

Inquiring Little Minds Food and Drink Provision Policy

Statement of Intent

ILM regards snack and mealtimes as an important part of the daycare session/day. We believe it is essential to provide children with positive healthy eating experiences to promote their personal wellbeing and to follow the Canadian Food Guide. Eating represents a social time for human beings and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We encourage children to look at the long-term effects of a healthy and balanced diet.

We respect all cultural, dietary, and health needs of all our children.

Implementation of the Policy in the Daycare Centre

The facility manager must ensure that:

- All staff, students, and volunteers are made fully aware of individual children's dietary needs and requirements.
- The Food and Drink Policy is made available to all parents and caregivers.
- Before a child begins attending child care, ILM staff must inquire about the child's dietary needs, including allergies.
- Staff record information about each child's dietary needs in their registration record, parents review and sign these records to verify information is correct.
- Every September, ILM Administration completes a file review of each child. Parents are then required to sign the updated record.
- ILM requires staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. At no time will a child be meant to feel singled out or labelled due to diet or allergies.
- Extra food is kept on hand in the event that children arrive without sufficient or appropriate food to ensure they are supplied with sufficient food for the day.
- If children are provided with food from the facility due to arriving without sufficient food that it be communicated to parents.
- No child should, at any point, be fed by means of a propped bottle.
- Children are never forced to consume food.

- Children are always supervised by a staff member while eating in case of choking, an allergic reaction, etc.
- Food and drink are never used as a reward or punishment for children
- The child's age, eating habits and duration of time in care are taken into consideration when determining the appropriate amount of food needed for the day.

Aim

At snack and mealtimes, we aim to support parents in providing nutritious food, which meets their child's individual needs. Staff should be able to offer examples and ideas to families.

Availability of Water

- At all times, fresh water and suitable cups or water bottles are readily available for children and staff.
- Staff encourage children to help themselves to water either with support or individually.
- Staff support children in recognizing the need to drink water whenever children are thirsty, hot, tired, or feeling unwell.
- ILM staff monitor the amounts children drink.

Meals

- Each day, parents should provide healthy and adequate meals for their children. All items included in your child(ren)'s meals must be labelled with their first names and last initial.
- Staff will implement and model a healthy eating policy (e.g., no treats amongst staff in front of children).

Multi-Cultural Requirements

- Staff respect and make arrangements for children's cultural and religious needs.

Special Dietary Needs and Food Allergies

- ILM staff use sensitivity in catering to children with specific dietary needs.
- Staff update records of children's specific dietary requirements regularly and keep these in a prominent place.
- ILM actively encourages children to wash their hands before and after meals using the sink or clean washcloths.

Snacks

- Occasionally, the ILM Centre may offer a balanced snack to provide a range of cultural and nutritious experiences for the children. Upon registration, parents will sign a waiver consenting to food being given. However, parents will still be notified in the newsletter of any snacks being provided by the centre.
- Parents should provide their child with healthy snacks. ILM staff encourage children to prioritize healthy food choices.

Social Aspect

- ILM staff prioritize the involvement of parents and children in planning, preparing, and serving snacks.
- Staff sit with children and encourage them to talk and listen to one another, learning to respect different views and opinions. If staff are eating, they model a positive example.
- Staff use meal and snack time to help children in developing independence through making choices, serving food/drinks, and feeding themselves.
- ILM provides children with utensils which are appropriate for their age, stages of development, and consider their cultural eating practices.
- ILM staff plan snack-time as a regular, pleasant, and social event.
- ILM encourages common courtesy such as saying "please" and "thank you".
- To protect children with food allergies, ILM policy prohibits children from sharing and swapping food.