



Mountain community children's centre inc.

Nutrition/Food/Beverages/Dietary Requirements Policy

Rationale: The nutrition provided by a variety of different food types is essential to good health and growth in young children.

Aim: To support families to encourage children to develop eating habits which reflect healthy life style choices.

Implementation

The Centre will have information available for families to read with regards to the *Dietary Guidelines For Australians* as provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health and *Sharing a picture of children's development – A communication framework for child care staff and parents*. Additionally the Centre will obtain relevant literature to support information on healthy lunchbox ideas, family nutritional guidelines to be shared via newsletters and emails.

Upon arrival at the Centre families are to clearly label lunchboxes and place into the refrigerator provided in each of the three rooms. Families are asked to remove fruit for morning tea, label and place into the fruit baskets.

Staff will role model and encourage children to develop healthy eating habits, this will be achieved by washing hands before all meals (this includes any cooking or food preparation as part the programmed activities). Staff will encourage children to sit through meals and chew and swallow their food before talking. Children will also be encouraged to drink water at the end of their meal to rinse their teeth (see Dental Hygiene Policy)

Drinks: As the main milk source of infants through to 12 months is breast milk or infant formula, families of the younger children in the Joey room are to prepare bottles or sipper cups at home for staff to supply to the children throughout the day. Children will only be given bottles / sipper cups containing milk or water. In the Joey's room sipper cups will be provided for the children who require them. Alternatively families may choose to bring along their own from home. **ALL BOTTLES / SIPPER CUPS MUST BE CLEARLY LABELLED.** Settling techniques for children who require a bottle at rest time will be discussed and determined between the individual family and staff. Infants and young toddlers who drink from bottles will be supervised by staff whilst doing so.

The Centre will provide children with a choice of milk or water at morning tea and/or lunch and water will be readily available throughout the day. Staff will encourage the older children to drink water after meals to clean their teeth (see dental hygiene policy)

Breakfast: Children that are dropped off early at the centre may require breakfast. Families are asked to provide their child's breakfast. Cows Milk is provided by the centre

therefore, families do not need to provide milk. If a child requires alternative milk due to intolerances or allergies they are to be provided by the family.

Whilst there are many different types of breakfast cereals available, some are high in fat and sugar, therefore, while respecting family choice within their homes, only **non-sugar coated cereal will only be served for breakfast** at Mountain Community Children's Centre. Children who arrive for the early breakfast program may also be served **toast (preferably wholemeal) or other culturally relevant bread types** such as lavish, pita, or corn bread in accordance with the food and spreads provided from home. Recommended spreads to be served are vegemite or honey, however, specific cultural spreads such as hommus are also encouraged. Families may send in a fruit juice for their child to drink during breakfast. Juice will not be available for the children to drink after the breakfast routine.

Meals: If required to do so, staff will work together with families on an individual basis to determine lunchbox items for the daily meals for their child. Within these guidelines staff will work toward ensuring that children receive at least 50% of the recommended dietary intake of nutrients during their day at the Centre. It is requested that families send in culturally relevant, nutritional food as the main part of their lunch such as sandwiches, pasta, noodles, sushi or rice. Staff will encourage children to eat the main part of their lunch before extras such as sultanas or cheese sticks.

Families will be requested to avoid sending in foods that contain high quantities of sugar, salt or fat such as sweet biscuits, sticky fruit bars or chips. Notes will be sent home in lunchboxes stating inappropriate food and a suggestion for a healthier alternative.

Spare bread will be kept in the freezer for emergency use or if a child has an inappropriate meal that needs replacing.

As food allergies and sensitivities have many signs and symptoms and are hard to diagnose **no nut spreads or nut products** are to be sent in for children in the **Joey Room**. Many schools have now introduced bans on all nut products in their canteens and lunchbox items from home, therefore, it is requested that all families avoid this food type at Mountain Community Children's Centre also. Whilst this is currently only a request, In the event of a child with allergies to nut products enrolling at our Centre this request will be enforced as a policy on NO nut products.

Whilst maintaining a flexible approach to meet the individual needs of each child (especially in our Joey room), meals will be taken in accordance with the daily routine in each room for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

The amount that children eat will be recorded each day on the Daily Routines Chart for the Lizard and Snake rooms and in the Communication Books for the Joey's room.

Staff will regularly review policies and participate in ongoing professional development such as munch and move to remain up to date with current legislation and practices.