



Healthy Foods and Nutrition Policy

Healthy eating is fundamental to good health for all people throughout life. It underpins healthy growth and development, contributes to health and wellbeing, positive mental health and quality of life, and prevents disease and disability.

Overall, for good health, children need to drink plenty of water, eat plenty of fruit, vegetables, legumes, and cereals ...and, importantly, choose foods containing less fat, less saturated fat, less sugar, and less salt.

Children with appropriate nutrition have improved cognitive development, attention span, work capacity, behaviour and attendance at school and preschool. Establishing healthy eating patterns at a young age provides a critical foundation for good eating patterns.

DECS Healthy Eating Guidelines 2004

At Challa Gardens Preschool, we aim to promote nutritional eating habits in a safe, supportive learning environment for all children. Sound health and wellbeing habits are developed when children are encouraged to eat meals in a positive social setting, followed by recreational physical activity.

Early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong, healthy eating habits and can benefit children in three ways:

- Short term: maximises growth, development, activity levels and good health
- Long term: minimises the risk of diet-related diseases later in life, e.g. heart disease, strokes, some cancers and diabetes
- Good nutrition contributes to good health and wellbeing, which is vital for positive engagement in learning experiences.
- Advice from speech pathologists and dentists indicates that children should be eating crunchy foods.

Therefore, staff at this preschool will model and encourage healthy eating behaviours. Food and drinks will be consumed in a safe, supportive environment for all children. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to supply healthy foods that fit within the Right Bite strategy for their children at preschool.

Our preschool's food and nutrition curriculum:

- Is consistent with the *Guide to Healthy Eating* and the Right Bite Program, and promotes and teaches food safety to children as part of the curriculum.
- It includes activities that provide children with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to make positive, healthy food choices and learn about the variety of foods available for good health.
- Includes opportunities for children to develop practical food skills like preparing and cooking healthy foods.
- Integrates nutrition across the Early Years Learning Framework where possible, relating to the Developmental Learning outcome: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

The learning environment

Children at preschool:

- Fresh, clean water should be available at all times. Children are encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day.
- Children will be encouraged to eat the food provided from home. We suggest that fresh fruit be eaten as a snack prior to lunch. Children are encouraged to sit with their peers while they eat. This develops conversational skills and provides opportunities for children to view and compare food choices.
- Eat in a positive, social environment with staff who model healthy eating behaviours.
- Use the preschool garden to learn about and experience planting, growing, harvesting and preparing food for eating.

Our Preschool:

- Does not provide rewards/encouragements that are related to food or drink.
- Understands and promotes the importance of breakfast and regular meals for children.
- Teaches the importance of healthy meals and snacks in the curriculum.
- Is a breastfeeding-friendly site.

Food Supply

Our preschool:

- Encourages healthy food and drink choices for children in line with the 'Right Bite' Strategy
- Follows the guidelines below for families for food brought from home or provided by staff within preschool time:
- Ensures healthy food choices are promoted and are culturally sensitive and inclusive.
- Displays nutrition information and promotional materials about healthy eating.
- We continue to engage families in healthy eating practices through newsletters, informal conversations, and our parent information book. Translated notes are available to support families with limited English. We are working to ensure that options are inclusive of our site's cultural diversity.
- Encourages food choices that are representative of the foods of the preschool community.
- Encourages safe storage of all foods.
- Should your child require special foods, as part of a Health Support Plan, staff will liaise with families to ensure appropriate measures are in place to support the child's medical issues.

Our preschool has the following guidelines for families for food brought from home:

Each day, your child will need to bring:

- A water bottle for independent access to water during the day- If a child forgets their water bottle, the preschool will provide your child with a cup for the day
- An appropriate lunch box including a snack for morning tea and a healthy lunch

Snack time

Parents/caregivers are asked to supply fruit and vegetables at snack time to:

- Provide children with important minerals and vitamins
- We will continue to offer fruit sourced through community partnerships, such as the Kickstart for Kids program, to children who do not bring fruit.
- Encourage a taste for healthy foods
- Encourage chewing, which promotes oral muscle development.

