

SA Montessori Pre-schools Policies

Nutrition Policy

Statement

SA Montessori Pre-schools aim to ensure that the minds and bodies of all children are fuelled and nourished by food.

Rationale

Each child's well-being must be considered holistically, in terms of social, emotional, mental and physical health. We have a responsibility to support children to develop positive and balanced approaches to food and eating to enable their holistic health, self-image and well-being to flourish.

We recognise the importance of the family, the home and culture in terms of the child's experiences and relationships with food. We strive to establish meaningful partnerships with families, with reciprocal exchanges in relation to food and nutrition. We respect the role of parents and families as the most knowledgeable source on their child's individual preferences, aversions and holistic needs. We endeavour to connect parents and families with qualified sources and reliable resources that provide empowering information.

Food Provided by the Centre

SA Montessori will consider the *5 Australian Dietary Guidelines* when making choices for food provided to children. These are:

1. *To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs.*
 2. *Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from the 5 food groups (vegetables, fruit, grains/cereals, meat/alternatives and dairy/alternatives) every day. And drink plenty of water.*
 3. *Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars.*
 4. *Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.*
 5. *Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.*
- Nutritional considerations if food is provided by the centre
 - Meals and snacks will offer a wide variety of nutritious foods from the five food groups, including diverse cultural food and with seasonal changes
 - The menu will be developed by team members who hold a knowledge of the eating habits, dietary preferences and allergen concerns of the children in their care
 - The Centre Manager/Director will check the menu to either adjust or approve the proposed selection
 - Team members will be offered opportunities to access professional development relating to food, nutrition and menu planning

- Team members will consult qualified sources and/or reliable resources to assist with introducing new recipes and developing menus
- Menus will be displayed for parents/families, and will be updated regularly
- Parents are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions in relation to the menus
- Fresh fruit and vegetables will be used where possible
- Food options that are low in added salt, saturated fat and/or added sugar will be prioritised
- Food options that are high in added salt, saturated fat and/or added sugar will be avoided if possible, or provided sparingly
- Water will be provided at each snack and mealtime
- Water will be accessible to children throughout the day
- Foods known to be common choking hazards will be prepared in a way that reduces risk, or by omitting these foods if they cannot be appropriately prepared
- Cultural considerations
 - Where children have food restrictions due to cultural, religious or individual beliefs parents must provide this information in writing at enrolment
 - The centre will cater for these needs appropriately as long as it meets all centre policy statements
 - Where this becomes extremely difficult the parents may be asked to provide the child's food in line with the centres policy
 - Utensils will at times reflect a variety of cultures and eating styles
- Allergies/intolerance
 - Where children have food allergies or food intolerances, parents must provide this information in writing at enrolment or when the allergy / intolerance is identified
 - Where the child has a food allergy an Action Plan will be required detailing the food or food products, expected reaction and required treatment (see Anaphylactic Shock, Allergic Reactions and Food Intolerance Policy)
 - The centre will cater for these needs as appropriate
 - Where this becomes extremely difficult the parents may be asked to provide the child's food
 - The centre will advocate as an allergy aware service
- Additional needs
 - Where a child has a specific feeding technique, staff will access appropriate training and ensure that correct procedures are followed whilst facilitating maximum independence for the child and respecting the child's dignity
 - Where a child has sensory needs or aversions, these will be considered wherever possible in developing the menu and parents/families will be supported with the food that they provide to meet these preferences
 - The child will have a Health Care Plan to outline their food needs and preferences, which can be updated regularly as their tastes and comfort levels develop

Food Provided by the Families

SA Montessori encourages parents/families to consider the 5 Australian Dietary Guidelines. These are:

1. *To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs.*
2. *Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from the 5 food groups (vegetables, fruit, grains/cereals, meat/alternatives and dairy/alternatives) every day. And drink plenty of water.*
3. *Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars.*
4. *Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.*
5. *Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.*

We understand that parents/families have diverse perspectives and influences in relation to their child's food, nutrition and eating habits. We trust parents/families to determine their child's dietary needs, and we intervene in relation to food within our centre only where there may be a risk to the physical, social and/or emotional well-being of children. We have some restrictions in place to fulfil our legal duty of care to the child by minimising risk, and we share recommendations as part of our role in advocating for the well-being of children and families.

