



## Nutrition, Food & Beverages, & Dietary Requirements Policy

### Aim

Children's healthy eating habits in early childhood lay the foundation for eating habits throughout their lives. Therefore CSIROCare Clayton believes in the importance of providing healthy and nutritious meals for all of the children at our service, and all educators promote, encourage and support healthy eating habits and educate children about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. All mealtimes are positive experiences and we endeavour to create calm, relaxing meal times.

### Rationale

CSIROCare Clayton acknowledges that early childhood is an essential stage for health promotion and we are committed to the provision of a well-balanced and nutritious diet, with an emphasis on introducing children to a wide variety of foods. The use of added sugar, salt, preservatives and colourings will be minimised wherever possible. All food is prepared fresh on the premises daily by our Centre Cook who holds a current Food Handlers Certificate. Food provided by the Centre is planned to fulfil a minimum of 50% of a child's nutritional intake. All educators use mealtimes as an opportunity to influence children's healthy eating habits by being positive role models and educating children about the importance of leading a healthy and nutritious lifestyle. Educators create a supportive, supervised, hygienic social environment for children when they are eating. All staff members promote, inform, and guide parents in making healthy food choices for their children and families.

### Body

#### Nutrition

CSIROCare Clayton provides a wide range of nutritious meals based upon the Australian Dietary Requirements. These menus are devised by the Centre Director in consultation with the Centre Cook, including constructive feedback from the Management Committee, educators, families and the children. All meals are accompanied by drinks of water; and fresh or boiled water is available to children at all times during the day. Fresh milk is provided to the children at afternoon tea time.

Mealtimes at CSIROCare are approached as pleasant and social experiences for educators and children. During mealtimes, good eating habits are encouraged and educators role model positive eating habits as they sit with the children. Educators develop children's independence during mealtimes in developmentally appropriate ways, for example providing appropriate self-feeding utensils and assisting children in pouring, serving, set ups and pack up times.

Adequate hand washing facilities are located in each playroom and children are educated about the importance of appropriate health and hygiene practices.

Educators encourage all children to drink water after each meal to eradicate excess food particles.

We do not allow babies to go to bed with their bottles, nor do we dip dummies in any substance.

### Food & Beverages

Menus are devised by the Centre Director in consultation with the Centre Cook, including constructive feedback from the Management Committee, educators, families and the children.

The menus are updated every 6 months, providing different menus for summer and winter time. We provide breakfast until 8.00am, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

Our menus are displayed in the foyer and in each playroom. All meals are accompanied by drinks of water; and fresh or boiled water is available to children at all times during the day. Fresh milk is provided to the children at afternoon tea time.

### Dietary Requirements

The Centre Cook will cater for any individual dietary requirements – whether due to allergy, food intolerance, parental request or cultural beliefs. A form requesting details of special dietary requirements will be provided prior to your child beginning care with us. All food consumed by children within the service must be prepared on the premises by our Centre Cook, with the exception of breast milk and formula. We do not allow any food items or products to be brought into the Centre due to current health regulations, and to protect all children with known or potential food allergies.

Our programs integrate nutrition and healthy lifestyles across the curriculum, through valuable learning experiences. We consider and respect children's and families individual food preferences, requirements and differences in relation to food choices. We strongly encourage mothers who are breastfeeding to continue this process, by providing a supportive, comfortable and private environment. All families are encouraged to share recipes from home and these are incorporated within the menu if suitable.