



Healthy Food Policy

1998, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2021

Rationale

Ardtornish Children's Centre provides a unique opportunity to promote and enhance the health and wellbeing of children in our local community. Our Centre works with parents and families to optimise each child's health and wellbeing.

Children need healthy food to develop their full physical and mental potential. Children's food preferences and eating patterns are learned through, and powerfully influenced by, early food and eating experiences. Appropriate food choices in childhood reduce the risk of chronic disease such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and kidney disease later in life.

At Ardtornish Children's Centre, children are regularly exposed to planned food and nutrition based learning experiences. These aim to positively influence the children's food preferences into adulthood and reflect multicultural understanding and family values.

What You Can Expect

- Meals are positive, relaxed, social experiences
- Independence is encouraged by supporting children to eat their own food without assistance
- Food for cooking experiences is safely and hygienically prepared and stored for children to eat
- Ardtornish Children's Centre follows the Australian Government Healthy Eating Guidelines and Physical Activity Recommendations
- We share information about the importance of children's nutrition with families and carers
- We support breastfeeding as a natural part of having a baby, and breast milk as a baby's natural first food
- Water is available at all times
- For children with specific dietary/health requirements alterations to the policy can be negotiated
- Staff model and encourage healthy eating behaviours
- Children are given opportunities to develop practical life skills such as preparing and cooking healthy food and growing their food in our Kindy garden
- Children have opportunities to learn about and engage with growing and harvesting nutritious food

What We Expect

- We request that you provide healthy snacks lunches for your child
- Children are also encouraged to bring their own water bottles (please do not give cordial or

Next Review	Last revision description
January 2023	Small wording changes

juice as sugary drinks contribute to tooth decay, and they attract ants!)

- The sharing of personal snacks and food with others is avoided because of possible diet and allergy issues
- Allergies – it is essential that staff are made aware of children’s allergies and that a Health Action Plan is provided to deal appropriately with any health issue that may arise
- Discrimination and harassment of breastfeeding mothers in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

What is a healthy snack?

Our Centre has the following guidelines for families regarding food brought from home.

Generally, a piece of fruit is best for snack times. Below are snack and lunch options that are considered nutritious by the guidelines we refer to. There are also examples of foods that are discouraged at Kindy.

Suggested Foods	Examples of Foods to Avoid
Fresh fruit and vegetables	Cakes, lollies, chocolate
Dried fruit	Sweet biscuits e.g. Tim Tams, Tic Tocs, Tiny Teddies
Dry biscuits e.g. Saladas, Jatz, rice crackers	Twisties, Chips, Burger Rings, etc. (high in fat)
Cheese	Muesli bars, fruit bars, roll-ups (high in sugar)
Cold meat – fritz, ham, sausage	Mousse, custard, jelly
Savoury filled sandwiches	*Many of these items contain high levels of sugars, fats, preservatives and/or salts. Check the labels – you may be surprised!
Yoghurt – (please note – squeeze packs are not able to be recycled)	
Plain popcorn	
Sandwiches/Wraps/Salads	
Cold pasta/left overs (we cannot reheat food)	

Lunch and Snacks

The Kindy and Occasional Care programs include opportunities in the morning and afternoon for children to eat when they are hungry and recharge for the remainder of the session. Children are supported to recognize when they are hungry and independently access their snacks from their bags. Children are given a reminder in each session to eat their snack if they are hungry. A snack table is set up exclusively for snack times and is kept clean for eating. Children are not permitted to walk around with food for safety reasons. We do not insist children eat all of their food unless negotiated with families for medical or dietary needs with an oral eating and drinking care plan. We remind children to eat and use positive encouragement and support them to put left over food back in their lunch boxes in order to support families to plan future meals.

As children only access the Centre for at most 2 days a week, we request that families only provide healthy snacks and lunches for their children. We are an environmentally aware Centre, and encourage foods without wrappers, the use of reusable containers and the use of products packaged in recyclable materials or materials that can be repurposed, such as yoghurt containers that can be washed and repurposed at our making table.

Please note that Ardtornish Children’s Centre is **Allergy Aware** and at times may ask families not to bring certain foods to support the safety of all children. We ask for your awareness and support in keeping all children safe.

What happens when an allergen containing food or not enough food is supplied?

Next Review	Last revision description
January 2023	Small wording changes

If your child has an allergen containing food item, a three stage response will occur. The food item will be placed in the kitchen to be returned to the child at the end of the day. The parent/carer will be contacted on the day (either in person or by phone). Your child will be supplied with an alternative healthy food by staff, for example a piece of fruit, something from our vegetable garden or some savoury crackers. A staff member will follow-up with the parent/caregiver if allergen containing foods continue to be supplied. If not enough food is supplied a similar response will occur. Staff will offer support to families where any food related concerns arise.

Birthday's

At Ardtornish Children's Centre we encourage children to share their family culture. For families who celebrate birthdays we encourage children to talk about what they do at home and we have a Kindy celebration of birthdays that includes presentation of a card, clapping out age and singing.

We ask that families do not bring food or other items into the Centre to share as part of their child's birthday celebration.

References

Further information about diet and nutrition including:

The Right Bite Strategy - The *Right Bite* strategy assists South Australian schools and preschools to select food and drink to promote healthy eating; **Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines** for Early Childhood Settings; **Start Right Eat Right** – promoting healthy eating and good nutrition for young children in South Australian and oral eating and drinking care plans in education and children's services & Eat Well SA - Schools and Preschools: Healthy Eating Guidelines, is available from the DECD website. <https://myintranet.learnlink.sa.edu.au/hr/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-in-early-childhood-settings/nutrition-and-dietary-requirements-in-preschool> Accessed August 2015

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