



Food and Nutrition Policy

Rationale:

The Staff and Management at Kidiwise Early Learning Centre are committed to the health and wellbeing of every child that attends the Centre. We will promote, encourage and support healthy eating and attitudes to food at all times.

We will provide seasonal fruit and vegetables in all rooms and morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea in the Nestlings and Moreporks room. We aim for most meals to be cooked with natural alternatives to sugar, minimal salt and preservatives. We will use culturally appropriate practice around meal times.

As some healthy foods such as apples can be dangerous for young children, Kidiwise will prepare all food served in a safe and developmentally appropriate manner to reduce food related risks of choking. Children have small air and food passages, are still learning to move food around in their mouths, chew, bite and grind food and may not have all their teeth – for example, for a child to be able to grind food before swallowing successfully they need second molars. Kidiwise will follow the Ministry of Health document *'Reducing food related choking guidelines for 1 - 3 year olds and for pre-schoolers,'* which is a list of foods to exclude and a list of foods to alter and how to do it (e.g. by boiling, grating, or mashing). Where parents provide food, Kidiwise will promote the best practices as set out in the guidelines.

Guidelines for Meal Times:

1. Lunch will begin with a karakia to say thank you for the meal they receive.
2. We value meal times as an enjoyable social time for children. Staff will sit with children when they are eating and will initiate and participate in conversation and social interaction. All children will be supervised while eating. They will need to stay seated throughout their meal. A teacher will be sitting at the kai table during mealtime.
3. Management will ensure that, for every 25 children present there will be at least 1 of the teachers sitting with the children holds a current first aid certificate or other relevant qualification.
4. Mealtime provides the opportunity for children to contribute to the life of the Centre. Children will be encouraged to participate in activities such as setting the table and clearing them.
5. Children will be encouraged to develop self-help skills through activities such as washing their own hands and faces.
6. Where food is provided by parents such as a lunchbox Kidiwise will promote the best practices by providing them with an information sheet from the guidelines. This will be included in the enrollment packs and at the time of transition. Kidiwise asks parents and whānau to adhere to these guidelines, especially when food is brought to be shared for special occasions.
1. As per the Ministry of Health Guidelines the following food will **NOT** be consumed at Kidiwise:
 - whole or pieces of nuts

- large seeds, like pumpkin or sunflower seeds
 - hard or chewy sweets or lollies
 - crisps or chippies
 - hard rice crackers
 - dried fruit
 - sausages, saveloys and cheerios
 - popcorn
 - marshmallows
7. These guidelines will be displayed in each food preparation area at Kidiwise.

Guidelines for Food Safety:

2. All tables are to be thoroughly cleaned before and after serving.
3. Children's hands are to be washed before they eat. This is particularly important when children are using their hands to eat.
4. Children will be encouraged to turn away from food when they cough or sneeze.
5. Children will use their own plates, cups and utensils and will not be allowed to share food from a common bowl.
6. Staff will wash hands thoroughly before preparing food and wear a glove to cover their hand if they have any cuts or abrasions.
7. All left-overs which have been served to the children will be disposed of. Where a child does not eat lunch at the normal time, the lunch will be hygienically wrapped and stored in the refrigerator until required. If necessary, the meal will then be re-heated thoroughly and served at a safe temperature. Food will not be re-heated more than once.
8. All plates, cups and utensils will be washed in the dishwasher after use.
9. Benches, cutting boards and working surfaces will be kept clean at all times.
10. All food served at the Centre will be fresh, in good condition and contain as little sugar and preservatives as possible. We aim to provide children with a balanced diet and good variation of food, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables to meet the nutritional and developmental needs of each child.
11. Weekly menus are displayed in/by each kitchen for parents to view. These are also kept in the meal records folder at the end of each week for up to 3 months.
12. All food provided by the Centre that pose a high choking risk **will not** be served unless prepared in accordance to the Ministry of Health document '*Reducing food related choking guidelines for 1 - 3 year olds and for pre-schoolers,*'

How to alter high-risk food to lower its choking risk

Food characteristics	Examples	Choking risk	Changes to reduce risk	
			1–3 years old	4–6 years old
Small hard food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pieces of raw carrot, apple or celery 	Difficult for young children to bite through and break down enough to swallow safely. Pieces can become stuck in children's airways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grate raw carrot, apple or celery, spiralise to create vegetable or fruit spirals, slice thinly using a mandolin. Cook until soft² and cut into strips (around 4–6 cm long) that can be picked up with one hand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare as for 1–3 years. Raw or cooked vegetables or fruit cut into sticks (approximately 4–6 cm long) that can be picked up with one hand.
Small round or oval food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit with stones and large seeds or large pips like watermelon Grapes, large berries, cherry tomatoes Raw green peas 	Small round foods can lodge in children's airways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove stones and large seeds or large pips. Quarter or finely chop grapes, berries and cherry tomatoes to an 8mm x 8mm size or smaller (about half the width of a standard dinner fork). Cook and squash with a fork. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halve or quarter grapes, berries and cherry tomatoes Whole cooked green peas are acceptable.
Food with skin or leaves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chicken 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove skin from chicken. Finely slice or chop salad leaves, spinach and cabbage. 	

