



# Food/Reduce Choking/Nutrition Policy

## RATIONALE:

We wish to promote healthy eating messages to families and to ensure there are adequate guidelines in place for food from home and celebrations. To reduce food related choking using MOH/MOE advice and guidance (2020)

To ensure appropriate records are kept to meet regulation requirements

## PRACTICES:

- The teachers will respond to children's hunger signals and energy levels by providing them with food or fluid as needed throughout the day, in addition to set mealtimes.
- Water will be available to the children at all times.
- Children bring their own food from home for all meals. Children are only to eat the food in their own lunchbox and drink from their own drink bottle or cup provided unless a parent has requested the help of the centre to provide food.
- Parents/caregivers acknowledge, by signing a waiver/acknowledgement in the enrollment form, that they are responsible for providing food that their child is capable of eating and chewing safely. Therefore, all food must be prepared, ready to eat, for the child in their lunch box. The centre will not cut or prepare fruit etc,
- Only food that the parent/caregiver believes the child is able/capable to eat safely should be in lunch boxes. Our parent handbook and regular discussions between kaiako and whanau promote safe food and preparation guidelines including the following
  - Small choking food such as: grapes, cherry tomatoes, cherries should be cut in half or quarters.
  - Carrots, celery or any hard, raw veggies should be cut in sticks rather than in rounds.
  - Sausages or meat should be whole or cut into long pieces, not rounds.
  - All small bones should be removed from fish or meat.The following items should not be included in lunchboxes;
  - Lollies
  - marshmallows
  - stringy fruit chews
- Parents are encouraged to send along a variety of healthy food choices. Teachers will remind children to eat their 'Grow food' first and will provide ideas to families about appropriate food choices through the newsletter. Foods high in fat, sodium or sugar content are to be kept to a minimum.
- Kaiako welcomes and encourages healthy eating and food related discussions with whanau, especially to clarify any practice not fully understood. .
- At least one kaiako for every 25 children will have first aid training.
- There will always be an appropriate ratio of adults to children at mealtimes.
- Throughout mealtimes, children's independence will be encouraged. Meal times will be relaxed, social times and opportunities for learning and the development of self help skills will be recognised.

The following practices are designed to minimise distractions and encourage safe eating;

- children eat at designated times,
- children only eat while seated
- children are reminded not to talk with their mouths full
- children are encouraged to sit up straight when they are eating.
- food will be placed directly in front of the child. This helps to prevent them twisting around to the left or right, which can cause them to lose control of the food in their mouth.
- Children will always be supervised while having fluid whilst resting
- A fridge is provided in the kitchen for parents to place food that needs refrigeration. There is a marker provided for parents to name food items that go in the fridge and containers on the bench to place food into that either needs to be refrigerated or heated for lunch.
- Extra food (soft rice crackers and/or wine biscuits) will be provided by the centre for children who do not have enough to see them through the day. This will be prepared in accordance with MOH guidelines and is recorded in the food record in the kitchen, and will be monitored by Kaiako.
- Uneaten food will be sent home. Scraps/rubbish/dirty dishes are sorted and placed in one of three containers by the children.
- Shelves are provided for children to place their lunchboxes on when they arrive, and a water bottle table, jug of water and cups, which are accessible at all times. Independence is encouraged.
- Allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements will be a shared responsibility of the child's family and centre staff. A picture of each child with a food allergy, with a description of the known allergy, food intolerance and special dietary requirement is kept on the kitchen wall easily visible for Kaiako to notice.
- If a child's allergy is life threatening a management plan will be put in place and the family will need to liaise with the centre Director to provide training for staff. For example, a visit to a staff meeting from a nurse/health worker.
- All food provided by Fingerprints Christian Preschool will be peanut free. We ask that **no peanuts** or food containing peanuts be brought to preschool in your child's lunch. The centre may become a total NUT FREE ZONE if deemed necessary by management.
- Children are not to share cups and bottles. All cutlery, plates and cups will be washed in the dishwasher.
- Children and adults will wash their hands before meal times and face cloths will be available. Tables will be wiped with a chemical spray before and after mealtimes.
- Children's birthdays and special occasions may be celebrated with special morning tea should the family wish to provide this. However, this is not expected, nor is it promoted. This will be fully at the choice of the family and **MUST** be in line with MOH guidelines.
- Records will be kept of food provided and ingredients, by Fingerprints Christian Preschool for at least 3 months.

**GUIDING DOCUMENTS: Education Regulations 2008 46, HS19 - HS23**

**MOH Reducing food related choking-Released 2020 [health.govt.nz](https://www.health.govt.nz)**

Research accessed when preparing these practices.

Citation: Ministry of Health. 2020. *Reducing food-related choking for babies and young children at early learning services*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

[Reducing-food-relate](#)

Table 1. Mortality from unintentional suffocation, foreign body inhalation and strangulation in children and young people aged 0 days to 24 years, New Zealand, 2002–09<sup>10</sup>

ICD-10-AM CAUSE OF DEATH	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total	Total (%)	2002–09 rate per 100,000
Accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed	13	13	18	13	23	27	29	16	152	78.4	1.28
Other accidental suffocation, strangulation and threats to breathing	1	4	4	3	1	6	6	2	27	13.9	0.23
Inhalation of food or other objects causing obstruction of respiratory tracts	2	2	-	2	-	6	3	-	15	7.7	0.13
Total	16	19	22	18	24	39	38	18	194	100.0	1.63

Source:

Numerator: CYMRC and PMMRC Cases by ICD-10-AM Main Underlying Cause of Death as assigned in the National Mortality Collection.

Denominator: Statistics New Zealand Estimated Resident Population.

Approved by:

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Date: May 2025

Service Provider

Contact Person: Aaron Donaldson

Date: May 2025

To be reviewed: May 2027

[Internal Evaluation Food /Choking 2021](#) IE undertaken later in April 2021

[Parent Permission for Extra Food-August 2022](#) IE undertaken in August 2022