



HARMONY CHILDCARE CENTRE

NUTRITION POLICY

(as per ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15 made under the CHILD AND EARLY YEARS ACT, 2014)

POLICY:

Children spend a large portion of their day in childcare where snacks and lunch are served as part of the program. Harmony Childcare Centre believes that meal and snack times are the perfect time for children to build healthy eating habits through positive eating experiences.

We empower children to make healthy eating choices by providing a variety of healthy foods and letting them choose which they will eat, if any, and how much they will eat.

Food provided at Harmony Childcare Centre will be nutritious and varied. Snack times and activities involving food preparation will provide positive learning experiences for children who will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Parents will be consulted and encouraged to share family and multicultural values and experiences to enrich the variety of enjoyment and exposure to food to meet children's nutritional needs.

MEETING REGULATIONS:

- All food / drink being brought into the childcare centre will be labelled with the child's name
- All food and drink will be stored, prepared and served as to retain maximum nutritive value and prevent contamination
- Meals, snacks and beverages will meet the recommendations set out in the Health Canada documents "Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide" and will be amended as necessary
- Our four-week lunch menu is posted on our website as well as posted in the main entrance on our Menu Board for parents. Hard-copies and emailed copies are provided upon request. Any changes to the menu or snack is posted for parents and kept on file for thirty days
- The menus and weekly fruit / vegetable offerings from the caterer are kept in a binder near the Menu Board for at least 30 days
- A list of allergies, food sensitivities and/or intolerances with children's names are posted in the kitchen (food preparation area) as well as in every classroom
- In special circumstances where special dietary and feeding arrangements are needed, the staff will be trained on (if needed) and follow written instructions as provided for by the parent of the child

STAFF TRAINING:

At least one staff of Harmony Childcare Centre will have successfully completed the examination based on Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Food Handler Training Protocol and City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 545, Licensing.

PROGRAM:

We provide *all* the children in our care a morning snack at 9:00 a.m., an afternoon snack at 3:00 p.m. and for those in our lunch program, it is served at 11:45 a.m. At all times while eating, children are required to be seated and not engaged in any play activity. This is to ensure safety and to promote appropriate eating / drinking habits. Under no circumstances will children be allowed to walk around or play with bottles in their mouths. Pacifiers are allowed at nap time only and if your child requires a bottle at nap time, will only get it on their cot. The bottle will be removed prior to the child falling asleep to ensure safety and to prevent dental problems.

OUR CATERER:

Our catering service, Choice Children's Catering, is dedicated to the preparation and delivery of meals to meet the nutritional needs of our Pre-School, JK/SK and School Age children. Choice Children's Catering is owned and operated by a Registered Professional Dietitian (a dietitian/nutritionist has a university degree in Nutrition/Biochemistry and membership in the Ontario Dietetic Association). Their menu has been developed to meet the dietary and nutritional needs of the children in our care and also includes services such as menu alternates for children with food allergies and / or dietary restrictions. Most importantly, we have found that their menu items also appeal to the child's eye and sensitive taste buds. An added bonus is that Choice Children's Catering has a special events calendar featuring multicultural and nutrition promotions that may be used for reference in a food education program.

They realize that issues of cultural dietary requirements and increasingly restrictive food sensitivities present a particular challenge today. However, individual dietary needs of each child must be acknowledged and provided for. At the same time, food is an important and sensitive issue with children, so to ensure normal and healthy development, children must enjoy their food experiences. Like Harmony, Choice Children's Catering also believes that positive food experiences begin in childhood and are fundamental to the development of healthy habits and "food" behaviors later in life. The owners believe that food—especially food for children—should also be interesting and tasty as well as nutritious. They choose quality sources for food providers and partner with local producers.

OUR PRACTICES:

- Food is prepared and stored as per Public Health Standards and Recommendations
- We will provide children with nutritionally balanced snacks that meet the recommended nutritional needs of children
- Water and milk will be offered at all snack and meal times
- Water is always available and accessible at all times of the day
- In the summer, when picnic lunches are used, juice boxes used will only be 100% juice and unsweetened
- When possible, food (snacks and meals) will reflect a wide variety of cultures, especially the cultural backgrounds of families within the local community
- As much as possible, fresh produce will be made available at all snack times
- Menus will be planned with the children in mind and with parents / children and staff input
- Snack and meal times will have a regular schedule but small, nutritious snacks will be available to hungry children as required or on request
- Children will be encouraged to try different foods but will never be forced to eat. Their food likes and dislikes and their families religious and cultural beliefs regarding food will always be respected.
- The denial of food will never be used as punishment
- The importance of good, healthy food will be discussed with children during meal times, as appropriate
- Information on nutrition, food handling and storage will be displayed on the Parent Board in our main entrance for parents
- Where food is prepared on premise (snacks) or food preparation is part of children's program of experiences, the ingredients and preparation techniques used will be hygienic and safe and contribute to children's nutritional needs
- Meal times will be a positive experience
- Children will not be rushed and will be allowed to eat at their own pace
- Parents shall be encouraged to pack drink bottles containing water for their child (especially during the summer)

ANAPHYLACTIC ALLERGIES / SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS / EXTREMELY PICKY EATERS:

- Children with allergies will have Action Plans developed in consultation with parents, staff and medical professionals which will be reviewed and updated annually
- All staff will be trained on Action Plans and will need to review and sign off annually
- Special dietary needs will be posted in each classroom and the caterer as well as Harmony will ensure that alternatives are made available to these children
- Where children are on special diets or are extremely picky eaters, the parents may be asked to provide a list of suitable /unsuitable foods /their child's preferences or to supply special food to meet dietary requirements

HARMONY CHILDCARE CENTRE ALONG WITH THE CATERER'S CO-OPERATION WILL....

1. Provide nutritionally adequate food for children by taking into account their physical, social, emotional and educational needs and development
2. Help foster nutritionally positive attitudes and food preferences in young children by having the staff be positive role models (staff eating with the children) and demonstrating positive attitudes to food
 - a. Providing learning opportunities and activities aimed at expanding a child's awareness of a wide variety of food and the links between health and nutrition
3. Pass nutrition, recipe, food information onto parents of children in care when / where the opportunity presents itself because we believe that parent's knowledge, beliefs and food preferences play a key role in establishing a child's eating patterns and behaviour
 - a. All menus are posted online
 - b. Parents are provided with copies of the food activities / recipes that the children participate in at Harmony
 - c. Special recipes are printed on the back of our newsletters for events / holidays

OUR GOALS:

To supervise and assist our children in receiving a safe, well-balanced and nutritious diet by providing an eating environment that promotes healthy choices as well as representing and respecting family and multi-cultural values.

- Water and emergency food/snacks will be available at all times
- Parents will be advised when their child is not eating well, staff and parents will work together to ensure that meal times meet the child's needs and that these times are successful and positive
- Children will wash their hands before handling food or eating meals and snacks
- Food will be stored and served at safe temperatures
- Products containing peanuts and/or nuts will not be brought into the Centre due to anaphylactic allergies of some children in our care. These products will be sent back home with the parent or thrown away if found after the parent has left the premise.
- Staff members will sit with the children during meal times
- Multicultural differences will be recognized and accepted
- Food awareness activities will be chosen from a variety of cultures
- Special occasions may be celebrated with culturally appropriate food or parent's choice of "treat" provided as long as it follows our guidelines regarding allergies / sensitivities, parents are welcome to participate
- Meal times are to provide opportunities for encouraging self-help, independence, social skills, learning and understanding