



# Food and Nutrition Policy

## Background

Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. Early education and care settings provide many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and other children.

The Beaconsfield Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) endeavours to make the venue as safe as possible for all users and provide an environment that stimulates healthy eating habits. Children who attend programs in the Children's Room sometimes have food allergies and members must be thoughtful about which foods they bring into the room.

## Purpose

The aims of this policy are to:

- Promote awareness of healthy eating practices.
- Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural, religious and family values.
- Ensure members are careful about the foods they bring or send with their children attending programs in the Children's Room in consideration of the needs of children with food allergies.

## Policy Statements

The Centre does not allow food sharing in the Children's Room. No food is provided by the service and each child should bring enough food from home to suit the length of the session they are attending. If insufficient food is provided, or the child refuses to eat what they have been given, parents will be contacted, and a solution determined. This may include early collection or additional food provided.

Educators will create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children. Each child's appetite is respected. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, educators do not insist he/she eats. Staff can encourage children to try different/new foods in their lunchbox but will not force them to eat. Food will not be used as a reward or withheld from children for disciplinary purposes.

The Centre encourages healthy food options. Staff can assist families with suggestions and will communicate if any foods should not be brought to a session relating to medical risks for an individual child attending the session. Parents and carers are encouraged to provide a variety of tastes and colours in their children's lunchboxes and food from all five food groups should be included in a child's daily diet.

The Five Food Groups are:

1. Vegetables and legumes/beans
2. Fruit
3. Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties
4. Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans
5. Milk, yoghurt cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat

Educators endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Communication with families is vital to support individual requirements.

Healthy food and drinks suggested by the Centre include:

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|------------------------------|--|------------|
| ✓ Water (preferable)         | ✓ Sandwiches                               | ✓ Wraps    |
| ✓ Fresh fruit/vegetables     | ✓ Dried fruit                              | ✓ Dips     |
| ✓ Fruit in jelly/juice       | ✓ Fruit sticks                             | ✓ Crackers |
| ✓ Ham or other meat products | ✓ Cheese, yoghurt, or other dairy products |            |

Water to drink is always freely available for children attending the service.

BNC discourages the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes.

The Centre is Allergy Aware and aims to be a Nut Free Zone.

Family support in implementing this policy is appreciated and encouraged.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing and reviewing policy</li> </ul>
Staff/Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing a hygienic environment for the children to eat/drink.</li> <li>• Ensure that the children have washed their hands before eating.</li> <li>• Educating children about healthy food, and healthy and safe eating habits while at the service.</li> <li>• Providing the children with appropriate access to their food and drinks throughout each session (usually at snack or lunch time and/or as required throughout the session).</li> <li>• Ensuring that there is NO sharing of food or drinks between children at the service and that children eat and drink only the food and drink provided for them by their parent/guardian.</li> <li>• Ensuring that ANY special food brought for birthdays or celebrations will be either:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Given out at the end of the session with the permission of each child's parent/guardian, or</li> <li>b) Eaten under the supervision of each child's parent/guardian while at the Centre.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Parents/Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing an appropriate snack and/or lunch in a named container.</li> <li>• Providing water in a named drink bottle.</li> <li>• Communication with staff regarding children's requirements and preferences for food.</li> <li>• Minimizing risk factors to help prevent an anaphylactic reaction by not sending any nuts or nut products, or other foods as advised by the Children's Room Coordinator which may be an identified risk.</li> </ul>

## Associated Documents

Children's Services Regulations 2020: *Regulation 47*

Medical Conditions Policy

Anaphylaxis Policy

## Document History

Version	Title	Author	Authorised	Date	Changes to Previous
1	Children's Room Food Policy	Occasional Care Coordinator	Children's Subcommittee	Nov 2011	Original-taken from 3YO and Occasional Care Policies & Procedures
2	Children's Room Food Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Sep 2017	Yes
3	Children's Room Food Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Oct 2019	Yes
4	Food & Nutrition Policy	Centre Coordinator	COM	Aug 2021	Review & reformat with additions