

Active Care Healthy Eating Policy

Version 1

Completed Date: 30th August 2024

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Purpose

The Healthy Eating Policy sets out our commitment to promoting good nutrition and healthy eating habits within our wraparound childcare provision. We aim to create an environment that supports children in making balanced food choices and to partner with parents in encouraging lifelong positive attitudes toward healthy eating.

Aims

- To provide children with nutritious and balanced meals and snacks that meet their dietary needs.
- To educate children on the benefits of healthy eating and support them in making nutritious food choices.
- To encourage children to try a variety of foods, promoting a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and other essential nutrients.
- To work closely with parents and guardians to respect individual dietary requirements, preferences, and cultural or religious food practices.

Principles of Healthy Eating

- **Balanced Diet:** Meals and snacks offered will include a variety of foods from different food groups, promoting a balanced intake of carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals.
- **Hydration:** Fresh drinking water is available to children at all times. Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day and will be reminded to stay hydrated, especially after physical activities.
- **Limited Sugars and Processed Foods:** We aim to minimise foods high in added sugars, salts, and saturated fats. Processed foods will be limited, and fresh, whole foods will be prioritised.
- **Portion Control:** Portion sizes will be appropriate for the child's age and nutritional needs, preventing both overeating and undernutrition.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Staff:** Staff members are responsible for providing and encouraging healthy food choices and creating a positive mealtime atmosphere. They will model good eating habits, sit with the children during meals, and promote healthy attitudes toward food.
- **Parents/Guardians:** Parents and guardians are encouraged to support the healthy eating principles set out in this policy by providing nutritious packed meals where applicable and sharing relevant information on the child's dietary preferences, allergies, or cultural practices.

- Children: Children are encouraged to try new foods, make independent healthy choices, and communicate their likes and dislikes. Their preferences will be respected while encouraging balanced eating.

Mealtime Practices

- Designated Meal/Snack Area: When possible, meals/snacks will be served to children in a specific area designated for eating. Children are encouraged to make positive choices, and eat in a relaxed and social atmosphere.
- Positive Reinforcement: Staff will praise children for trying new foods and making healthy choices. Food will never be used as a reward or punishment, and children will not be pressured to eat more than they are comfortable with.
- Food Exploration: We aim to introduce children to different foods through activities and discussions, teaching them the importance of healthy eating and the role food plays in their growth and health.

Special Dietary Needs

- Allergies and Intolerances: Staff will work with parents to understand any allergies or food intolerances and will provide safe alternatives when necessary. All staff will be trained to recognise signs of allergic reactions and know the appropriate responses. Where allergies are present, staff will be provided with the correct information to ensure the children's safety during meal/snack times.
- Cultural and Religious Practices: We are committed to respecting children's cultural, religious, and ethical dietary practices, adapting meals or snacks as needed to honour these preferences.
- Medical Needs: Any medically required dietary modifications will be respected, and staff will receive appropriate guidance on how to meet these needs.

Snacks and Meals

- Snack Times: Nutritious snacks will be provided between meals, consisting of options like fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy or dairy alternatives.
- Meals: Where meals are provided, they will be well-balanced and follow dietary guidelines. Meals will include vegetables or fruits, lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats.
- Celebrations: Special occasions will be marked in a way that supports healthy eating. Treats such as sweets or cakes may be provided occasionally in moderation, with healthier alternatives offered as options.

Promoting Healthy Eating Education

- Interactive Activities: Staff will incorporate discussions about healthy foods into activities, helping children understand the benefits of nutritious choices. This may include gardening activities, cooking simple recipes, and learning about the origins of food.

- Positive Language Around Food: Staff will use positive language to describe foods and avoid labelling foods as “good” or “bad.” Instead, they will help children understand how different foods help their bodies grow and give them energy.

Food Safety

- Storage and Preparation: All food provided will be stored, prepared, and served according to food safety standards to ensure it is safe for consumption.
- Allergy Awareness: Staff will be trained on cross-contamination risks, allergy management, and the correct procedures to prevent any allergic reactions.

Monitoring and Review

This Healthy Eating Policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet best practices and aligns with updated dietary guidelines. Staff and parents will be invited to provide feedback on the policy to ensure it remains effective and supportive of children’s health and well-being.