
 Encourage finger foods
 Continue to offer breast milk or formula three times per day after feeding

Table: Recommendations for when and what foods to introduce to children from

6months-----12 months

Types of foods	Baby rice cereal Vegies Fruit	Meat Fish Chicken	Egg yolk Lentils Split peas dried beans	Bread rusks, dry biscuits rice, other cereal e.g. oats, barley, muesli, weetbix, pasta custard and yoghurt	Egg white	Full cream milk can be introduced as a drink
Consistency of foods	Fine puree	Thick puree	Small soft lumps, minced meat	Larger mashed lumps or mashed with fork	Finger foods	Family table food chopped/mashed
Development milestones	Begins to control tongue, take food from a spoon Interested in food, increased appetite	Starting to chew	Can grip finger foods and likes self feeding	Can hold a spoon	Learning to drink from a cup	Can hold cup and drink by themselves Developing a grinding action when chewing

Special Diets/Allergies

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Menus provided in the Service reflect as far as possible the cultural composition of the families currently using the Service. The Service endeavours to be sensitive and responsive to special medical, religious, and cultural diets. Parents must inform staff of any allergies or special dietary requirements. E.g. If a child is anaphylactic then an action plan that includes foods that should not be consumed must accompany the child whilst at the centre. An alternative menu is prepared for children who have an allergy, intolerance or special request. It is prepared using separate utensils, ingredients and equipment so as to ensure that there is no cross contamination.

If a child is suspected of having an intolerance or allergy the family will be encouraged to seek relevant professional advice from;

- Their local doctor
- Community dietitian-nutritionist
- Maternal and child health nurse
- Royal children's hospital
- Allergy specialist/paediatrician
- Royal Prince Alfred Hospital allergy unit

If an expert confirms a child has an allergy or intolerance then an action plan must be formulated and signed by the relevant health authority. With parental permission this plan will be displayed in all the children's rooms along with a photo of the child so that all staff are able to identify the child. Should the child become exposed to a substance that they are allergic to then the staff will follow the action plan. An ambulance and then the child's family will be contacted immediately. **Refer to 3.11 Anaphylaxis Policy**

Special occasions

If parents wish for their child to celebrate a special event by bringing food into the centre then that food must include all ingredients. If this is not adhered to then the food will not be served to any of the children. This is to ensure that children who have food allergies are not exposed to any of the foods they are allergic to. Any lolly bags for the children must only include individually wrapped lollies.

Avoiding choking

Choking is a risk for children because their back teeth may not be fully developed until around four years of age. They are still learning to grind and chew food

To prevent choking, staff do;

Always supervise infants and young children when eating
Avoid small hard lumps that may cause choking
Grate cook or mash foods such as carrots, celery and apple
Cut sausages, frankfurts and other meats into small pieces
Not give children popcorn, nuts, hard lollies, corn chips or similar
Make sure children are always seated when they eat
Never force a child to eat
Will not offer food to children who are laughing or upset.

Increasing awareness of foods and nutrition

The centre provides opportunities throughout the year to promote awareness of foods and nutrition to both children and families. This is implemented through;

Conversations with the children about healthy eating – at mealtimes and where possible during the day.
Displaying posters that show healthy foods
Pamphlets and information given to families through newsletters and displays
Organised visits from experts
Dramatic play areas include pretend healthy foods for the children to play and become familiar with.
Cooking opportunities where the children can learn about making healthy food options
Provide families with the parent handbook that will contain the Nutrition Policy

Emergency Foods

In the incidence that the centre is in “lockdown” there will be supply of emergency foods available. The centre will have a supply of tinned goods and powdered milk to ensure that all children and staff will have their needs met.

Responsibilities

Committee of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allocate finances for training for food safety ▪ Allocate finances to ensure provision of nutritionally balanced meals ▪ Ensure Centre is registered and working in line with the Food Safety Act and Children’s Services Regulations.
Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oversee the planning of menus ▪ Review/update food safety plan annually ▪ Ensure the cook/staff work in accordance with the Food Safety Act and Food Safety Plan developed by the centre ▪ Ensure special dietary needs and infant’s meals are planned and catered for. ▪ Ensure the cook attends annual food handler’s course. ▪ Manage Centre’s food expenditure to ensure it remains within the budget allocation. ▪ Review policy with input from staff, recognised authorities and families annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate implementation of nutrition policy and procedure amongst all staff. ▪ Facilitate training of other staff in compliance with the Food Safety Plan and Act.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure children’s individual dietary needs are adhered to. ▪ Work according to the nutrition policy. ▪ Follow guidelines as set out in the Food Safety Act/Plan with regard to the handling of food. ▪ To attend/receive food safety training annually ▪ The cook is to attend an annual food handler’s course.
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be aware of the nutrition policy and abide by this. ▪ Communicate regularly to staff on children’s specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs. ▪ Contribute menu ideas, suggestions and recipes. ▪ If supplying food to the centre, to bring a list of ingredients.

Date:
2011

Date last updated: 10th February, 2010

Date of next policy review: February,

Related Legislation

Food Safety Act 1998

Children’s Services Regulations 2009

Children’s Services Act 1996

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See also: 5.5 Food Handling