

# FoodMatters

A nutrition newsletter for carers of children under five

ISSUE 18

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Constipation insert included to copy and distribute or multiple copies available from SA Dental Service.

Winter 2005



## Food and nutrition policy for child care.

### Why do it?

By Alison Martin, Dietitian/Nutritionist and Louisa Matwiejczyk, Chief Dietitian/Nutritionist, Start Right-Eat Right Child Care Nutrition Awards Scheme, Noarlunga Health Services

Many centres have a food and nutrition policy but writing and updating these can be a challenge!

This issue of Food Matters will soon be followed by the new 'Guidelines for Developing a Food and Nutrition Policy in Child Care Centres', written by South Australian child care staff and the South Australian Child Care Nutrition Partnership (SACCNP). These guidelines aim to make writing or just checking your centre's policy a simple task.

### So, why review our food and nutrition policy?

In 2001, an independent survey in South Australia found that most child care centres had a food policy. Although these were of a high standard, feedback from centres and survey results found the content of these food policies varied quite a lot. As an example, in a local survey of 10 centres, only 8 of the 18 key food policy criteria were met. With recent changes in feeding practices and food hygiene, many centres found their policies needed reviewing. *Continued page 2...*

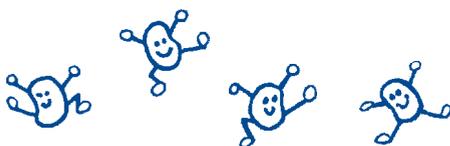
## Welcome

to issue 18 of Food Matters. Do you need to create a food policy within your centre or does your current food policy need a review? We have some simple suggestions to get you started! We also give you advice on why you need a food policy and the benefits it can bring to your centre.

We include a care providers 'first hand' experience at providing some great opportunities for children in her care to learn about healthy living. It is great to see how a positive learning environment can include not only eating healthy food but cooking and growing healthy food too. With winter upon us, we have a great 'winter warmer' recipe providing inspiration for cooking through the cooler months.

Don't forget to check out 'What's Happening' for the Start Right Eat Right Award training dates. We also introduce you to a newsletter which can provide you with valuable up-to-date information relevant to the early childhood sector. Read on to find out about the new updated version of 'Planning Nutritious Long Day Child Care Menus' in our resources section as well as some valuable resources around quality improvement and outcomes for your centre. We hope you enjoy this issue of Food Matters.

Paula Nash  
Editor and Dietitian  
Department of Nutrition  
Children, Youth and Women's Health Service



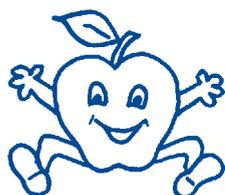
## Does a food and nutrition policy help me?

Yes, it helps child care workers, children and their families as it:

- gives workers support for dealing with food issues that often come up in child care (eg, if there is concern over the types of food being sent from home, a food policy can give clear guidelines when talking with parents/carers)
- helps define responsibilities for nutrition/food safety issues
- ensures children are given the food and opportunities they need for good health, growth and development
- can open helpful, regular talking between families and child care staff
- ensures best practice around nutrition, food safety, hygiene, eating behaviour, meal times and curriculum
- promotes healthy eating and safe nutrition
- helps bring about and maintain changes



A food policy is also needed for QIAS accreditation (National Child Care Accreditation Council quality assurance program for child care services) and Child Care Licensing in South Australia (child care licensing is governed by Department of Education and Children's Services).



## Will I benefit from using the new guidelines?

Yes, these new guidelines were formed to help your centre review or write your own food policy. They are seen as best practice guidelines for nutrition and include aspects of QIAS.

They will help make checking or writing your own policy simpler and include lots of handy ideas so that your policy is easy to use. They also offer ideas to help your centre make and sustain the changes that will promote healthy eating to children in care and their families in the long term.

## What's in the new guidelines?

There are clear steps to use when writing and putting in place your own food policy. There is a focus on involving all members of your child care community. This will make sure your policy meets the exact needs of your centre. The guidelines advise the following four broad headings are used, with each centre choosing the details they wish their policy to contain.

