**NUTRITION, FOOD & BEVERAGES, DIETARY REQUIREMENTS**

**Policies and Procedures**

**Rationale:**

- Our Centre regards eating times as positive, pleasant, social experiences for all to enjoy. Good nutrition and healthy eating and drinking habits are encouraged in a safe, hygienic environment. Food will not be used as a form of punishment or reward.

- Food (including cultural food events, raising and caring for chickens and our Kitchen Garden) will be used as learning experiences, introducing children to a variety of foods, family and multicultural values, with children taking part in activities including food preparation. Family participation will be encouraged.

- In providing positive role models for children, fundraising events will take the Centre’s Nutrition, Food & Beverages, Dietary policy into consideration and food in play will be kept to a minimum.

- Staff recognise that early childhood is an important time when children establish healthy eating habits for life. These benefit children by maximising growth and development, activity levels and good health. This supports their positive engagement in learning activities. It also minimises the risk of diet related disease in later life.

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**Parents must advise the Director or Assistant Director Services on enrolment** or when appropriate, if their child has a special diet for medical or non-medical reasons such as an allergy, intolerance, food sensitivity or specific requests based on family or cultural preferences. This information will influence centre procedures. Parents need to complete the enrolment form providing details of any dietary or allergy conditions. Copies of this information will be communicated to staff through the procedures for children with medical conditions.

**Parents/Caregivers** are to provide all food including snacks, lunch and drinks in named container/s. The food supplied will be consistent with the dietary guidelines for children and adolescents, and should provide at least 50% of their child’s daily nutrition requirements. Parents must ensure that they pack ample food for their child for their time in care or Preschool.

- On enrolment, parents are provided with the Centre’s Nutrition, Food & Beverages, Dietary policy, procedures and supporting resources to assist in providing an age appropriate healthy lunchbox. These resources may include “Food for Health”, “Feeding your baby in the first year” and Start Right Eat Right resources such as “The Infants Lunchbox”, “Introducing Solids – Stages and Texture Progression”, the “Lunchbox checklist for 1-5 year olds” and “Ideas to Increase Essential Food Groups in the Lunchbox”. The Healthy Food Supply and Nutrition policy and nutritious food suggestions are displayed in the foyer and in the kitchen areas.

- Parents will also be given nutritional information in an informal way through conversations with educators and at regular intervals (eg through newsletters, parent workshops or information leaflets) on topics such as infant feeding, fussy eaters or introduction to solids.

- Educator supervision can minimise incidents of choking on food, therefore children will be encouraged to remain seated whilst eating and congregate in central areas at food times. Walking around the Centre eating is actively discouraged.

- Foods considered a high choking risk, such as raw apple and carrot, whole grapes and cherry tomatoes, popcorn, fat on meat, skin on sausages, and nuts will be prepared appropriately for the age of the child. The guidelines for
prevention of choking apply to all children birth to 4 years old. Please refer to the attached “Preventing Choking on Food in Children Under 4 years of age”.

- Staff will sit and eat with children, where possible, while providing strict supervision during mealtimes to ensure children’s safety. Staff will use positive attitudes and behaviours in providing food. Staff will follow the hygiene procedures outlined in the food safety and handling course (eg Bug Busters) and First Aid for Centres & Schools.

- Lists of foods recommended through “Right Bite” will be provided to families through handouts & displays. Information will describe foods according to the green, amber, red classifications consistent with Right Bite. In addition, information will be provided by newsletter about the intent of Right Bite & the centre’s educational program for the children as we encourage healthy food choices by the children for their overall health and wellbeing. Suggested snack and lunch options will be provided twice per term in the newsletter.

- Children will be encouraged to use self-help skills and to learn to choose to eat the healthier food options from their lunchboxes first. In a situation where a child brings high fat, sugar or salt rich food, staff can talk sensitively to the child about the food and encourage them to eat any healthy options first from their provided snack or lunch.

- Regular conversation with children as individuals and as a group should embrace opportunities to positively acknowledge healthy food options and talk about the value of such to the health and wellbeing of our bodies. Our learning and care programme includes ongoing education, involving children in informal discussions about health, nutrition and good eating and drinking habits e.g. cooking healthy meals and snacks with the children, raising chickens and using the eggs, eating the fruit from our Centre trees and growing our own vegetable patch. Popcorn, chewing gum, lollies, chocolate, flavoured milk, sugary drinks (fruit boxes, soft drink and cordial), salty snacks (chips etc) are examples of the types of foods and fluids that would be considered as not the healthiest options.

- Meals and snacks are served on a regular but not a rigid schedule. Allowances are made for individual needs, such as sleep times and arrival and departure times. Children are offered a morning snack and lunch in both Kindy and Childcare. Where appropriate, children will be offered breakfast and an afternoon snack in Childcare. Children who are in care at 5.00pm will be offered a late snack from their lunchbox.