- Nutrition suggestions for families
 - If possible, a variety of foods representing the five food groups should be included
 - If possible, food options that are low in salt, saturated fat and/or sugar should be prioritised
 - If possible, food options that are high in salt, saturated fat and/or sugar should be avoided, or provided sparingly
- Requirements and requests
 - Drinks from home (other than breastmilk / formula) should **not** be provided, as water is available to children throughout the day (cow's milk is available for toddlers who are weaning)
 - A drink bottle may be provided for children in the event that it is integral to their emotional well-being or their hydration, and/or if a centre requests the provision of drink bottles
 - Parents must not provide foods that contain nuts
 - The centre will advise parents if any other food items are temporarily excluded or discouraged to protect an enrolled child with a severe allergy
 - If providing foods that are known to be common choking hazards, parents are asked to prepare these in a way that reduces risk, or to omit these foods if they cannot be appropriately prepared
 - Educators may remove food from a child's lunchbox only in the event that it is believed to;

- Contain an identified high-risk allergen that poses an immediate threat to the safety or survival of another child
 - Present a significant choking hazard that cannot be minimised by preparation
 - Consist solely of chips, chocolate or lollies (based on the results of a vote by SA Montessori parents, which identified that a majority of our families strongly prefer that these items are not present in our centres)
 - Where an educator removes food from a lunchbox for the aforementioned reasons, the educator will do so subtly and frame this positively and sensitively, carefully keeping these items to the side to enjoy with their parents/carers at home
 - Due to the emotional significance of homemade foods, educators will not remove homemade items that appear to contain small amounts of chocolate, though strongly discourage the use of chocolate as this causes confusion for other children. Homemade items appearing to contain nuts or choking hazards will be removed
 - Parents are encouraged to minimise disposable packaging wherever possible
 - Where a child attends and does not bring their lunch, the centre will provide some food and a fee may be charged to the parent
- Safe storage and transport
 - Food should be hygienically packed in a lunchbox with appropriate insulation/cooling to keep food at a safe temperature during transportation
 - Parents/carers will be responsible for assisting their child to place this in the kitchen fridge or in an alternatively nominated space
 - Parents are responsible for clearly labelling all lunches and snacks with their child's full name so that the correct food can be provided to the correct child
 - Staff are responsible for checking these labels and ensuring each child receives the correct lunch box
 - Staff are responsible for the safe storage and serving of food within the centre as per Food Safety regulations
- Breastfeeding / expressed breastmilk / formula
 - For more information, please see our Infant Nutrition Policy
- Parent information
 - Parents are made aware of the Nutrition Policy through written communication, access to our digital Policy Folder, and access to the physical policy folder kept at the centre.
 - Parents are linked with reliable and appropriately qualified sources to help them make informed decisions about their child's food and eating.
- Special occasions and events

- On excursions meals will still meet the nutritional requirements of the centre but may vary to the centre menu to allow for more picnic type eating
- Parents must not send in cakes or other food for other children to share for a child's birthday celebration due to the high incidences of allergies, intolerances and dietary or cultural requests. Parents are encouraged to celebrate the social and cultural significance of a child's birthday by providing some photographs from throughout the child's life so that these can be shared with peers and/or incorporated into our birthday ceremony.
- This Policy represents a minimum standard, but individual centres may build their own priorities, projects and learning programs on top of this foundation to strengthen the commitment to health, well-being and nutrition in their setting as long as this does not contradict any of the core principles in this Policy.

Training and awareness

This Policy will be accessible through the SA Montessori staff Onboarding and Ongoing Development course to ensure staff are knowledgeable about its principles, contents and requirements.

Linkage to other policies

Anaphylactic Shock, Allergic Reactions and Food Intolerance Policy
 Dental Policy
 First Aid Policy
 Food Safety Policy
 Mealtime Policy
 Medication Policy

Linkage to guiding documents

National Quality Standards Element 2.1.3 – Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
 Early Years Learning Framework Outcome 3 component – Children are aware of and develop strategies to support their own mental and physical health and safety.