**Food provision:** In writing your policy, you need to outline what menu guidelines you use to provide healthy food eg. a centre may have a goal *'To provide food and drink that is safe, varied, nutritious and culturally diverse'*.

**Meal times:** In writing your policy, you need to outline how the eating environment will support healthy food habits and the passing on of family and multicultural values eg. a centre may have a goal *'To provide*

*a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating'*.

**Families and nutrition:** In writing your policy, you need to outline how your staff discuss the food environment, routines, activities, and special diet needs with families eg. a centre may have a goal *'To communicate effectively with families about their child's food and nutrition'*.

**Curriculum:** In writing your policy, you need to outline the ways you regularly include food in activities that help children learn about food and healthy eating eg. a centre may have a goal *'Children will be given opportunities to learn about food and nutrition'*.

The new guidelines have lots of great examples of policy statements you can use to support your goals and to get started on planning or checking your policy. They also include guidelines on how centres manage special diets as well as the most recent infant feeding guidelines (including starting the right types of solids and fluids, breast milk and the use of formula).



The new guidelines will soon be available on <http://www.chdf.org.au/cgi-bin/auto?id=519>



# Learning about healthy foods in Family Day Care

By Robyn Wilson, Family Day Care (FDC)

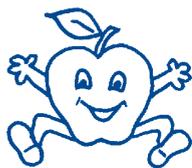
Food Matters Representative (Robyn Wilson, Fieldworker from Family Day Care) spoke to Taetia McEwen (Careprovider) about how the 'Healthy food choice in Family Day Care' Policy has been included in to her daily role of caring for children within her home environment.

**Robyn:**

*'How do you teach children in your care about healthy foods?'*

**Taetia:**

'I explain to the children about how important it is to eat foods that help them grow. With the introduction of the Policy I am able to reinforce the importance of children being sent into my care with healthy food each day. I circulate a regular newsletter to all parents about what food is acceptable and explain that items will be sent home if they are of poor nutritional value to a child. I have always considered it very important to promote healthy food choices for children. I talk to the children about how certain foods help them with different parts of the body and use books to teach them about this. I have a large garden where the children learn about growing food'.



**Robyn:**

*'What sort of things do you do with the children in the garden?'*

**Taetia:**

'The children had planted cherry tomatoes in a pot and we watered them until they were ripe and then picked them. We also planted spring onions and spinach in pots that the children picked. The children tried eating the spinach in some sandwiches they made but it was not terribly successful so the children took it home for their parent/s to cook. We have planted herbs which the children really love running their hands through and smelling the aroma, especially the basil. I have chooks in my backyard and the children feed them scraps and collect the eggs. Sometimes the children take the eggs home or we boil them and use them for activities. In the backyard there are strawberries, fruit trees and a passionfruit vine growing (that a parent gave me as a gift) and the children watch the flowers develop into fruit and then we pick the fruit. I also have a worm farm that the children enjoy getting their hands in'.



**Robyn:**

*'Has the Policy been helpful since being implemented in January 2004?'*

**Taetia:**

'I am now able to stipulate that it is a necessary part of my job and that I am obligated to work within the Policy guidelines. The resources are helpful to give parents. They provide many ideas such as snack ideas for children. I don't see so many treats and sweet snacks coming along in children's lunchboxes now that we have the policy.

The policy has helped me to provide positive food related activities such as encouraging children to try new foods. It has also helped me manage food related behaviour issues such as food refusal'.

**Robyn:**

*'What are the children doing here today?'*

**Taetia:**

'The children planted the sunflowers and watched them grow and here they are picking out the seeds and we will replant them in another pot. Some of the children are removing the seeds from the heads to take them home to their parents'.



By Sandra Andreassen, Lecturer, Community Food Services, TAFE SA

## Winter warmer

Soups are an excellent way of including a range of vegetables in the diets of young children. Not to mention the fact that they are easy to prepare and easy on the budget.

- Thick and hearty soups such as chowder and pureed soups can be easier for young children to manage than thinner varieties.
- Adding noodles or alphabet letters makes them fun to eat.
- Served with damper or bread they can make a healthy and satisfying meal.

