

# La Trobe University Community Children's Centre

## Nutrition Statement

Current research indicates that during the early years, many food habits are developed which continues throughout life. Therefore, it is important for our food at the Centre to be nutritious as well as meeting the social, cultural and educational needs of all our children.

The Centre acknowledges that Children have high nutritional needs because of their rapid growth and these needs must be met to promote their normal development (Quality Improvement and Accreditation System – Quality Practices Guide First Edition 2005 – Principle 6.1 p64).

The Victorian Governments Food Act 1984 classifies all Children's Services as **Class 1**.

*Class 1 premises are those responsible for handling and supplying high-risk ready to eat food predominantly for vulnerable population groups (the elderly, children aged 5 years or less, hospital patients, and others whose immune systems are compromised). (The Victorian Governments Food Act 1984)*

The Act provides the framework for all food preparation at the Centre. The Centre is also required under the Act to obtain a Certificate of Registration, with the City of Darebin's Health Department; develop a Food Safety Plan which is approved by the third party auditor; participate in annual inspections by City of Darebin, Health Department and a third party external auditor who both check kitchen areas, staff food preparation records and training.

The Centre menu is informed by numerous professional organizations (Nutrition Australia, Start Right Eat Right, Victorian Government Food Act 1984, Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code and the Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents) which provide the framework on which the menu has been developed.

### Sessional Care Families

Sessional Care families provide for all of their child/children's nutritional needs whilst they are at the Centre. This Statement is to be used, by you, when bringing food from home to the Centre.

For interesting lunch ideas feel free to consult with staff in your child's section and view our displays. Sessional Care Early Childhood Educators will throughout the course of the year collect ideas on lunch box ideas from parents and other professionals. This information will be distributed to all families regularly.

### Bringing Food from Home

Parents using our Centre when bringing in food that has not been purchased through a registered food business regulated under the Food Act 1984 (i.e. Bakery or Supermarket) must sign that the food has been prepared and stored appropriately. This is required under our legal compliance with the Food Act 1984.

### Special Occasions and Birthdays

Special occasions and birthdays are very important in a child's life. The Centre will focus on the occasion making them enjoyable and special experiences for **all** children. **It's not about the food.** Parents who choose to provide for their child's party/celebration should be mindful that the Centre takes part in the Start Right Eat Right Scheme which promotes health, nutrition and well being in all young children.

## **Food Safety**

For all the Children's safety within our Centre please note the following food product cautions:

1. **The Centre is a NUT, NUT PRODUCT and WHOLE EGG (hard boiled, poach, fried or omelette style egg dishes) free zone.**

The Centre must be compliant with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, legislative framework July 2008 (Children's Services Act 1996) for Anaphylaxis Management. The Centre is required to minimise the risk of exposure to a known allergen. Food containing the major sources of allergens, or foods where transfer from one child to another is likely, for example peanut, nut products, whole egg, sunscreens and nappy cream with nut products **must be eliminated from this environment.**

2. **Choking Precautions:** Certain foods can be dangerous for young children because they can easily be inhaled and block off the air ways. These include nuts, raw carrots and other hard vegetables, pieces of apple, popcorn, corn chips, lollies and grapes. Remember young children under the age of three years may not be able to chew properly because they do not yet have their full complement of teeth, so anything that is firm is a potential hazard (Safety Centre, The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne – Choking and Suffocation). The Centre acknowledges the recommendations made by the Safety Centre at the Royal Children's Hospital and will implement for all children, attending the Centre, less than 3yrs of age, the following:

- Carrot will be presented either grated or par boiled;
- Parents will indicate to staff serving preferences relating to other hard vegetables and fruit offered at the Centre (celery, apple and pear);
- In Sessional Care, parents provide for all children's nutritional needs. Staff will monitor children's lunch boxes for dangerous and prohibitive foods.

3. **High Risk Foods** - Certain types of food are called *high risk foods* because they provide an optimum environment for the growth of bacteria. *High risk foods* include those which contain meat, poultry, dairy, eggs, small goods, seafood, cooked rice, cooked pasta, prepared salads (coleslaw, pasta salads) and prepared fruit salads. (Food poisoning and how to prevent it – Fact Sheet – Department of Human Services September 2007).

The Centre's menu does contain *high risk foods* and therefore we undertake precautions to prevent the likelihood of bacteria growing and multiplying. These precautions involve the Centre following its Food Safety Plan (FSP), the appointment of a Food Safety Supervisor and the training of staff in safe food handling.

