



## **TORRENS VALLEY CHILDREN'S CENTRE INC.**

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### **NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY POLICY**

The Torrens Valley Children's Centre is committed to providing a healthy and supportive environment in which children can enjoy a wide variety of foods and mealtimes within a social setting. Through the provision of programmed experiences, including appropriate modelling from staff, children will have the opportunity to learn good hygiene practices, healthy food choices and food safety. We will also support families and carers in providing healthy, safe nutrition to their babies and children.

#### **The centre will...**

- ✚ Encourage children to eat healthy, nutritional food which has been sent from home.
- ✚ Program opportunities where healthy food and safe food handling practices are modelled and encouraged
- ✚ Support children's understanding of a healthy diet/food choices
- ✚ Model and support children to develop appropriate personal hygiene practices
- ✚ Encourage and support breast Support families to provide food/fluids for children whilst at the centre, that is consistent with dietary guidelines and meets recommendations from health services regarding safety (choking hazards and re-heating etc.)

#### **This policy contains the following sections:**

1. Nutrition
2. Food Safety

#### **NUTRITION:**

##### **Centre responsibilities:**

- ✚ To model healthy eating habits
- ✚ To encourage the avoidance of foods which contain added/excessive amounts of SUGAR, SALT, FAT, PRESERVATIVES, ADDITIVES and COLOURINGS as much as possible through providing information to families.
- ✚ To give children many opportunities to learn about food and nutrition as part of regular curriculum experiences. This will include
  - the children in growing, preparing and eating a variety of nutritional foods, that reflect local community cultural and multi-cultural influences
  - literacy experiences such as books, songs, games
  - dramatic play experiences - home corner, "small worlds"
  - conversations throughout the day, including during meal & snack times, and group time discussions - in Kindy we actively promote the idea of being a "food explorer".

- ✚ Children, excluding those babies and toddlers who require breast milk/formula, are encouraged to drink water only whilst at the centre. Filtered tap water (Pura Tap) is always available for children at all times throughout the day and specifically offered at snack and meal times. Children are reminded to drink during the day, particularly in warmer weather. The centre provides and maintains cups for children in the Child Care room. Children attending the Preschool program are asked to bring a named, plastic water bottle each day.
- ✚ Juice will not be routinely provided by the centre. If, however, juice is provided by the centre, as part of a curriculum experience, it will be diluted 1 part juice to 2 parts water.

### Allergies & Medical Conditions:

TVCC is an allergy aware site. We will do our utmost to provide a supportive environment for our children who have special food requirements based on food allergies, food sensitivities and/or medical conditions. We will do this by:

- ✚ Working with families and health professionals to support the child's health and wellbeing
- ✚ Requesting health support plans, including emergency management & medication plans, for each individual child. These will be monitored and updated regularly. All staff will be made aware of children with emergency health plans.
- ✚ As far as possible, the foods concerned, will be avoided in the centre. **Please note that families and staff** are requested not bring nut products of any kind into the centre.

Staff will also respect any family's special diet requirements, based on religious, cultural or family preference. The health and wellbeing of children is foremost and any concerns about a child's dietary intake will be discussed with parents/caregivers.

### Foods that may be choking hazards:

There are some foods that are not suitable for children until they have developed sufficient teeth, tongue and mouth control. The following foods are not recommended for children under 4 years, by the Adelaide Women's & Children's Hospital, as they may pose a choking:

- ✚ Foods that can break off into hard pieces
- ✚ Celery, carrot and whole/pieces of apple
- ✚ Popcorn, corn chips and similar foodstuffs
- ✚ Sausages, frankfurts and similar foods - unless skin removed and cut into small pieces
- ✚ Whole cherry tomatoes, blueberries or grapes (please cut in half)

The centre will not provide the above food items for children under 4 years. Parents are asked not to send them for children under 4. (Please note that if your child is 4 and attends the Child Care program they are able to have the above foods in their lunch boxes). If, however, a parent of a child under 4 requests that these foods be eaten as part of a lunch/dinner mealtime that has been provided from home, a risk assessment will be conducted with staff and parent/s. Similarly, in the Kindy program, a risk assessment will be completed with parents if the above foods are provided for children under 4.