### Chicken Noodle soup

\*Serves are based on 250 mls



Ingredient	Serves 40	Serves 50	Serves 60
Diced chicken thighs	2.4kg	3kg	3.6kg
Water	8 litres	10 litres	12 litres
Massel chicken stock cubes	16	20	24
Onions	1.2 kg	1.5 kg	1.8 kg
Carrots	720g	900g	1.0 kg
Celery sticks	4	5	6
Zucchini	600g	725g	1.0kg
Creamed corn	4x420g cans	5x420g	6x420g
Egg noddles or alphabet noodles	240g	300g	360g

- Place chicken, water and stock cubes into a large stock pot.
- Wash and chop or roughly process vegetables. Add to stockpot. Bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for 1 hour.
- Use a stab blender to puree soup. Stir in creamed corn and egg noodles
- Simmer until noodles are cooked.
- If soup is too thin, thicken with cornflour blended with a little water or milk.
- The vegetables in this soup can be substituted eg replace carrot with pumpkin or sweet potato.
- For a creamy soup, add 2 tablespoons of milk powder for every litre of water (mix the milk powder with the creamed corn when adding it to the soup).
- The quantities given will provide 1 serve from the meat group and 1½ serves from the vegetable group.

## Food Advertising to Children

By Paula Nash, Nutrition Department, Children, Youth & Women's Health Service

There is growing concern and mounting evidence about the harmful impact food advertising to children has on their food preferences and eating habits.

A number of factors influence children's eating habits and physical activity patterns including peers, school, the environment and the media. All of these factors have the ability to influence lifestyle habits in both a positive and negative way. We would like to highlight the negative influence television food advertising to children has on children's eating habits.

What we know:

- At least 1 in 3 advertisements during children's viewing time are marketing food
- If an Australian child watched 2.5 hours/day of commercial television they would be exposed to 11 food advertisements for high fat and/or high sugar foods per day, or 77 per week
- Manufacturers use sophisticated marketing techniques to persuade children to buy their product
- Research shows that TV food advertising does influence children's eating habits
- The current regulations are ineffective at protecting the interests of children

What can be done?

- Have your say by voting on an online survey at [www.wch.sa.gov.au/foodadstokids.html](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/foodadstokids.html)
- Visit the website above to find out more or join 'Friends of CFAC'
- Speak to your local politician about your concerns
- Limit 'screen' time to a maximum of 2 hours/day
- Read the pamphlet titled 'TV food advertising promotes junk food to children' in this issue of Food Matters

If you are interested in becoming more involved in this issue, please refer to the Food Advertising to Children workshop outlined on page 5 or phone Paula Nash on 8161 7233.

# What's Happening

Compiled by Jane Taylor, Centre for Health Promotion, Children, Youth & Women's Health Service

## Start Right Eat Right Award for Child Care Centres



The Start Right Eat Right award recognises centres that have:

- a nutritionally adequate menu
- all staff trained in food safety
- a supportive and enjoyable environment for children.

The accredited nutrition course is run over one and a half days and is attended by Directors and Cooks. The course includes food safety training and visits from a Nutritionist and an Environmental Health Officer.

### 2005 dates and venues

- August 4 & 18, Thebarton.
- Two rural courses will also be run, dates and venues TBA.

For more information contact the Start Right Eat Right Project Officer on 8325 8100.

## 'Walk and Talk'



'Walk and Talk' is a resource to support language development, literacy and physical activity in young children and focuses on walking excursions around the local community. It has been developed by speech pathologists at Noarlunga Health Services,

Southern Adelaide Health Service and health promotion staff at the Centre for Health Promotion, Children, Youth and Women's Health Service.

Cost: \$66.00 plus \$7.70 postage.

**FREE** workshops that provide information on the resource will be run during 2005. Contact the Centre for Health Promotion on (08) 8161 7777 to find out more about the resource and upcoming workshops.