- Daily information on children’s meal times & feeding times will be recorded on the daily board and sign in sheets in Childcare. For children under the age of 2 years, this information will be recorded on the baby board located on the fridge, as well as in individual ‘Baby Books’ which serve as a Communication Book between educators and families. Information for children over the age of 2 years will be recorded on the sign in sheets if required.

- Uneaten foods (if not heated) will be kept in the child’s lunchbox as appropriate, as a record of food eaten throughout the day. Childcare educators will record /concerns to the amounts a child has eaten for the day on the daily board changes or sign in sheets and share this information with parents. Kindy educators may contact parents or guardians directly or send a note home.

- The Centre will maintain a supply of food in case of an emergency or if children require more food due to an insufficient amount being packed. Families may incur a fee for the consumption of this food.

- A maximum of 2 ‘sometimes food’ experiences may be offered per term in line with our Healthy Eating guidelines. These experiences may be for special occasions such as theme days, celebrations or fundraising events.

- We recognise that food shortages impact on some families and want to keep food waste to a minimum. Any food waste will be disposed of thoughtfully, recycling as appropriate to feed the chooks or to make liquid compost for our Kitchen Garden in Bokashi Bins provided. Play dough and Gloop may be offered to children for play as the material does not resemble food products. This is an embedded strategy in supporting ongoing sustainability.

Personal and routine hygiene practices:

Personal and routine hygiene practices for both children and educators are an embedded part of our Centre routines. For example, washing hands before meals/meal preparation, wiping hands and face following food consumption, checking refrigerator and freezer temperatures daily, maintaining hygienic kitchen and eating areas through regular washing of utensils, and disinfecting of table tops, chairs and benches.
Children will wet hands, apply soap and wash hands back and front before drying with paper towels after outside play, before and after food, after nose wipes, after nappy change/toileting, or touching private body parts.

Staff are to wash hands: After nappy changes and toileting of children, before and after preparing bottles, between handling individual children’s food (wipes are used), after nose wipes, after outside play sessions and on arrival at work and prior to departure.

Strategies, Practices and Procedures:
- Tissues are held with plastic bags when assisting/teaching children to wipe noses whether indoors or outside. The bag is then tied and placed in the bin lined with a garbage bag liner.
- Cutting boards and knives are changed regularly when preparing food, and are stored and used out of reach of children.
- Utensils and dirty dishes are washed in hot, soapy water, sanitised, rinsed, covered and left to dry.
- The Refrigerators are cleaned weekly and staff will check and record their temperatures daily.
- Staff will store, thaw and warm breast milk, formula & cows milk in accordance with the “Right Bite Thawing, Warming, and storage of breast milk and formula procedures” that are displayed in the kitchen areas.
- Foods are heated once and, if not eaten, they are discarded. In Childcare, the amount eaten will be recorded. In Kindy, if concerned, educators contact parents or guardians directly or send a note home.
- Tables are sanitised before and after meal times and chairs as needed.
- The floor is swept after each meal time and mopped or spot cleaned as necessary.
- Children are encouraged to handle their own food.
- The kitchen area is cleaned thoroughly after each meal time. Staff sign off on the daily cleaning log which outlines the cleaning practices completed.
- Children are discouraged from sharing food and drinks.
- The kitchen bin containing food scraps is sealed and emptied into the outside garbage bin after each meal time.

Staff are to:
- Be free from illness
- Cover all cuts
- Participate in the Food Handling program Bug Busters training within 1 month of commencing employment
- Adhere to the guidelines set by the Department of Health at all times

Babies, Toddlers and Young Children, including breast feeding and bottle feeding:
We recognise the importance of the World Health Organisation and UNICEF recommendation that, “infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life to achieve optimal growth, development and health. Thereafter, to meet their evolving nutritional requirements, infants should receive nutritionally adequate and safe complimentary foods whilst breast feeding continues for up to two years of age and beyond.”

- Centre staff recognise the nutritional benefits of breast milk and support mothers to continue breast feeding whilst their child is in care. Please discuss your individual preferences and how we can best support you and your child during this important time. Several quiet venues are available to breast feeding mothers so please advise staff if you wish to access one.
- As a DECD site all employees throughout the centre we support the DECD Breastfeeding Procedures for DECD Employees: http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/hr/pages/hrpolicy/flexiblework/.

Strategies, Practices and Procedures:
- Babies and young children’s needs, such as milk, prepared formula and boiled water need to be supplied, fresh daily, in sterilised bottles, clearly named and with sterilised accessories.
- Breast milk and formula will be stored in a clean sterile bottle and will be named and kept in the rear of the refrigerator in the allocated storage boxes.
- Bottles will be heated in either warm water or in a bottle warmer with thermostat control. It will NOT be heated in the microwave as this has the potential for uneven heating, causing ‘hot spots’ and it also destroys the immunological properties of breast milk.
- Bottles may only be heated once. If the infant does not consume all the liquid, it must be discarded. Partially used infant formula, breast milk bottles or warmed cows milk will be kept warm for up to 2 hours. The amount and time consumed will be recorded.