Precautions to prevent and treat choking will be known and implemented by ALL staff

### **Meal times and the eating environment:**

We want children to enjoy the social aspect of eating together. We will model positive attitudes and behaviours towards mealtimes with children.

Breaks will be provided for morning tea/snack, lunch and afternoon tea/snack. Families of children attending the Child Care program may also wish to provide enough food for a late afternoon snack.

- ✚ Children will be seated and supervised at all times whilst eating - staff will sit with children and where practical, enjoy foods with them.
- ✚ A positive, relaxed and social eating environment will be provided
- ✚ Staff will promote positive discussions about the foods being eaten by children
- ✚ Access to appropriate equipment and utensils will be provided for children and their use modelled by staff.
- ✚ Staff will encourage self-help and, where necessary, assist children at mealtimes
- ✚ The food preferences of children and families will be respected

### **Special celebrations:**

We love to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions with children - we respect any family's religious and/or cultural beliefs in relation to celebrations. You do not need to provide a cake or food based "treats" to share. We will still share in the celebration with your child!! However, if families wish to provide a cake etc. they **MUST** provide a list of all ingredients used so that we can ensure foods can be safely consumed by children. It also pays to check with staff regarding any food allergies/intolerances, prior to the celebration. Families of children with special diet requirements are encouraged to provide a "supply" of celebratory alternatives, so that it can be an inclusive experience for all.

### **Families - you can support this policy by:**

- ✚ Supplying healthy food choices - please check with staff if you have any queries/concerns or would like further information
- ✚ Providing breast milk/formula in clearly named bottles
- ✚ Sending water only, in Kindy drink bottles
- ✚ NOT sending lollies, chocolate products, chips/crisps etc. - please save these treats for home
- ✚ Sending a piece of fruit/vegetable each morning for shared morning tea/snack
- ✚ Reading and following the guidelines in our *Allergy Aware Policy*.
- ✚ Keeping the centre informed and updated about your child's dietary requirements and/or allergies.
- ✚ Providing developmentally appropriate food for your children

### **FOOD SAFETY:**

The centre has developed safe food handling procedures which cover the safe storage, preparation/handling, serving and consumption of food, as set by the Food safety Standards - [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au). These procedures will be followed by staff, students and volunteers at all times.

### **The centre will:**

- ✚ Provide safe food handling training for all staff to ensure that food handling procedures and practices meet the required safety standards

- ✚ Ensure staff & volunteers wash hands appropriately or wear gloves when handling food - i.e.: preparing morning tea/snack, during cooking experiences
- ✚ Model and encourage the development of hygienic practices in relation to hand washing i.e.: when and for how long.
- ✚ Model and encourage the development of safe eating practices
- ✚ Offer developmentally appropriate food to babies, toddlers and children.
- ✚ Ensure children are supervised when preparing and/or eating food.
- ✚ Follow temperature guidelines or reheating restrictions when storing, preparing and serving food.
- ✚ Keep food preparation areas separate and ensure they are clean and hygienic
- ✚ Ensure that staff/volunteers with illnesses do not prepare food

The centre requests that children's lunch is provided for refrigeration in a plastic, standard sized lunch box - please remember that our fridge space is limited. If you choose an insulated lunch bag, they will not be placed in the fridge. If room temperature food is placed in an insulated bag, then placed in a refrigerator, the food is insulated **AGAINST** the cold air. This poses a food safety risk. We ask that you include a frozen icepack in the insulated bag.

**Families - you can support this policy by:**

- ✚ Modelling safe and hygienic practices at home
- ✚ Transporting high risk foods such as dairy products, meats and rice in insulated containers if transporting for more than 30 minutes or in very hot weather and refrigerating once at the centre

**Sources:**

Start Right Eat Right resource kit for child care centres in SA (March 2011)

DECD Right Bite Strategy

Preventing Choking on Food for Children 4 years of age and under - WCH

[www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)

Adelaide Hills Council - recommendations from Environmental Health Officer (Nov 2017)

Policy reviewed: November 2019

Next review date: November 2022