### **The Menu Framework is:**

1. Lunch and 2 snacks will be provided to the children on a daily basis. As the Centre does not open until 8.15 am children, it will be presumed, have had breakfast before arriving – the meals provided by this Centre will be **lunch, afternoon tea and late snack**. These meals and snacks are appropriate to the children's developmental needs and meet the minimum 'Daily Recommended Nutritional Requirements' (Nutrition Australia – Fact Sheet 2. Children's Nutrition – **Refer Attachment 1.**)

2. The child's lunch will consist of a two course meal that is nutritionally balanced. Milk and water is to be offered. Lunch time will normally commence from 11.15 am;

3. An assortment of fruit and sandwiches will be provided for afternoon tea and late snack. Afternoon tea will be offered from 2.30 pm reflecting the needs of the children. The late snack will be offered from 5.00 pm;

4. All food prepared at the Children's Centre will meet the Victorian Governments Food Act 1984 requirements and the Centre's own HACCP plan. Fresh fruit and vegetables are purchased on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week. Other food items on delivery will have temperatures and the use by dates checked. Correct storage and food serving requirements are implemented by the Food Handling Personnel. All Centre Personnel receive a Safe Food Handling Session conducted by the Food Safety Supervisor;

5. The Assistant Manager and Food Safety Supervisor have nutrition specific training. The Centre has also participated in the Start Right Eat Right program;
6. The La Trobe University Community Children's Centre Menu and Nutrition Statement is reviewed annually by Management, Families, Staff and Children;
9. The Centre will develop in consultation with Families an individual Educational Diet for the young babies.

0-1yr old Educational Diet: The Children's Centre menu for the 0-1 year old is designed around each child's individual need. Breast milk contains all the nutrients your baby needs in the first four to six months of life. If you can not breast feed, then formula is an adequate substitute. It is not advisable to introduce solid foods before four months as your baby's digestive system is not mature enough to cope with solids and there is a high risk of allergy. Even though there are no set rules, the introduction of solid foods generally starts with iron enriched infant cereals that can be mixed with cooled boiled water, breast milk or infant formula. Then a few weeks later you can introduce cooked, pureed fruit and vegetables that are easily mashed. Meats, poultry and fish are added gradually from about six months of age. Do not add salt or spices as your baby's taste buds are sensitive and your baby can not tolerate high levels of sodium. Egg and products containing gluten (wheat) should not be introduced until after eight to nine months.

The Centre will provide the following food items as part of the educational diet:-

- Rice cereal,
- Puree Apple, pears and mashed banana
- Individual vegetables (pureed and diced) Potato, Pumpkin, Beans, Carrot and Zucchini.

NO FOOD is introduced to a child if the parent/guardian has not previously given this food. Parents are to advise staff of their child's dietary needs. This is done via the Background Information Form and through discussion with your child's carer. This information will be documented and signed by you. These individual details of each child's needs are then be passed on to the Food Safety Supervisor for his/her action. The Centre does not provide formula for young children. Centre staff will not make up a child's formula at the Centre. Parents will need to provide the child's daily intake requirement in separate bottles. Please refer to the Centre's recommended Milk Handling Procedure. Cooled boiled water for children under 12 months is an alternative fluid source.

10. The menu will be:
  - Well balanced,
  - Adequate in portion sizes to suit individual children's needs (**refer to Attachment 1**)
  - Made up of a wide variety of nutritious foods to ensure we obtain all the nutrients our bodies need for good health and wellbeing(**refer to Attachment 1**),
  - Low in salt/sugar/fat products<sup>1</sup>,
  - Iodized salt added to cooking of pasta, rice and lentils<sup>2</sup>
  - Limited in artificial colourings/flavourings & preservatives,
  - Provide a combination of spoon/fork/finger foods,
  - Seasonal foods,
  - Chosen from a variety of cultures,
  - Vegetarian alternatives will be offered,
  - Free of all pork product,
  - Based on information available to the Centre, every attempt will be made to eliminate Genetically Engineered Food products from the menu (True Food Guide – GeneEthics Network GreenPeace May 2002),
  - Every attempt will be made to purchase organic products, being mindful of budget constraints.

- Note:
- a. The purchasing of food is the responsibility of the Centre's Food Safety Supervisor in consultation with the Manager. Purchasing of food product must be done from approved suppliers<sup>3</sup>. The menu must be managed within the annual budget allocation and be mindful of available preparation time.
  - b. Centre Early Childhood Educators will advise parents, daily, on the amount of food, and fluid intake a child has had whilst in attendance at the Centre (via the Daily Feedback Sheets). Centre Educators will advise parents when variations to the menu occur. You will be advised in writing and be required to sign in acknowledgement of this change.

## **Water**

Water makes up about two – thirds of our body weight. Water is needed to absorb nutrients from food, transport them around the body and flush away any waste products.

Children are at greater risk of experiencing dehydration from outdoor play and hot weather than adults. Children, when at the Centre, will have access to water throughout the whole day. Parents will provide their child with their own plastic water bottle. This must be taken home each day. It is expected the bottle will be clearly labelled and cleaned appropriately.

Cooled boiled water will be offered to children in our Nursery after feeds if children show signs of continued thirst.

Centre Early Childhood Educators will monitor and document (via Daily Feedback Sheets) the input/output of infants and all children's fluid intake for that day.