- When a baby shows signs of readiness for solids, staff will support families by providing up to date information, following current recommendations from Right Bite. Please refer to the Appendix for information regarding the stages of introducing solids.

**Drinking water:**
Drinking water (fresh, clean tap water) and cups are available to the children throughout the day, however the Centre encourages parents to supply a named water bottle. Staff refill these as required. On average, children should drink 4 to 6 cups of water per day. Please refer DECD Policy-Water Supply for Schools and Preschools at http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/assessservices/pages/topiclisting/watersupply for further information.

- Children who are 1 to 2 years of age may have up to 125mls of fruit juice which does not contain added sugar and is diluted with at least 50% water.
- Children over the age of 2 years are to drink just water or milk if still required, unless specified for medical reasons in a Special Dietary Care Plan or Modified Dietary Care Plan.
- It is expected Preschool children will drink water only, unless specified for medical reasons in a Special Dietary Care Plan or Modified Dietary Care Plan.

**Dental Hygiene:**
Staff and Governing Council see Dental Hygiene as a high priority in the area of children’s health and wellbeing and will incorporate this within the Centre’s curriculum. It is important for children to understand dental hygiene to ensure the growth of healthy teeth and the use of hygiene practices needed throughout life.

**Strategies, Practices and Procedures:**
Dental Hygiene will be fostered by
- Encouraging healthy eating and drinking practices by incorporating these in Centre policies
- Staff act as positive role models
- Dental checks by the School Dental System in the child’s eligible pre-school year are encouraged and promoted.
  Dental Enrolment forms are included in the Preschool Enrolment Packs.
- Parent education programmes and information sharing.
- Children are encouraged to drink water after eating.
- The rules of hygiene and dental care will be included in the child’s program and staff will initiate discussion about these subjects with groups and individual children at appropriate times.

**Birthdays and Special Celebrations:**
With respectful consideration of the family’s cultural and religious beliefs, our Centre appreciates the significance of a child’s birthday. Where appropriate, we acknowledge the event with a Centre based celebration. Children have the right to feel special and be appreciated by those around them.

At the Centre we:
- Talk to the child about their special day and any plans they may have. We bring the special celebration to attention of others, sing them happy birthday and invite them to share their news with other children.
- also may give the child a birthday badge to wear for the day in the Preschool service
- Have them blow out real candles on a play dough cake
- Take the child's photo and put it in the Communication Book or Folder

With approximately 120 children passing through our Centre in one week, we encourage families to consider non-food based or healthy food options (eg Fruit Platter) as a way of acknowledging their child’s special day. Please discuss any individual arrangements with staff prior to the day to ensure fruit etc is prepared according to safety guidelines.

**Supporting Resources:**
- DECD www.chess.sa.edu.au Special Dietary Care Plan and Modified Dietary Care Plan
- Dietary Preferences form
- Preventing Choking on Food in Children Under 4 years of age
- Right Bite: Fluids for 1-5 year olds
- Thawing storing and warming breast milk and formula
- Lunchbox checklist for 1-5 year olds
- The Infant’s Lunchbox
- Ideas to Increase Essential Food Groups in the Lunchbox
- Choosing Healthier Food Snacks
- DECD Policy - Water Supply for Schools and Preschools
- Right Bite Ready Reckoner and Food Supply Checklist
- Right Bite The easy Guide to Healthy Food & Drink Supply for South Australian Schools & Preschools & links to other resources as suggested

**Sources:**
- Right Bite Policy - Right Bite Easy Guide to Healthy Food & Drink Supply for South Australian Schools & Preschools and
  Healthy Food & Drink Supply Strategy for South Australian Schools & Preschools
- Eat Well SA - Schools & Preschools: Healthy Earing Guidelines
- DECD publishing, (Revised Edition 2006), Health Support Planning in education and children’s services,
  Department for Education & Child Development
- **DECD Breastfeeding Procedures, 2011**
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, October 2011, National Quality Framework Resource Kit
- NHRMC Publications, 2005, Staying Healthy in Childcare, Preventing Infectious Diseases in Childcare 4th edition,
  Australian Government, National Health and Medical Research Council
- Gowrie Training and Resource Centre, 2005, Start Right Eat Right, Resource Kit for Child Care Centres,
  Government of South Australia, Department of Health
- DECD publishing, (Revised Edition 2008), Anaphylaxis in education and children’s services
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority, October 2011, National Quality Framework Resource Kit

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**Approval Signature:**