Suitable food for snack time

- Vegetables (any that your child can eat independently)
- Fresh fruit (any that your child can eat independently)
- Fruit salad
- Dried fruit.

Lunch Time

At Challa Gardens Preschool, each child is required to bring their own lunch. Our Healthy Eating guidelines support parents/caregivers in providing healthy lunches for preschool. Children are responsible for putting their lunchboxes back in their bags to promote independent self-help skills.

Some examples of a healthy lunch include:

- Pita bread filled with salad or vegetables and low-salt lunch meats (e.g. ham, chicken, beef)
- Savoury sandwich/baguette/bagel
- Rice cakes with savoury filling
- Salad wrap
- Savoury rice
- Cold rolls
- Pasta salad
- Sushi
- Falafel and hummus
- Baked beans
- Tuna salad
- Home-made pizza
- Yoghurt
- Custard
- Cheese sticks or cheese wedges with crackers
- Plain full cream or reduced-fat milk

Challa Gardens Preschool works with families to manage identified allergies through individual health care plans. When notified, we ask all families to avoid bringing foods that contain nuts or other high-risk allergens. Staff will support children in understanding allergy safety in a developmentally appropriate way.

Foods Unsuitable for Preschool

To support a healthy and allergy-aware environment, we ask families to avoid sending cakes, pastries, doughnuts, chips, corn chips, roll-ups, chocolate, lollies, sweet biscuits, and products containing nuts. We work closely with families of children with diagnosed allergies or dietary requirements and will communicate with all families if additional food exclusions are needed.

If you're unsure whether a food item is suitable, please speak with an educator before including it in your child's lunchbox

Please note that due to food safety regulations, we are unable to heat or cook any food for lunch. If you would like to send hot foods, they must be stored in a thermos.

Food safety

At Challa Gardens Preschool, we

- Ask parents/caregivers to notify the preschool of any food allergies or intolerances on enrolment or as they occur

- Staff regularly review current research and health guidelines, including anaphylaxis and allergy management practices. Updates are discussed at staff meetings to ensure consistent, evidence-based implementation.
- Promote and teach food safety to children during food learning/ cooking activities
- Encourage educators to access training as appropriate to the *Healthy Eating Guidelines*
- Provide adequate hand-washing facilities for everyone
- Staff participate in ongoing training to remain current with anaphylaxis and allergy management, including the correct use of EpiPens and recognising signs of allergic reactions.
- Promote and encourage correct hand washing procedures and provide hand sanitiser stations
- Cook healthy options and provide preschool recipes for parents' information.

Policy in Practice

When children bring items that are not aligned with healthy eating or allergy-safe practices (e.g., large packets of chips or chocolate bars), staff will respectfully discuss alternatives with families. This is part of our commitment to working in partnership to support healthy eating habits and safety for all children.

Food-related health support planning

At Challa Gardens Preschool, our educators

- Liaise with families to ensure a suitable food supply for children with health support plans that are related to food issues
- Exceptions to this policy will only be made when a child requires certain foods due to dietary and/or medical needs, which have been discussed with the Director (or delegate) at enrollment.

References

Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013

[The Guidelines | Eat For Health](#)

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

[Australian Guide to Healthy Eating | Eat For Health](#)

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Part 4.2 – Children's Health and Safety

[Education and Care Services National Regulations \(2011 SI 653\)- NSW Legislation](#)

Early Years Learning Framework (2009)

[Approved learning frameworks | ACECQA](#)

Healthy Eating Guidelines for Schools

[Healthy eating guidelines for schools | SA Health](#)

Lunchbox ideas: meals for early childhood settings

[Get Up & Grow – Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood – Resource collection | Australian Government Department of Health](#)

National Quality Standard 2.1 (2017)

[Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety | ACECQA](#)