## **Children's Learning**

The Centre values the importance of children *learning about healthy lifestyles including nutrition, personal hygiene, movement and physical fitness. These aspects of learning are integral to each child's sense of wellbeing and self confidence. Enhancing children's understanding of their physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing is an essential component of our program (Early Years Learning Framework, 2009).*

**Health** and **Nutrition** awareness are addressed weekly on the Educational Curriculum within each Section as part of children's learning. Cooking experiences are also offered at the Centre, these are viewed as positive learning experiences for all children. For example cooking experiences not only provide children with opportunities to learn appropriate food handling practices but also develop concepts that can include: mathematics; fine motor skills; social (sharing, communication, negotiation,); literacy; language development; problem solving and many more.

## **Mealtime Environments**

At meal times it is important for the Centre Early Childhood Educators to create a calm and pleasant experience for children.

It is important for the Centre Early Childhood Educators to sit with children and be active participants in meal times.

Centre Early Childhood Educators will actively promote small group settings for meal and snack times. This in turn will promote a positive environment for socialization, learning and language development.

Mealtimes encourage positive conversations between staff to staff, children to staff and children to children.

## **When We Eat**

The Centre's routine as outlined in the Centre's 'Our Day' document, demonstrates our flexibility in routines which supports our ability to offer children choice in their day. Centre Early Childhood Educators need to be both sensitive and responsive to each child's daily nutritional needs and eating patterns.

## **Emergency Evacuation**

When an emergency evacuation takes place Food Preparation Staff will ensure that the following food will be available to the children as required: Water and Fruit.

### **Note:**

Start Right Eat Right Award Scheme is an integral component of Kids – Go for your life, a State funded initiative aimed at reducing childhood obesity. To achieve the Start Right Eat Right award, the Centre was required to meet a set criterion within this nutrition statement, our menu and undergo a site assessment on mealtime environments. The Centre received its award on 24 May 2007.

#### <sup>1</sup> **Choose low salt foods;**

**‘The body’s need for salt (sodium) is low and there is more than enough naturally present in foods without adding salt. The taste for salt is learned, therefore serving low salt foods to children will prevent them from developing a preference for salty tastes’. ‘Eat only moderate amounts of sugar and foods containing sugar. Foods that are high in added sugar contribute to dental caries and may displace more nutrient dense foods in the diet.’ (Caring for Children – Food, Nutrition and Fun Activities – Choking Precautions for Children in Care p.5)**

<sup>2</sup> **“...iodine is a key nutrient in the fetal development process, especially in respect to the brain. Young children are also particularly at risk because the brain still needs iodine for its development during the first two years of life. In addition, iodine deficiency in children is responsible for disorders in physical and cognitive development, and hypothyroidism. Iodine deficiency can easily be prevented at low cost. One of the best and least expensive methods of preventing iodine deficiency is by simply iodizing table salt, which is currently done in many countries. Where salt iodization has been in place for at least a year, improvement in iodine status within the population has been overwhelming.**

**(World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/features/qa/17/en/print.html>)**

<sup>3</sup> **Refer to La Trobe University Children’s Centre Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point Plan (HACCP) – section Approved Suppliers List for description and list of these.**

#### **Links to other documents:**

La Trobe University Community Children’s Centre Menu  
La Trobe University Community Children’s Centre – Anaphylaxis Statement  
La Trobe University Community Children’s Centre – Mission Statement  
Educational Curriculum  
Children’s Celebrations at the Centre  
Dental Care Statement  
Sun Protection Statement  
Milk Handling Procedure  
Information for Users and Conditions of Enrolment – Centre Information p8  
Staff and Family Induction checklists  
Daily Feedback Sheets  
Background Information Form  
Our Day  
My Grown Up Buddy

#### **Reference:**

Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents ([www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au))  
Nutrition Australia – Fact Sheet 2. Children’s Nutrition  
Start Right Eat Right Scheme  
Victorian Government - Food Act 1984  
Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code – Food Safety Standards  
True Food Guide – GeneEthics Network GreenPeace May 2002  
National Childcare Accreditation Council(NCAC): Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) Quality Practices Guide (2005) – Principle 6.1 & 6.2  
Caring for Children – Food, Nutrition and Fun Activities – Choking Precautions for Children in Care  
World Health Organization <http://www.who.int/features/qa/17/en/print.html>  
La Trobe University Children’s Centre Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point Plan (HACCP)  
Safe Food Storage and Display flyer – Department of Human Services 1996  
Safety Centre, The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne – Choking and Suffocation  
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, legislative framework July 2008 (Children’s Services Act 1996) for Anaphylaxis Management.  
City of Darebin – Food Safety Officer

Revised: March 2003

Approved: 27 May 2003 Minute 330.3 iii a. ii.

Revised May 2006

Approved 3 May 2006 Minute 359.7 iii.

Revised May 2007

Approved: 3 October 2007 Minute 372.11 i.

Revised March 2008

Revised November 2008

Approved: 3 December 2008 Minute 383.3 ii.b.

Revised July 2009

Approved: 27 August 2009 Minute 388.7 i. c.

Approved: 5 November 2009 Minute 389.10.m

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