Food characteristics	Examples	Choking risk	Changes to reduce risk	
			1–3 years old	4–6 years old
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lettuce and other raw salad leaves, spinach, cabbage Stone fruit (eg, plums, peaches, nectarines) Apples and pears Tomatoes 	Food skins are difficult to chew and can completely seal children's airways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grate raw carrot, apple or celery, spiralise to create vegetable or fruit spirals, slice thinly using a mandolin. Cook until soft³ and cut into strips (around 4–6 cm long) that can be picked up with one hand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare as for 1–3 years. Raw or cooked vegetables or fruit cut into sticks (around 4–6 cm long) that can be picked up with one hand.
Compressible foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pieces of cooked meat 	Can fit into the shape of the airway and get wedged tightly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cook meat until very tender. Choose mince, shred or chop meat to 8mm x 8mm sized pieces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare as for 1–3 years; or offer thin strips of meat (around 4–6 cm long) that can be picked up with one hand or with a fork.
Food with bones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish Chicken nibbles 	Small bones present a choking risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove all bones. 	
Thick pastes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nut or seed butter 	Can fit to the shape of a child's airway or stick to side of airway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use smooth thick pastes sparingly, spreading thinly and evenly onto bread. 	
Fibrous or stringy food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw pineapple 	Fibres make it difficult for children to break up the food into smaller pieces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peel the skin or strong fibres off where possible. Slice these foods thinly across the grain of fibres. 	

³ 'Soft' means the food can be easily squashed between your thumb and forefinger, or on the roof of your mouth with your tongue.

13. Children will have access to drinking water at all times. All drink bottles will be washed, filled and monitored daily.

14. Parents preferences and cultural values regarding the nutritional requirements of their child will be adhered to.

15. In cases where food allergies exist, staff will ensure that children will not have access to food that upsets them.
16. Food allergens will be declared on enrolment, should they develop following this an allergy action plan must be completed. Using this the administrator will create a medic display card detailing how to manage the allergy.
17. The allergy cards will be displayed on the wall in the kitchen of each room. Where severe food allergies exist, we recommend parents provide their children's food.
18. If there is a shared lunch, children with known allergies are to be closely supervised if selecting from the shared food or encouraged to eat their own food only.
19. Staff are first aid trained and are prepared at all times to respond appropriately in case of a life-threatening reaction (anaphylaxis).

Guidelines for Children Aged 0 to 2:

1. All children under the age of six months will be held while being fed and will only be given food as provided by the parent or at parental direction.
2. All food prepared for children under the age of 4 will be done so to ensure it is safe, soft and age appropriate, as per the Ministry of Health Guidelines.
3. Parents/caregivers routines and rituals for the feeding of their child/ren will be acknowledged and respected.
4. All children under the age of two will have their meals and eating times recorded in their care book.
5. Parents/caregivers will label all bottle-feeding equipment clearly with a durable marker. All equipment must be in good order.
6. Prepared bottles of infant formula will be stored in the refrigerator and will only be heated once. Any milk surplus to the child's requirements will be disposed of.
7. Breast milk will be heated in warm water, not the microwave. Frozen breast milk must be placed in the refrigerator the day before use to thaw or alternatively gently thawed in warm water and used within 24 hours.
8. A daily record of the quantity of milk taken by the child will be kept in the child's care book.
9. All bottles will be thoroughly sterilised in a bottle steriliser or as to the parents/caregivers wishes.
10. No child will have access to food or fluids whilst in sleeping areas.

Statutory Source:

Food Act 2014; Food Regulations 2015; Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008 Reg 46, 1a, 46 1b, 56, 1; Licensing Criteria for Centre Based Education and Care Services 2008: HS19, HS20, HS21, HS22, HS23, Dining PF12, Kitchen PF13

Resources:

- Education Sector, Managing allergies and anaphylaxis in schools and preschools: a collaborative partnership; [allergies in schools and preschools \(allergy.org.nz\)](http://allergies.in.schools.and.preschools.allergy.org.nz)
- Allergies and learning; <https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/allergies-and-learning/>
- Fact Sheet for Parents - Anaphylaxis - in English and Other Languages; <https://www.allergy.org.au/hp/anaphylaxis/fact-sheet-for-parents-anaphylaxis>
- [Ministry of Health](#) - reducing food related choking guidelines (list of foods to exclude and a list of foods to alter and how to do it (e.g. by boiling, grating, or mashing) for 1 - 3 year olds and for pre-schoolers.
- Safe food for babies; <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety-home/safe-food-babies/>