

## **Food & Nutrition Policy**

*Quality Area 2:*

*Children's health and Safety*

### **Rationale:**

The early childhood years are a time when food habits are being developed, many of which will be retained throughout life. Food should not only be nutritious but should help to meet the social, cultural & educational needs of children. Meal times provide a wonderful opportunity to create a sharing family atmosphere.

### **Objectives of the policy:**

- To provide a learning environment where food awareness activities can be experienced.
- To provide children with at least 50% of their dietary intake in the form of safe & appetising food.
- To provide a pleasant eating environment that assists in the transmission of family and multicultural values.
- To supervise & assist children to receive nutritious & safe food where food is brought from home.

### **Procedures:**

- 1. To provide a learning environment where food awareness activities can be experienced.**
  - Food awareness experiences will be included in the centre program.
  - Children will be encouraged to participate in 'hands on' food preparation experiences.
  - The foods being served to children will be discussed with them.
  - Parents will receive information about food & nutrition in newsletters, memos, & as a part of orientation.
  
- 2. To provide children with at least 50% of their dietary intake in the form of safe & appetising food.**
  - Menus will be planned using the Nutrition Checklist for Long Day Care Menu Planning.

- Milk will be served for both morning & afternoon tea.
- Water will be available at all times.
- If served, juice will be diluted with water by at least half.
- Children will have access to bread/cereals or fruit/vegetable snacks if they are hungry between meals.
- Children are allowed to have a second helping of fruit or milk based desserts.
- If children have not eaten their main meal they may still receive dessert.
- Parents will be advised if their child is not eating well. Daily eating records will be displayed for families in the foyer.
- Parents of children on special diets will be asked to provide details of food needs.
- Children over two may be provided with reduced fat dairy products.
- Only soy milks that are fortified with calcium will be used as a substitute for cow's milk.
- In hot weather children will be further encouraged to drink water.

**3. To provide a pleasant eating environment that assists in the transmission of family and multicultural values.**

- Staff members will sit and enjoy lunch with the children.
- Food will not be used as a form of punishment.
- Food awareness activities will be chosen from a variety of cultures.
- Parents will be encouraged to share suggestions for the menu & provide information on children's likes/dislikes.
- Special occasions may be celebrated with culturally appropriate foods.
- Parents will be invited to special events at the centre involving food.
- The weekly menu will be on display to parents & staff.

**4. To supervise & assist children to receive nutritious & safe food where food is brought from home.**

- Parents will receive advice on both suitable & unsuitable foods to pack for their children.
- Emergency food will always be available for children who have brought insufficient food.
- Parents will be encouraged to keep food cool while transporting it to the centre.
- High risk foods will be stored below 5 C as soon as possible after a child arrives.

**Related Policies & Documents:**

- Food Safety & Hygiene Policy

**Sources:**

- *Caring for Children: Food Nutrition & Fun Activities.* (2005). NSW Department of Health.

**Last updated:** October 2016