

# NUTRITION, FOOD AND BEVERAGE

## Aim

In a village, nutrition as a singular term was not a familiar concept. Villagers didn't choose to be nutritious, they just were. They understood the link between eating and staying healthy and it was not a conscious decision to make healthy choices either. It was just done. Everything was organic. They harvested their own food and made it into delicious, fresh and naturally nutritious meals, without a single thought about fats, or salts or preservatives.

As the demands of modern times grow, children are spending more and more time within services and it is left up to others to ensure your child gets the right nutrients. At The Little Village, we are going back to basics. We will ensure children not only receive regular and adequate food, they will also enjoy it, experience it and be involved in it. We want to make food a point of celebration, like the villagers did, where people gather and partake in a meal together. This will create positive experiences and instill in them an appreciation of diverse and nutritious food.

## National Quality Standard and Legislations

This policy links to the following National Quality Standards 2.2.1, 2.2.2 National Law (section) and National Regulations 77-80, 90-91, 162, 168

## Links to other policies

- Water Safety Policy
- Interaction with Children Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

## Sources

- Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Guide to the National Quality Standards
- Staying Healthy in childcare 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.





## Strategy

To create a positive experience of food, we want to involve children in all aspects of it; from seed to plate. We will instill healthy practices that will be carried on into adulthood.

### HEALTHY EATING EXPERIENCES

- Healthy eating practices starts with understanding. It will be our responsibility to take every opportunity to teach children about nutrition and food awareness to instill positive attitudes that will be retained through life.
- Mealtimes will be a positive experience and a chance to learn social skills as well as self-reliance. Food will be served in small portions so children may be able to serve themselves and sit within a group to encourage discussions during meals.
- Group learning activities will include information about healthy food, different food groups, how food is grown, why we need to eat healthy food as a source of energy and how food is a point of celebration of cultural diversity.
- All cultural traditions will be celebrated with food being a main feature. Children will be encouraged to try new foods, but by no means forced.
- The Little Village will live by the philosophy of carer provides, child decides. We don't want to push food onto children, as we believe that each child is capable of deciding when they want to eat and how much. If one meal is light, we will observe that they make up for it in subsequent meals or days. (If this behaviour is continuous, we will recommend the consultation of a pediatrician.)
- We will provide half of the Recommended Dietary Intake (RDI) over the course of a full day. This will be assured through our qualified nutritionist, planning our menu to provide a variety of nutritious meals.
- Nutritionists will be invited to give talks and presentation to families to ensure children are getting the right intake of food.
- Parents will be informed of eating practices of their child through daily updates through The Little Village app.
- The TLV app also has a platform that provides healthy eating recipes, recommendations and prompts for families to access independently. This is updated regularly.



- Families will be given regular information about nutrition and recommended dietary inclusions in our monthly newsletters, with popular alternative recipes they could try as a family.
- Important information may be displayed intermittently to encourage healthy eating practices, as well as recommendations for nutrition for both child and adult.
- Children will be involved in the growth and maintenance of a vegetable garden. By teaching them how food is grown and involving them in its preparation and cooking, children will be happy to eat the fruit of their labor.
- Organic food will be purchased wherever possible. TLV veggie patch Local and sustainable produce will be incorporated as often as it is available.

#### BABIES AND TODDLERS (BIRTH – 24 MONTHS)

- We support and encourage breastfeeding, even on our premises. Follow the breastfeed here sticker if you would like some privacy.
- With the support of parents, we will start to introduce solids to babies around 6 months of age as they require more nutrients and iron, which breast feeding and formula alone does not provide. Baby's reflexes and ability to hold up their heads also allows for solids to be consumed.
- At 6 months, their interest in food is developing, so we will experiment with flavours and textures to encourage a wide interest in food.
- We will respond to the child's interest in food. We will provide and experiment with food, but at no time force-feed. We do not want to encourage the learnt behaviour of over-eating that may lead to child or adult obesity.
- We don't want to punish with food either, as we want the experience to remain positive at all times. A no fuss approach will be taken at all times, so the child may develop a healthy and natural relationship with food.
- To avoid choking or gagging:
  - 6-7 months - food will be blended or finely mashed for all mealtimes.
  - 7-9 months – food will be mashed or grated for all mealtimes.
  - 9-12 months – food will be served that requires munching.

- At 12 months of age, food will be given a higher priority than milk. Milk will be offered in a cup after meals.
- Small meals with mid-meal snacks will be provided. Grazing will not be encouraged, even when hungry, as this will help develop patience and a healthier appetite for meal times.
- Milk will not be given in excess to protect the child's appetite.

### **CHILDREN (2 - 5 years)**

- To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, children need to be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious foods and drinks to meet your energy needs.
- Children should eat sufficient nutritious foods and drinks to grow and develop normally. They should be physically active every day and their growth should be checked regularly.
- Children need to enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day.
  - Plenty of vegetables, including different types and colours, and legumes/beans
  - Fruit
  - Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
  - Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans
  - Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives
  - And drink plenty of water. (see Water below)
- Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt and added sugars.
  - Limit intake of foods high in saturated fat such as many biscuits, cakes, pastries, pies, processed meats, commercial burgers, pizza, fried foods, potato chips, crisps and other savoury snacks.
  - Replace high fat foods which contain predominately saturated fats such as butter, cream, cooking margarine, coconut and palm oil with foods which contain polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as oils, spreads and avocado.





- Low fat diets are not suitable for children under the age of 2 years.
- Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added salt. Read labels to choose lower sodium options among similar foods.
- Do not add salt to foods at the table. The chef/cook understands the nutrition policy, based on professional recommendations, and will use sodium in moderation.
- Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars such as confectionary, sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks.
- Sweets will not be used as rewards, nor bribery for good behavior. Food in general will not be used for behavior guidance (see Interaction with Children Policy).
- The importance of milk:
  - Children will be encouraged to drink plain cow's milk after meals as well as during morning tea and afternoon tea to promote good dental hygiene.
  - Children aged two years and under should have full cream milk (around 4g fat per 100ml) to help meet their energy needs. Reduced fat milk (not skim) contains 1-2 g fat per 100ml and can (not supplied by TLV) be given to children over two years as long as their appetite is good and they are growing normally.
  - Soy milk, rice milk and milk alternatives shall be used when dietary restrictions require it.
- Water is the best to drink to quench thirst and will be made available at all times.
  - Bottles will be kept filled to promote self-reliance.
  - Tap water is recommended for children above 12 months.
  - Children will be encouraged and reminded to drink water throughout the day.
  - See our Water Safety Policy for more information.
- Fruit juice is not recommended. Fruit will be served regularly instead.
  - Juice lacks the fibre and nutrients found in a whole fruit.
  - Fruit will be served for morning tea and/or afternoon tea.
- Desserts will be fruit or milk based, such as natural yoghurt, custard, mousse or fruit salad, as just some examples.



- Children with special diets:
  - Alternative foods will be provided for children with special diets to ensure that they still consume half of their Recommended Dietary Intake (RDI).
  - We will obtain detailed written information from the family on the diet to be followed while in care, and certification for the special diet from a health care professional.
  - We will ensure written instructions on a child's special dietary needs are easily accessible to all staff and carers.
  - We will review the diet every six to twelve months and ask the family whether the diet has evolved and obtain details of any changes.
  - If special diet is due to a medical condition, Action Plans will be set up according to practitioner's recommendations (see Medical Conditions Policy).