

**-SWiCh Inc Child Care Centre  
Monash Student Association Clayton**

**Policy: Nutrition**

**Reviewed: Sept 2008**

**Policy Statement:** SWiCh encourages parents to send nutritious well-balanced meals for their children. Due to an increasing number of children with allergies the centre policy has banned all forms of muesli bars, nut bars and pre-packaged fast food snacks that may contain nuts. This includes pre-packaged cake bars, breakfast bars, rollups etc. Peanut butter and other nut spreads (e.g. Nutella) are not permitted. Pre-School room children often know what is in their lunch box so if restricted foods are sent the child will have the policy explained in simple terms and the food will remain in their lunch box to take home. We promote healthy snacks for morning and afternoon tea such as fresh fruit, vegetables, yoghurt, cheese, dry biscuits, and dried fruit. Lunch choices include sandwiches, cold cuts of meat and salad, stir-fries, pastas etc. The centre does not allow children to eat lollipops, hard lollies, chips, cakes etc. We encourage children to drink plenty of water and plain milk. Sweet drinks (e.g. lemonade), fruit juices and cordials will not be offered.

The following guidelines apply:

- Breakfast can be given to children when required; cereal and milk need to be supplied by parent. The centre does not have a cook and room staff serve prepared food however they do not cook as they are supervising children.
- We promote and support breastfeeding. EBM can be offered to your child, staff will warm the milk by standing it in a container of hot water, the microwave oven will not be used.
- If your baby requires bottles, the total number of bottles needed for the period of time the child is at SWiCh must be prepared by the parent and labelled clearly with the child's name. Formula bottles can be made up if the correct amount of powder is given to staff and the bottles are filled with the correct amount of water. Likewise cows milk bottles need to be prepared.
- Morning and Afternoon tea are offered approximately around 10.00 and 3.30 respectively. Parents are asked to provide a nutritious snack i.e fruit or raw vegetables, yoghurt, cheese etc. Examples of raw vegetables are chopped carrot, cucumber, capsicum, cherry tomatoes, bean shoots, snow peas, sugar snap peas, corn on the cob. In the pre-school room we have a fruit / vegetable share platter, this encourages children to sit socially trying different foods and sharing what they bring. On occasion's dry biscuits, healthy dips and avocado may be shared also.
- The centre does not give children high sugar content drinks including fruit juice. Children are encouraged to drink water and plain milk (no flavouring).
- Lunch is served between 11.30 and 12.00pm. Parents need to provide food that can be warmed in the microwave (please be mindful of ingredients in stir fries for

example satay sauce etc) or salads and sandwiches. As part of the centre's dental hygiene policy all children will be given water at the end of each meal.

- Water is available to the children at any time throughout the day. Children will be encouraged to bring a water bottle, these will be monitored to ensure children are drinking an adequate amount of water. They will be stored in a hygienic way ensuring children are not sharing bottles.
- If a child is particularly hungry they are offered food; the set times for meals are approximate guidelines and should not be mistaken for regimented eating times.
- Any child with a special needs diet will be catered for unless it causes any risk to that child or others in the centre.
- All food handled during the program shall be done in a hygienic manner ensuring perishable goods are stored in the refrigerator or in a covered container away from heat and sunlight. The kitchen shall be maintained in a clean hygienic state.
- Staff will provide parents with information regarding age appropriate meals, lunchbox ideas, and other information on healthy eating for young children to keep them informed of their nutritional needs. This will be done through discussion, brochures, newsletters and displays.
- All children's food and infant bottles must be clearly labelled.
- Parents are informed of what their children have eaten throughout the day.
- Staff make meal times a pleasurable experience, encouraging children's self help skills by enabling them to help with setting the table, collecting bibs facewashers etc, self feeding. Staff are always involved at mealtimes to ensure safety when eating. This is a good time to role model good eating behaviours, support socialisation and learning about nutrition. Discussion about healthy choices and special occasional foods that we have from time to time at home or at parties etc.
- When planning cooking experiences staff draw from a variety of different cultures expanding the children's knowledge of the wide range of flavours, textures and taste that can be experienced.
- Due to the varying ages of the children, dietary requirements and cultural dietary restrictions we do not share a wide range of foods other than those we have previously mentioned. This includes birthday cakes. We discuss how birthday treats such as lollies, cakes etc are sometimes foods and that they will be eaten at home, instead parents are welcome to send special treats such as balloons, fruit kebabs, dips and dry biscuits.
- In line with food safety recommendations uneaten meals will not be reheated and discarded by staff.

### Food Handling and Safety

- When children arrive staff store the child's food in appropriate area and refrigerate perishables. Non-perishables can be left in the child's lunch box. Parents are to ensure that all food is clearly labelled.
- Staff wash their hands before and after preparing food.
- Surface area must be cleaned with an appropriate cloth before preparing food.
- Food preparation area is not used for any other purpose i.e. preparing art materials.
- Food and bottles (excluding E.B.M.) will be warmed in the microwave oven unless staff are given alternative instructions.

- Any food that falls on the floor is discarded.
- Any spoon / bowl / fork / knife that falls on the floor will be washed.
- Tongs are used to distribute food.
- Any food kept at the centre other than the child's daily lunch box will be stored in the kitchen pantry in airtight containers if needed.

Source: Food hygiene for food handlers / Australian Institute of Environmental Health, Victorian Division  
Human Services / Food Safety Programs  
Childcare and Children's Health Publications  
NCAC  
Caring for Children Food Nutrition and Fun Activities