

Nutrition Policy

Kangaroo Valley Preschool Inc recognises the importance of healthy eating in the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in their care.

The preschool also recognises and supports the importance of the fostering of relationships and social interactions that occur within an eating environment.

Kangaroo Valley Preschool Inc recognises the importance of supporting parents and families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that the preschool has an important role in supporting parenting skills in healthy eating.

This policy aims to:

- Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.
- Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values as well as fostering the development of interpersonal connections and social development.
- Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood staff and families about healthy food and drink choices
- Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending preschool.
- Promote awareness of sustainable practises.

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Kangaroo Valley Preschool will:

- Encourage the children to eat a variety of nutritious foods and drinks to meet their appetite.
- Encourage the inclusion of a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for lunches and snacks whilst at preschool. This includes fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, milk products and lean meats.
- Provide information to parents and families on the types of foods recommended for children and which are suitable for children's lunchboxes
- Encourage families to pack both fruit and vegetables in their child's lunch box every day.
- Encourage the children to eat the nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox before eating any less healthy treats that may be supplied.
- Encourage families to provide water as a suitable drink. Milk is another suitable drink to provide as well as supplying water.
- Drinking water is made readily available for the children.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for staff to undertake professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.
- Discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods which are high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven baked crackers and corn chips.
- Store and serve food at a safe temperature. (Above 60°C or below 5°C)
A fridge is available to families for storage of perishable food. The temperature of the fridge is checked each day. Eskys are also available for general food storage.
- Breast feeding is supported.
- Encourage physical activity every day as well as good nutrition practices to promote health.

Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values

Kangaroo Valley Preschool will:

- Instruct the staff to sit with the children at meal and snack times and role model healthy food and drink choices. Staff will also foster discussion and interpersonal connections at these times.
- Endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Food activities may be incorporated into the program. These include simple cooking experiences, and learning experiences, including stories and books which promote healthy eating.
- Children are encouraged to try different foods, but will not be forced to eat anything they do not wish to eat. Children are praised for trying different foods.
- Provide sufficient meal and snack times for children to consume an appropriate amount of food and drink, as well as time to enjoy the social interactions with other children and staff at these times.
- Not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for discipline purposes.

Celebrations

- Special occasions may be celebrated by sharing different foods – for example - birthday cake (provided by a child's family), Easter eggs, popcorn, party foods. Any treat foods enjoyed on these occasions will be supplied in small amounts. These special occasions are an excellent opportunity to discuss with the children the differences between everyday foods and sometimes/ treat /party foods. These special occasions may also be celebrated by playing games, candle blowing ceremonies or another special treat that does not always involve food.

Food safety

- Children are always supervised during eating.
- Safe and hygienic food handling practices are promoted by encouraging children and staff to wash their hands before eating and handling food. Food handling gloves, tongs or other utensils are used for serving food whenever possible.
- Staff ensure that children always sit down quietly to eat.

- Staff are aware of the dangers of choking. They will closely monitor the children as they are eating, being particularly vigilant if a child is provided with hard foods, for example nuts and foods with pips.
- Food will not be microwaved for the children due to the possibility of burning and hot spots.
- All staff need to be aware of any children's food allergies or special diets.
- Staff are aware of safe and hygienic food handling practices.
- Food that is too hot will not be served to the children; staff will exercise extreme care with hot drinks around the children.
- Children are encouraged to take part in cooking experiences led by the educators. Staff should ensure that the children and adults all wash their hands before starting, supervise carefully and take precautions to avoid burns and other injuries.

Promote Lifelong Learning About Healthy food and Drink Choices

Kangaroo Valley Preschool will:

- Foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through a range of learning experiences included in the education programme.
- Encourage children to participate in a variety of hands on food preparation experiences.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices.
- Encourage children to use their self help skills during mealtimes and so develop their independence.
- Growing food in our garden will be encouraged whenever possible.

Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending preschool

Kangaroo Valley Preschool will:

- Provide access to the Nutrition Policy to all families at the beginning of the year or when their child commences at the service. Families will be provided with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the policy.
- Request that details of any food allergies or specific dietary requirements be provided to the service and work with parents to develop an appropriate response so that children's individual needs may be met.
- Certain foods may be excluded from the preschool environment if an enrolled child has a severe allergy to that food.
- Whenever possible, uneaten food will be returned home in the child's lunchbox so that parents can monitor their child's eating habits
- Communicate regularly with parents and provide information and advice on suitable and unsuitable food and drinks packed in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways which may include newsletters, brochures, notes in lunchboxes, face book, e mail, orientation days, information sessions and informal discussions.

Promote awareness of sustainable practises.

Kangaroo Valley Preschool will:

- Encourage Recycling through sorting food scraps and rubbish. Scraps of food are placed in the green "Chook Food" bucket, Recyclable objects placed in the yellow recycling bucket, and wrappers etc sorted into the red rubbish bucket. The process of sorting will be discussed regularly with the children.
- Encourage children to eat the foods they require while minimising wastage.
- Families are encouraged to use reusable and sustainable packaging when packing food.



References:

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Munch & Move Resources www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

Kidsafe www.kidsafe.com.au

NSW Health:

Caring for Children Manual

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Get Up & Grow

- www.health.gov.au
- www.eatforhealth.gov.au

This policy was written in consultation with Megan Powell – Health Promotion Officer, Munch and Move program.