



POLICY

NUTRITION

National Quality Standard: 1, 2, 6
Regulation: 77-80; 168

Managed by: Jenny Fox	Responsible position: Director	Status: Approved
Contact position: Chairperson	Date approved by Governing Council 1 December 2015	Next review date: December 2018



1. TITLE

NUTRITION

2. SCOPE

The policy applies to all those working in the site including students and volunteers

3: PURPOSE

Elizabeth Grove Children's Centre promotes good nutrition and safe, healthy eating habits in a supportive environment for all children attending the centre. Early childhood is a very important time for establishing lifelong healthy eating habits. Healthy eating has both short and long-term benefits for children. In the short term it maximises growth, development and activity while minimising sickness. In the long term it minimises the risk of diet related chronic diseases later in life, such as heart disease, strokes, some cancers and diabetes.

3. POLICY DETAIL

WHAT TO BRING

3.1 Snack Time

Snack time is part of the morning routine and children are free to have an afternoon snack if they wish. Parents and carers are asked to bring only fresh fruit, vegetables or dried fruit for snacks (called Crunch and Sip time) for the following reasons:

- To provide children with important vitamins and minerals
- To encourage a taste for fruits and vegetables and promote healthy eating habits
- To avoid children pressuring parents and carers to buy and provide other less healthy foods they may see other children having.
- To encourage chewing which promotes good oral muscle development
- To lower the risk of poor nutrition.

If a child cannot eat fruit and vegetables at snack times, staff are happy to discuss a plan around this with the involvement of a medical practitioner through a specific diet plan.

3.2 Lunch Time

Parents/carers should pack healthy lunches consisting of a variety of foods to help the children meet their nutritional requirements for the day. Parents and carers will receive handouts from time to time with guidelines and ideas for healthy lunches to meet some of the daily nutritional requirements. Parents are encouraged to bring nutritious food that children normally eat at home that is consistent with their culture. As Elizabeth Grove Children's Centre encourages healthy food choices, parents and carers are asked to avoid including foods high in fat, sugar and salt in children's lunch boxes for the following reasons:

- Children will quite happily eat healthy food, but will often choose less healthy food if they are given the choice
- Children who do not have 'treats' in their lunch box may become 'envious' of less healthy foods they see other children eating, i.e. peer pressure
- Healthy eating habits are easier to model if all children are doing the same thing

- High fat/high sugar/high salt foods contribute to short and long term health problems such as dental caries,
- High cholesterol, overweight and high blood pressure. Such foods are discouraged as 'everyday' foods
- High fat/high sugar/high salt foods are generally low in important nutrients needed by children to meet their daily nutrition requirements for good growth and development. If these foods are eaten at the expense of more nutritious foods, children will miss out on important vitamins and minerals.

3.3. Examples of healthy lunches

- Whole grain and wholemeal breads/wraps
- Fillings on sandwiches wraps such as cheese, salad, chicken, egg
- Whole grain rice dishes
- Cold rolls
- Sushi
- A range of fresh fruits
- Baked beans in a container
- Rice crackers and cheese
- Rice and tuna
- A cold pasta salad
- Chicken salad

3.4 Examples of Foods that must not be brought to the centre

Parents and carers are requested not to provide the following foods and drinks for snack time (and lunch) as they provide little goodness (vitamins and minerals). Some foods are high in fat, while others are high in sugar and promote tooth decay. Other foods are soft and don't promote chewing for healthy teeth, gums and face muscles.

- Sugary sandwich spreads e.g. honey, jam, chocolate spread, hundreds and thousands
- Potato, corn, rice chips including corn chips, twisties, burger rings, etc. (high in fat and salt)
- Popcorn as it is a choking hazard
- Muesli bars (high in sugar) and nut products
- Roll ups, fruit straps, fruit metres, etc. (high in sugar)
- Chocolates (high in fat and sugar)
- Lollies (high in sugar)
- Soft drink, cordials, flavoured mineral water and milk drinks
- Fruit juice, fruit box (high in sugar)
- Biscuits (high in fat and sugar)
- Cakes, buns, pastries (high in fat and sugar)
- Chewing gum (high in sugar)
- Dunkaroos/Dig Its
- Nut products of any kind (e.g. Nutella, peanut butter).

