Blackmans Bay Childrens Services

Nutrition Policy

Policy Number 3.6

Links to Education & Care Services National Regulations: 77, 78, 79 & 80

Rationale Developing healthy eating habits and attitudes during childhood is important for children’s long-term nutritional wellbeing. Healthy eating habits, together with regular physical activity, contribute to a child’s physical growth, capacity to learn and the development of a positive body image and self-esteem. Good nutrition also prevents illness and health problems such as obesity.

Policy Food provided at Blackmans Bay Children's Services will be nutritious and varied. Snack times and activities involving food preparation will provide positive learning experiences for children, who will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Parents will be consulted and encouraged to share family and multicultural values and experiences to enrich the variety and enjoyment of food to meet children’s nutritional needs.

Practices

- Food is prepared and stored hygienically
- The Service will provide children with nutritionally balanced snacks that meet the recommended nutritional needs of children
- Snack times will be treated as social occasions. Staff members will sit with the children and interact with them to encourage good eating habits and an appreciation of a variety of food and drinks
- Water will be offered at morning and afternoon tea
- Where possible, snacks and drinks will reflect a wide variety of cultures, especially the cultural backgrounds of families within the local community
- Snacks and drinks will be appetising and varied. Where possible, fresh produce will be used
- Menus will be planned with input from children, parents and staff
- Drinking water will always be available and accessible to staff and children
- Snack and meal times will have a regular schedule but small, nutritious snacks will be available to hungry children as required or on request
**Nutrition Policy** cont.............

- Children with allergies/intolerances will have Action Plans developed in consultation with parents, staff and medical professionals updated annually. This will be displayed for staff information.

- Children will be encouraged to try different food but will never be forced to eat. Their food likes and dislikes and their families religious and cultural beliefs regarding food will always be respected.

- Where children are on special diets, the parents may be asked to provide a list of suitable and unsuitable foods or their child’s preferences or to supply special food to meet dietary requirements.

- The requirements of children with special dietary needs must be known and followed by all staff.

- The denial of food will never be used as punishment.

- The importance of good, healthy food will be discussed with children during meal times, as appropriate.

- Information on nutrition, food handling and storage will be displayed at the Service and provided for parents.

- The Service systematically incorporates information on dental health practices into the children’s programme.

- The Service will provide information to families on dental health practices relating to different age groups of children as recognised by health and dental authorities.

- During vacation care (OSHC only), parents will be asked to provide their child’s lunch and drinks, except when otherwise stated on the vacation care programme.

- When food is prepared as part of the children’s programme of experiences, the ingredients and preparation techniques used will be hygienic and safe and contribute to children’s nutritional needs.

- Meal times will be a positive experience.

- Children shall be allowed to eat meals without being rushed.

**Blackmans Bay Children’s Services has the responsibility and opportunity to:**

1. **Provide nutritionally adequate food for children** - the food provided and the serving environment should also take into account a child’s physical, social, emotional and educational needs and development.
2. **Help foster nutritionally positive attitudes and food preferences in young children through:**
   - staff providing positive role models for children. Children readily pick up adult eating habits and attitudes to food; and
   - carrying out nutrition education activities with children aimed at broadening a child’s awareness of a wide variety of food and the links between health and nutrition.

3. **Pass nutrition information onto parents** of children in care. It is important to establish links with family members to encourage parent participation in the Services nutrition programme. Parent’s knowledge, beliefs and food preferences play a key role in establishing a child’s eating pattern and behaviour.
   - parents shall be encouraged to pack drink bottles containing water
   - fizzy or sugary drinks will be sent home

**Goal:**
**To supervise and assist in children receiving a safe and nutritious diet**

**Strategies**
- parents will receive direction on suitable food to pack for their children
- water will be available at all times
- dairy products for children under 2 should be full cream
- emergency food will always be available
- children will have access to bread or fruit if they are hungry between meals
- parents will be advised when their child is not eating well
- children will wash their hands before handling food or eating meals and snacks
- food will be stored and served at safe temperatures
- products containing nuts or nut products are not to be brought into the Centre due to severe allergic reactions by some children. These products will be sent back home

**Goal:**
**To provide an eating environment that assists the transmission of family and multicultural values**

**Strategies**
- staff members should sit with children at meal times when possible
- food is never to be used as a form of punishment either by its provision or denial
- multicultural differences will be recognised and accepted
- food awareness activities will be chosen from a variety of cultures
- special occasions may be celebrated with culturally appropriate foods
- parents will be invited to at least one food occasion each year
- meal times provide opportunities for encouraging self help, independence, social skills, learning and understanding
Goal:
To teach children about food and nutrition

Strategies
- Food awareness activities will be included in the teaching curriculum
- Children will be encouraged to get practical experience in food preparation
- Foods being eaten by the children will be discussed with them

Links to other Policies
- Food Safety
- Dental/Oral Health

This policy will be updated when:
- Changes are made to regulations or legislation
- We become aware of information indicating that best practice requires us to make alterations to our existing policy
- As part of the services normal policy review cycle of three years