



NARNIA EARLY LEARNING

ACN 002 919 584

(Administered by St. Philip's Christian Education Foundation Ltd.)

NUTRITION POLICY

Narnia Christian Preschool and Early Childhood Centre recognises the importance of healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in their care. This policy concerns the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in care and the promotion of normal growth and development.

The service is committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in *Munch & Move* and to supporting the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* as outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources.

Further, we recognise the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating.

This policy aims to:

- Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods.
- Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* and *Infant Feeding Guidelines*.
- Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and to promote hygienic food practices.
- Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values.
- Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood educators and families about healthy food and drink choices.
- Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the service.

Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods

The service will:

Apply current national infant feeding recommendations.

- Provide a suitable place within the service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breastmilk.
- Support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while offering appropriate complementary foods from around 6 months of age.
- Ensure the safe handling of breastmilk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing and bottle feeding.
- In consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age.
- Where breastfeeding is discontinued before 12 months of age, substitute with a commercial infant formula.
- Always bottle feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position.
- Ensure appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age.
- Adjust the texture of foods offered between 6 and 12 months of age to match the baby's developmental stage.
- Offer a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups.

- Always supervise babies while drinking and eating - ensuring safe bottle feeding and eating practices at all times.

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.

The service will:

Where food is provided by the service (morning tea and afternoon tea):

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, dairy products etc.
- Plan and display the service menu that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets the daily nutritional needs of children whilst in care.
- Plan healthy snacks on the menu to complement what is served at mealtimes and ensure the snacks are substantial enough to meet the energy and nutrient needs of children.
- Vary the meals and snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas.

Where food is brought from home:

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes.
- Encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious food provided.
- Discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven-baked crackers and corn chips.

All services

- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day.
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans.
- Ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking.
- Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Always supervise children while eating and drinking.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.

Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and to promote hygienic food practices.

The service will:

- Ensure gloves are worn or food tongs are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- Children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, warm running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures i.e. below 5°C or above 60°C.
- Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils.
- Food-handling staff attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information onto the rest of the staff.

Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values

The service will:

- Ensure that educators sit with the children at meal and snack times to role model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided.
- Endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Cultural diversity will be recognized through food learning experiences.
- Create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children.
- Encourage older toddlers and preschoolers to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink - providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem.
- Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats.
- Be patient with messy or slow eaters.
- Encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat.
- Do not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.
- *Birthday cakes are encouraged for children's birthdays. If your child has food allergies, it would be good if you could supply the centre with an alternate treat for these occasions.*

Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood staff and families about healthy food and drink choices.

The service will:

- Foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the children's program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating.
- Encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices.

Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the service.

The service will:

- Request that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the service and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children's individual dietary needs are met.
- Communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the service and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.
- Communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

This policy links to the following:

National Quality Standards: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 7.1, 7.3

Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011:78, 79, 80

Good for Kids Good for Life 2007

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