3.5 INTRODUCING SOLIDS/YOUNG CHILDREN

Children who have bottles of formula/ milk etc. and pureed food should consult with the occasional care coordinator about what to bring. If a child requires infant formula or breast milk during the day, a parent/carer will bring the necessary number of bottles (already made up) to the Centre each day. A parent may also choose to come back and breastfeed the child. When it is time for children to be introduced to solids staff will work with the parent around nutritional choices until the child is old enough to engage in 'crunch and sip' time.

3.6 NUT AWARE CENTRE

Some children (or family members) can have a life threatening allergic reaction to nuts and nut products including peanut butter, Nutella and muesli bars. Sometimes just touching a bowl with a nut product can trigger a reaction. For this reason, no food with nuts or traces of nuts can be brought to the centre and children will not be permitted to eat any food with nuts or traces of nuts. In this instance a parent will be phoned to see if they can bring an alternative food and if they cannot be contacted or cannot bring this then food will be provided to the child. The centre considers it is 'nut aware' as opposed to 'nut free' as it is not possible for staff to control what is brought to the centre in that it is possible food may be brought and staff are unaware it has nuts or traces of nuts.

3.7 DRINKS

Water is freely available to children and is the preferred drink for lunches. Most fruit juices and cordials/flavoured milks are high in sugar and should not be packed.

4. MEAL TIMES

Lunch and snack times are social events for the children where they can eat together and talk to one another and where positive eating habits will be encouraged. If a child finishes lunch quickly before everyone else, the child may be encouraged to stay and talk to their friends for a short time and *then* choose a quiet activity. Food and meal times are viewed as a learning experience.

5. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS ABOUT FOOD INTAKE

Staff send home food not consumed by the child so that the parent/carer is aware of the food eaten. If there are any concerns about eating during the day staff communicate with the parent/carer.

6. CURRICULUM

The centre will promote nutritional foods through the curriculum and from time to time might engage in a specific nutrition program.

7. INDIVIDUAL DIETARY NEEDS

When a child has an allergy to food or cannot eat fruit or vegetables an individual plan from a medical practitioner will be in place before the child starts at the centre.

8. COOKING AT THE CENTRE

The centre cooks/prepares food with children from time to time as part of the curriculum. Vegetarian options are always available and processed meats and ham are not given to children at the site as these are not part of the culture of some families. A parent's religious and cultural preferences will be taken into account. The centre will promote food with high nutrition when providing food at the centre. The centre may have food provided through the Elizabeth Grove Primary School for special functions such as cultural functions.

9. FUNCTIONS AT THE CENTRE

The centre will cater for vegetarian, cultural and religious preferences in foods provided for all parent functions. The centre does not normally have functions where food is shared from home to ensure that ingredients are appropriate for all children. Outside of enrolled hours it is parents' responsibility to monitor what their children eat (for example at a family function). To make it easier for families the centre will have food for functions that is practical for large numbers which may include a sausage sizzle. There is a cost for some functions involving food.

10. FOOD BROUGHT TO THE CENTRE

Parents supply all nutritious food for the day/session for their children. If food is supplied that is not nutritious, if the food has nuts or traces of nuts, if there is insufficient food for a child or a child will not eat the food a parent provides, the staff will normally try to contact the parent. If staff are unable to contact the parent, they may provide food for the child.

The centre will also supply lunch or snack for the child if a parent requests this and the parent is invoiced as per the fees policy. Sandwiches and fruit are the usual lunch supplied to children by the centre.

Staff will encourage children to eat the nutritious food that is packed but parents/carers should be aware that at times children may not be hungry and may want varied quantities of food at different times.

11. Birthdays

To celebrate birthdays, parents may bring a birthday cake, other food or items for all children. Cake and food must not be home-made, must be in original packaging, must have ingredients listed and must not contain nuts or traces of nuts. The staff should be informed the week before to ensure that there are not several cakes/items given at once and to ensure those with allergies are provided with another alternative and do not miss out. This is considered as 'sometimes' food and is considered acceptable as it is part of most family events and part of many families' culture.

The cake, food or items will be given out to enrolled children after parents arrive at the end of a session with parent/carer verbal approval. The centre acknowledges that some families may not celebrate birthdays and some children have allergies etc. and will work with the families to ensure the child is not excluded during such events and that staff are sensitive to varied cultural beliefs.

