

P5: GOOD NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY

GOOD NUTRITION

Good nutrition is important to a child's development and growth.

A poor diet could slow down the growth and development of a child.

CHILDREN SHOULD BE SERVED A NUTRITIOUS, BALANCED MEAL.

Meals should include protein-rich foods such as dry beans, meat, fish, eggs or cheese. Fruit and vegetables should be included every day to provide essential nutrients and protect children against diseases. Use of full cream milk or low-fat 2% milk if funds allow.

TIP: You can replace fruit with fresh raw vegetables such as carrots, tomatoes or cucumber.

AVOID SERVING FOOD HIGH IN SUGAR AND SALT

Avoid food such as chocolates, chips and sweets.

FOOD SAFETY

Hygienic food preparation, food handling and safe food storage is very important. If dangerous germs get into the food and water it can make the person who eats the food or drinks the water very sick.

- Always wash hands with soap and water before preparing food and feeding children
- Ensure that children wash their hands with clean water and soap before they eat
- Make sure kitchen equipment and food preparation area is clean
- Keep food in sealed containers and any food that needs cold storage in the fridge
- Ensure no pesticides or dangerous chemicals are used to protect food sources
- Store rubbish away from the food preparation area
- Cook food thoroughly so that germs are killed
- Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before serving

FOOD FROM HOME

In some cases, parents and caregivers are expected to provide food from home or children would bring their own food for medical reasons.

- Guidance should be given to parents and caregivers about what to include for children to eat
- Parents and caregivers should be encouraged to include healthy food in children's lunchboxes such as fruits and avoid foods high in sugar such as chips, chocolate and sweets
- Children with special food requirements should be considered individually

FEEDING GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN 0 TO 6 YEARS

- Children under **6 months** should be given breast milk or formula. ECD programmes can support breastfeeding mums through cup feeding or milk storage. Milk **MUST** be kept in the fridge. No other food or water is needed.
- Children from **6 – 8 months** start them on three spoons full of food three times a day. Introduce one vegetable and fruit rich in vitamin A that is soft, pureed or mashed.
- Children between **9 – 11 months**, feed 2-4 times a day gradually increasing the amount of food they eat. Add foods that are finely chopped and food they can pick up with their hands.
- Children **between 12 months and 6 years** should be given balanced meals with foods that are chopped/sliced into small pieces and finger foods with clean water in cup.

REFER TO THE ROAD TO HEALTH BOOKLET OR THE ECD NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR MORE INFORMATION