

ALEXANDRA CHILDCARE CENTRE (1995) INC.

FOOD, NUTRITION AND SAFE EATING SUPERVISION POLICY

The following guidelines and procedures are specifically for Kopuwai Early Learning Centre, where the food is provided by parents. We provide an eating environment which encourages and supports ākongā to develop and understand healthy eating habits. We encourage parents/caregivers to provide healthy lunches which meet Ministry of Health Guidelines for Healthy Food and Drink.

OBJECTIVES:

- To provide a safe physical environment whilst eating.
- To educate tamariki about food and nutrition and food safety and its role in achieving and maintaining health.
- To provide children with food that has been stored, prepared and served safely and hygienically.
- To provide an eating environment that promotes family and multicultural values.
- To ensure children's safety when consuming food and drinks.'
- To serve food at appropriate times to meet the nutritional needs of each child while they are attending.

PROCEDURE:

- Kaiako encourage ākongā by role modeling healthy eating habits when eating with the ākongā at mealtimes.
- Kaiako will sit with children and actively supervise children while eating at all times during kai time.
- Any infant milk given to a child is provided and approved by child's parent/caregiver.
- To offer parents and ākongā advice and guidance on suitable food to pack in their lunchboxes through discussion, newsletters, and role modeling – pamphlets/information is available for family/whānau.
- Ākongā will be encouraged to eat healthy food options first.
- Consideration will be given to ethnic/religious dietary customs/beliefs during our kai times and routines. Whānau will be asked during their pre-visit to Kopuwai, if they have any specific cultural customs or beliefs that we will need to observe.
- Staff must be aware of specific children's allergies. When preparing food for consumption at the Centre; this will be displayed in a folder in the kitchen and updated regularly. Allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements will be the shared responsibility of the child's family and Centre. If a child's allergy is life-threatening a management plan will be in place to ensure all staff know emergency protocols.
- Due to the severity of peanut and/or nut allergies, our Centre is a Nut Free Zone.
- Water is always accessible, and boiled water will be available for infants 0-12 months of age.
- Ākongā are discouraged from sharing cups and bottles.
- Children will sit where their weight is supported by their buttocks as opposed to their feet.
- We will ensure there is a designated time and place where children sit down to eat.
- We will encourage children to sit up straight when they are eating, children are not permitted to walk, run or play while eating.
- Children will be encouraged to talk to each other only when their mouths are empty from food.
- Food will be placed directly in front of children to prevent them twisting and losing control of food in their mouths.
- A food allergy chart will be posted in the kitchen and updated as necessary.
- No child will have access to any food or fluid i.e. bottles, while in bed (or any other sleeping place).
- Infants under the age of 6 months and other children unable to drink independently are held semi-upright when being fed.
- Emergency food will always be available.
- Whānau will be advised if their child is not eating well.
- Ākongā and staff will wash their hands before handling food or eating.
- Food will be stored and served at safe temperatures. Fridge Calibration Record to be used to record the temperature of the Fridge every 12 weeks. Appendix 1.
- Activities focusing on food, nutrition, health, and food safety will be incorporated into the programme including experiences which recognise and support the diversity of family values and multicultural differences.

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Events for whānau/families outside normal Centre hours may be held for special celebrations such as Matariki and Christmas which include the sharing of food.

- Ākonga are encouraged to learn more about healthy eating by being involved in growing vegetables in our Centre garden.
- Food is used only for nourishment and learning experiences, never as punishment.
- Whānau are welcome to participate in mealtimes or food activities, particularly on special occasions.
- Uneaten food except unfinished yoghurt, fruit jellies (unless in a lidded container) will be retained in ākonga lunchboxes unless a parent requests otherwise.
- Food provided by Kopuwai Early Learning Centre will meet the MoH guidelines.
- Records of food provided by Kopuwai Early Learning Centre will show the type of food provided and are available for inspection three months after the food is provided.

Lunch:

- Healthy lunches are encouraged.
- Eating habits in the early years lay the foundation for future health.
- Children need good energy food to promote their growth.
- It is the responsibility of parents/caregivers to ensure a healthy lunch is provided for ākonga.
- On enrolment MOH guidelines re safe food options are provided to each whānau, and the pamphlet is available in the foyer.

High risk foods which are discouraged in lunchboxes at our Early Learning Centre due to being a choking risk:

- Nuts
- Large seeds such as pumpkin or sunflower
- Hard or chewy lollies
- Chips and corn chips
- Rice crackers
- Dried fruit such as apricots or raisins
- Sausages, saveloys and cheerios
- Popcorn
- Marshmallows
- Small hard food such as raw carrot, apple and celery will be grated, spiralized or sliced thinly with a mandolin, or cooked until soft.
- Small round or oval food such as fruit with stones or large seeds like watermelon, grapes, berries or cherry tomatoes. Grapes and cherry tomatoes will be cut long ways.
- Food with skin or leaves like chicken will have the skin removed and be sliced finely
- Compressed foods such as pieces of cooked meat will be cooked until tender or minced, shredded or chopped
- Any food with bones such as chicken nibbles or fish will have all bones removed.
- Use smooth thick pastes sparingly, spreading thinly and evenly onto bread or crackers
- Fibrous or stringy foods such as pineapple will have the skin removed and sliced thinly against the grain of fibers

Policy Category	Health & Safety
Licensing Criteria	Caring for Children by Carolyn Bunney & Laura Williams, Health Promotion Centre-Nutrition Team (Community Health Services) Healthcare Otago, Public Health Nurse, Nutritional Guidelines for Under Fives, Ministry of Health - Healthy Food and Drink Guidance – Early Learning Services
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