Sourcing

Kidsafe SA
 National Regulations: Regulations 78-80, 168
 National Allergy Council's Best Practice Guidelines for anaphylaxis prevention and management in children's education and care V2.1, 2023
 Dietitians Australia
 Eat for Health
 SA Montessori Family Survey 2023-24

Development date

09/07/08

'SA Montessori' Definition

For the purposes of these Policy documents the term 'SA Montessori' refers to a collective of centres functioning as a professional network with shared management through 'MMM'. These documents have been developed by MMM with intellectual property rights retained. By accepting these Policy documents, the company directors, approved providers and/or persons with management or control (PMCs) of each entity acknowledge that these policies do not release them from their responsibilities, obligations, or liabilities.

SA Montessori Pre-school centres include:

Cedars Montessori Pre-school
 Chancery Lane Montessori Pre-school
 Echoes Montessori
 Jescott Montessori Pre-school
 Lilliput Village Montessori
 Little Oxford Montessori
 Rosemont House Montessori

Review date

All SA Montessori Policies will be reviewed at least annually by MMM. In addition to the annual review, individual policies may be adjusted at any time in the event of community feedback, changes to guiding documents or legislative updates.

Review history:

Date	Policy satisfactory	Policy amended	Comments	Next review due:
26/6/10	√			6/11
26/5/11	√			6/12
11/4/12		√	Reviewed and changed from JSC Montessori Pre-schools to SA Montessori Pre-schools	4/13
1/4/13		√	Remove the statement: Drinks will be provided at each snack and meal time (water, milk, diluted unsweetened juice) Replace with: Drinks will be provided at each snack and meal time (water, milk) Add to source: National Regulations: Regulations 78-80, 168	4/14
7/11/13		√	Add: Parents are given written information outlining the types of food and recommended daily requirements for healthy eating. Add: Parents are made aware of this policy through written communication and display of the policy at the centre. Add: Lunch food should aim to provide at least 50% of children's daily nutritional requirements Change wording: Children who are unhappy or disruptive at mealtimes will be offered an alternative activity and offered their food again when they are settled Add: Education about food and nutrition will be included in the curriculum Add to references: Kidsafe SA: Prevention of Choking Add: The centre will minimise the risk to children from choking by having children seated to eat, cooking and softening hard foods such as carrot and apple if needed and by vigilant supervision by staff. Staff are trained in basic first aid and aware of Kids Safe recommendations to prevent choking	11/14

3/4/14	√			4/15
2/4/15		√	Add new centres to SA Montessori listing	4/16
3/6/15		√	Bottles will not be provided to children once they are capable of drinking independently from a cup.	4/16
16/4/16		√	Add: Children will be encouraged to eat a reasonable amount of food for lunch but will not be unreasonably coerced to finish food provided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children will be respected for their own self regulation of hunger and will never be forced to eat against their will Food will never be used as a reward or punishment for behaviour 	4/17
26/4/16		√	Amended new centre name. Removed Montessori On The Park & Montessori From The Start. Changed to Rosemont House Montessori	4/17
18/4/17	√			4/18
26/4/18		√	Amended the name Babthorpe Montessori Preschool to reflect the new centre's name being Lilliput Village Montessori.	4/19
5/4/19		√	Added new centre, Little Oxford Montessori, to SA Montessori listing	4/20
28/2/20	√			4/21
28/5/21	√			4/22
15/7/21		√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added the word 'mealtimes' to appropriate dotpoints/sentences throughout Added: "Parents must not send in cakes or other food for birthday celebrations" Added new centre, Little Oxford Montessori, to SA Montessori listing 	4/22
10/5/22	√			4/23
27/4/23	√			4/24
8/4/24		√	Significant changes made in all sections based on the outcome of the Parent/Family Survey and Educator Critical Reflections	4/25
6/7/24		√	Clarification added to empower centres to develop their own internal priorities and programs on top of this base line. Addition of Training and Awareness, SA Montessori Definition & Review Date	7/25
5/3/25	√		End of consultation period for all Policies following significant updates in 2024. Feedback incorporated as needed, no further changes required as of March 2025.	3/26