## CSNews

Early Childhood Australia (formerly the Australian Early Childhood Association) has started a free, weekly, online newsletter for the early childhood sector called CSNews. It provides a broad range of up-to-date news and information about children's services.

The newsletter will support the development of a strong early childhood sector by helping all services access the same information. It also aims to increase knowledge and understanding of what is happening across the early childhood sector in Australia. This will help develop networks and improve services.

Guidelines for the newsletter have been developed by Early Childhood Australia. They include the requirements of the Privacy Act which provides protection for your email address.

To register to the newsletter, send an e-mail to [office@csnews.com.au](mailto:office@csnews.com.au)

For more information visit: [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

## Food Advertising to Children

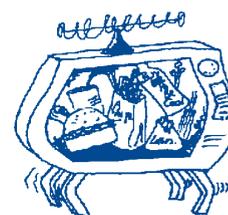
This workshop is aimed at community members who are concerned about television food advertising to children. The session will cover:

- Why we are concerned
- TV food advertising and the link with childhood obesity
- Group presentation skills
- How you can make a difference to TV food advertising to children.

2005 dates and venues:

- Friday, August 19, Port Pirie
- Tuesday, August 30, Fullarton Park Community Centre
- Saturday, September 10, Women's & Children's Hospital

If you are interested in attending this workshop or would like further information, please contact Paula Nash on 8161 7233.



## For more information

For enquiries about any aspect of Food Matters, including mailing list details phone (08) 8161 7777. For general information about children's health and nutrition, contact the Health Information Centre at Children, Youth and Women's Health Service on (08) 8161 6875.

Paula Nash  
Editor, Food Matters



# Resources

Compiled by Jane Taylor, Centre for Health Promotion,  
Children, Youth & Women's Health Service

## Planning Nutritious Child Care Menus: Nutrition Checklist and Support Materials

### UPDATED VERSION COMING SOON!

The checklist has been updated to include key points from the 2003 Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating as required by the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS). Updated information in the checklist includes dairy foods and the age for starting solids.

The revised Checklist and Support Materials will soon replace the current version available at [www.wch.sa.gov.au/childcarenutrition](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/childcarenutrition)

## Guidelines for Food and Nutrition Policy in Child Care Centres

is soon to be released by the SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership. It will be sent to all child care centres in South Australia by mid 2005. The guidelines in this resource aim to help centres create and/or review their Nutrition Policy. These guidelines are considered best practice guidelines and include principles from the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS). The resource includes:

- Why have a policy?
- How to develop a policy
- Food provided by centres and from home
- Special diets

- Advice on policy content
- A list of resources for food policy and menu development

The guidelines will soon be available at [www.wch.sa.gov.au/chp.html/childcarenutrition](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/chp.html/childcarenutrition)



## Family Day Care Planning resource

This resource package is designed to support discussion between fieldworkers, care providers and families about quality improvement and outcomes for children in home based child care settings.

The resource links the Family Day Care Quality Assurance self evaluation tool and the South Australian Curriculum Standards & Accountability (SACSA) Framework, especially through the Essential Learnings.

The resource can be purchased for \$33.00 by phoning The Gowrie Resource Centre on 8352 5246.

## Constipation

This pamphlet has been developed for parents. It provides information for families about preventing constipation.

You can get more copies for parents by phoning the SA Dental Service on (08) 8222 9016.



## The SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership aims to promote good nutrition for all South Australian children in early childhood services.

Partners include representatives from Child Care Associations, Department of Education and Children's Services, TAFE, Gowrie Training Centre, SA Dental Service, child care centre cooks, Children, Youth and Women's Health Service (Women's & Children's Hospital), The Cancer Council South Australia, Southern Adelaide Health Service (Noarlunga and Inner Southern Community Health Services) and Department of Health.

## Editorial Policy

Food Matters aims to promote good nutrition in early childhood by providing nutrition information, advice and support to carers of young children and showcasing child care food and nutrition initiatives. While every effort is made to include articles which meet these objectives, inclusion does not necessarily imply endorsement by the SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership. This newsletter may be copied for educational and non-profit purposes with acknowledgement.

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Government of South Australia



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