



# Mawson Lakes Preschool Healthy Eating Policy



At Mawson Lakes 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 the 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 and using cups for drinking.

*Healthy Eating is fundamental to good health throughout life for all people. It underpins healthy growth and development, contributes to health and wellbeing, positive mental health and quality of life, and plays a role in preventing disease and disability.*

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

## Curriculum

Our preschool's food and nutrition curriculum:

- Is consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*, and the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*
- Includes activities that provide children with 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 including preparing and cooking healthy food
- Integrates nutrition across the curriculum where possible
- Integrates the Early Years Learning Framework, Implementation guidelines for indicators of preschool numeracy and literacy in government preschools and the National Quality Standard.

## The Learning environment

Children at our preschool:

- Have fresh, clean tap water available at all times and are encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day
- Are encouraged to bring their own named cup to access our fresh water or a named bottle containing water only
- Eat in a positive, appropriate, social environment with staff who model healthy eating behaviours
- Use the preschool garden to learn about and experience growing, harvesting and preparing nutritious foods.

Our preschool:

- Understands and promotes the importance of children having breakfast prior to attending preschool
- Teaches the importance of healthy meals and snacks as part of the curriculum
- Ensures healthy food choices are promoted and are culturally sensitive and inclusive of our preschool community
- Is a breastfeeding friendly site.

Our preschool will ensure a healthy food supply for preschool activities, celebrations and events, strictly limiting availability of high fat, high sugar, or processed foods during preschool activities and events to no more than twice a term, in accordance with the Healthy Eating Guidelines.

Nutritional information about healthy eating is displayed and information will be provided through updates in our newsletters and on our website.

## Food and water supply

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

Each day your child will need to bring;

- A named cup or drink bottle for independent access of water during the day- If a child forgets their cup or water bottle, the preschool will provide your child with a cup
- An insulated bag/ or container with fruit/vegetables **ONLY** for snack
- Lunch in an appropriate small lunch box ONLY – no cooler ice packs or insulation required – lunches are stored in the preschool refrigerator.



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## Snack time

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

- Provide children with important minerals and vitamins
- Encourage a taste for healthy foods
- Encourage chewing which promotes oral muscle development.

Parents/caregivers are asked to supply fruit and vegetables **ONLY** for snack time. The snack containers are to be kept in children's bags which are placed in their locker under the verandah.

Parents/caregivers are required to provide enough fruit/vegetables for two snack times (morning and afternoon) in an insulated snack container with a cooler ice pack. Children will be reminded to have a drink regularly during the day and have free access to cool drinking water at all times. Children are expected to bring their own named drinking cup or water bottle which is kept in their bag.

## 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

If your child brings an inappropriate snack they will be asked to put it back in their bags to eat when they get home and parents/caregivers will be notified via a note in their child's information pocket. Your child will be offered an alternative healthy food snack.

If your child has not been provided with fruit/vegetables for snack time, your child will be offered an alternative food item such as sultanas or an apple.

If the snack food you have provided for your child is not fruit/vegetables and meets our Healthy Eating policy guidelines, it will be added to your child's lunch.

## Lunch Time

At Mawson Lakes Preschool each child is required to bring their own lunch. Our Healthy Eating guidelines support parents/caregivers in providing healthy lunches for preschool. **To promote independent self-help skills children are responsible for putting their lunch box in the lunch crates provided, which are located on the verandah.**

## Ideas for lunch time 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
- Cheese sticks or cheese wedges with crackers

Parents/caregivers need to ensure foods provided do not include **EGG or NUT** products.

## Foods unsuitable for preschool

Our healthy eating policy does not include items such as cakes/pastries, donuts, chips/corn chips, roll ups, chocolate, custards, lollies, sweet biscuits, or any items **containing egg, nuts or nut products – this includes muesli bars**. At times other foods may need to be excluded due to children's specific medical requirements. Families will be notified through the newsletter and black board.



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Parents/caregivers must notify the preschool of any food allergies or intolerances on enrolment or as they occur. Please note that due to food safety regulations we are unable to heat or cook any foods for lunch. If you would like to send hot foods, it must be stored in a thermos, which will be kept on the kitchen bench. If you want your child's lunch to be stored on the kitchen bench you must complete a safe food storage procedure form. If inappropriate foods are sent for lunch, children will be provided with a white bread cheese or vegemite sandwich at a cost of \$3.00, to be paid for by the family.

## Food safety

Our preschool:

- Promotes and teaches food safety to children during food learning/ cooking activities
- Encourages staff to access training as appropriate to the *Healthy Eating Guidelines*
- Provides adequate hand washing facilities for everyone
- Promotes and encourages correct hand washing procedures and provides hand sanitiser stations
- Cooks healthy options and provides preschool recipes for parents' information.

## Food-related health support planning

Our preschool:

- Liaises with families to ensure a suitable food supply for children with health support plans that are related to food issues.

## Working with families, health services & industry

Our preschool:

- Invites parents/caregivers to be involved in the consultation process to review our Healthy Eating policy
- Invites health professionals to be involved in food and nutrition activities with the children
- Provides information from health professionals to families and caregivers on the *Healthy Eating Guidelines* through a variety of media including:
  - Newsletters
  - Policy development/review
  - Information upon enrolment
  - Pamphlet/Poster displays
  - Website.

## References

Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/australian-guide-healthy-eating>

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Part 4.2 – Children's Health and Safety

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653/chap4/part4.2>

Early Years Learning Framework (2009)

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>

Healthy Eating Guidelines for schools

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/healthy+communities/schools/healthy+eating+guidelines+for+schools>

National Quality Standard 2.1 (2017)

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-2-childrens-health-and-safety>

Right Bite Food Supply Checklist

<https://edi.sa.edu.au/library/document-library/checklist/early-childhood-services/right-bite-food-supply-checklist.pdf>

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Developed and accepted by the Governing Council and staff of Mawson Lakes Preschool - 26<sup>th</sup> May 2008

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