

Emu Community Children's Centre Inc

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

AIM

The centre aims to develop positive habits and provide a wide variety of nutritious, safe and culturally appropriate foods and drinks to meet children's daily requirements whilst in child care.

To communicate effectively with families about their child's food and nutrition.

For children to be given opportunities to learn about food and nutrition through the curriculum.

PROCEDURE

Planning and preparation:

Information will be gathered from parent/guardian(s) regarding their children's eating habits, cultural background and any special dietary requirements. This information will be collected upon enrolment and as updated by families during their child's growth and development. Menu planning will reflect the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the five food groups. The centre's menu will provide at least 50% of the recommended daily intake for key nutrients.

Menu planning will be mainly done by the cook with input from staff, families and the children. At least one staff member involved in menu preparation will have completed specific training in nutrition for young children. Weekly menus will be displayed in each room and also in the foyer. Recipes from the centre menu will be available to the parents on request and through the menu of the week display in the foyer. Menu's are rotated on a 6 weekly basis and reviewed by the cook at the end of this period. Menus are discussed regularly at staff meetings.

To follow up on our food safety and hygiene policy all staff who handles food will complete the food safe package or a food handler's course. Current staff will complete the package within the first month of employment. The cook and the Director will complete the Start Right Eat Right program to maintain the centre's certification star.

Selection and preparation of foods will be done to minimise the risks of choking and allergies. Hard foods (eg raw carrot, celery or apple) will be grated, mashed or cooked and whole grapes will be cut into small piece before being served to children under the age of 5 years. Apples and whole grapes are now recommended as choking risk for children under the age of 5 years. Children's ages and development will be taken into account when presenting food. Meat, sausages and chicken will be cut into small pieces. Other high risk foods will not be provided by the centre.

E.g. popcorn, nuts, raw carrot sticks, lollies or corn chips.

The centre uses bottle warmers to heat bottles of formula and cows milk. Breast milk will be heated by placing the bottle in the bottle warmers. Once heated all bottles will be shaken, then tested for correct temperature throughout before giving the bottle to a child. Microwave will be used for heating of bottles when a quick result is needed.

Parents/guardians will be consulted regarding the menu for infants before the introduction of new foods.

Special Dietary Requirements:

The centre will undertake to cater for variations in the diet due to allergies, health and cultural or religious beliefs/needs/concerns. Families are asked to inform the centre before the child starts of any of these needs. The cook is open to discussion and will ask you to fill in an allergies form which will be kept in the child's file. The centre will keep a register of children's dietary needs in each specific room and in the kitchen. This allows staff access to this vital information.

If any difficulties arise due to specific dietary needs, these will be negotiated with the family by the director and/or the cook.

The Emu Community Children's Centre Inc. does not use peanut butter or any other nut based products. This is due to peanuts being identified as a high risk food due to the extreme allergic reaction caused in some children.

Special Occasions

Birthdays are celebrated with children and staff with emphasis on the special day not the food. The centre has a plaster of paris cake with candles for all children in the centre to use for the celebration.

Foods which do not fit in with the centre Policy or the dietary guidelines such as cakes, biscuits or lollies will not be permitted into the centre for the children. These are classed as high risk foods and with the high risk of allergic reactions we say no to all of these items.

Health, hygiene and education:

- We will provide a clean and pleasant surrounding to create a relaxed atmosphere for meal times
- Staff will sit with and supervise the children at all times when they are eating
- Foods being served to the children will be discussed with them
- Children will have milk or water from the pura tap to drink at meal times
- Water from the pura tap will be available to all children at all times of the day
- All children will be offered food at regular intervals and on an individual basis
- All families will be provided with information relating to good eating habits, dental care, bottle/breast feeding and dummies
- Children having bottles will be supervised at all times
- No flavoured milk, cordials, juices or soft drinks will be given to the children
- Bottles will not be used as comforters
- Our centre supports breast feeding mothers
- Staff will role model good eating habits with the children
- Food and nutrition will be incorporated into the daily program
- All children will have clean plates, cups and cutlery to use at each meal
- Children will be encouraged to sit down at each meal time and for drinks
- Children's eating habits will be recorded for families each day via communication books and daily charts
- Children are encouraged to try new foods
- Food will not be used as a source of punishment either through its provision or denial
- Food awareness activities will be offered to the children
- Children will be taught to wash their hands before meals using good hygiene procedures
- Foods provided take into account choking, special dietary requirements and age appropriateness
- Additional food is provided for children when hungry
- Pamphlets will be available for families on food handling, safe storage and appropriate foods for different age groups
- The centre provides full cream milk for the children in the centre; other milks will need to be supplied by the family. Please note full cream milk is supplied for children over the age of 1 year.
- Children's food preferences will be respected

- Cultural food events and practices are celebrated
- Self help skills are promoted at all times
- Recommended schedules for introducing solids, infant feeding and procedures for storing, thawing and warming breast milk and formula's is available from the office

N.B Microwaves will only be used to heat bottles in extreme circumstances. There will be instructions on the microwave to follow when heating Infants milk.

Evaluation

This policy is viewed to be effective when:

- Children are provided with a variety of nutritious and culturally appropriate meals and snacks that meet their daily requirements
- Policies are communicated effectively to families through the centre newsletters, handbook, and the centre's policy folder.

References

Start Right Eat Right Project
TAFESA 'Prepare Food' competency module
Food Matters various issues

Developed August 2004
Reviewed August 2005
Reviewed August 2006
Reviewed November 2007
Reviewed November 2008
Next Review November 2009

Review will be done through the Policy and Accreditation Committee
All Policies available in the Policy Folder in the foyer and this is communicated to parents via the centre's Parent Handbook

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