The Monash Kindergarten is committed to providing a safe and educational environment for our children. Included with this is an emphasis on good health and nutrition, which is a requirement within the Early Years Learning Framework Document used at our Centre. We aim to look at children's growth and development and establish habits that will prevent disease later in life, eg Diabetes.

The number of children in Australia who are overweight or obese is increasing rapidly. Experts cite sedentary lifestyle, ie. lack of active play and exercise, and diets high in fat and sugars as cause for this trend. There is also an increase in tooth decay in young children and speech pathologists are reporting a greater incidence of speech problems which is partially attributed to the decrease in children eating foods which require extensive chewing eg. whole raw fruit.

Mindful of the growing weight and tooth decay problems, Monash Kindergarten has a Health and Nutrition Policy that aims to promote healthy eating.

**The goals of the Policy**

1. Promote nutritious food choices for children at the centre by creating a supportive environment for parents, carers and children.
2. Promote increased knowledge and awareness of the importance of good nutrition by acting as role models for parents, carers and children of the Monash Kindergarten community.
3. Ensure that the Centre fosters safe eating and food related activities.
4. Foster healthy social, emotional, cultural and physical development of children.

**Promotion of the Policy**

1. Promotion to parents through pamphlets, information sessions and cooking sessions.
2. Promotion to children through role modelling, cooking activities, etc.
3. Regulating and promoting the types of food allowed at kindergarten.
4. Water is the highly recommended drink.
5. Promote and model good hygiene practices.
6. Minimise foods that are choking risks to children.
7. Promote cultural appreciation of diversities through bilingual worker, cooking sessions from different countries, role modelling, cultural celebrations.
8. The kindergarten will recognise and celebrate children's birthdays.

**Foods that the kindergarten promote:**

* Fruit and vegetables - celery, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, apples, oranges, strawberries etc. (staff will cut, peel, etc. as necessary).
* Dried fruit
* Dips
* Salads
* Milk products - cheese, yoghurt, etc.
* Hard boiled eggs
* Dry biscuits and rice crackers
* Plain pancakes/pikelets
* Sandwiches/wraps
* Bread sticks/pita breads
* Plain scones.

**Foods that are discouraged:**

* Muesli bars
* Potato chips
* Chocolate and lollies
* Sweet biscuits
* Cordials/fruit boxes
* Flavoured milks
* Chocolate custard

Notes will be placed into parent pockets if inappropriate foods are being brought to kindergarten.

**The Monash Kindergarten is a NUT FREE ZONE.**

Water only is to be brought to kindy. Children are encouraged to bring their own water bottle and it will be refilled as necessary.

Refrigeration will be available for all foods.

Specialised dietary needs will be accommodated.

Date reviewed November 2011