

## Explanation of Child Care Centre Menu Plan Model

<p><b>Food and Nutrition Standards</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child care centre menu planners must select nutritious menu items, as well as the methods of food preparation, that will ensure compliance with Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide and government policy standards.</li> <li>• See <a href="#">Food and Nutrition Support in Child Care Centres</a> for <a href="#">Standards</a>, Guidelines and Criteria.</li> <li>• See <a href="#">Child Food Groups Servings and Best Practices</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Creativity and Aesthetics</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young children introduced to a wide variety of foods will develop long term healthy eating behaviours.</li> <li>• Children use all physical senses when interacting with food-they smell, see, touch, hear, and taste the foods around them. Food characteristics play a vital role in the children’s acceptance of the food on the menu.</li> <li>• The taste (strong or mild; sweet or sour), colour (neutrals, oranges, greens, reds), texture (crisp or soft) and shape (natural, round, cubes, sticks, etc.), serving temperature (cold or hot), and the overall presentation of the meal are sensory aspects that must be incorporated into the menu.</li> <li>• A menu’s appeal is improved by having at least one food item close to its natural form (for example; baby carrots, broccoli spears, chicken wings, etc.) and appealing contrasts of the food sensory properties.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child Considerations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Menu items must consider the motor skill developmental stages of children as it applies to ability to feed selves and avoid choking hazards (avoid nuts, popcorn, hard candy, whole grapes, raisins, carrots in rounds, marshmallows, fish bones, sticky foods).</li> <li>• Children are known to be more likely to consume familiar foods, but it is important for the menu to introduce new foods. Introducing new foods, one at a time, with familiar foods enhances the acceptance of the new foods.</li> <li>• Children should be given the opportunity to serve themselves in a family-style meal service. A positive eating environment can also involve the sharing of unique food experiences if there are cultural differences among the children.</li> <li>• Special dietary considerations such as food allergies, diabetes, ADHD, and autism should be incorporated into menus as necessary.</li> <li>• Incorporating foods from different cultures in the menu will provide variety as well as inclusivity.</li> <li>• Children may present challenging feeding behaviours – dawdling and messing – due to their small appetites, curiosity or need to express independence. There are a number of strategies such as involving children in some aspect of the meal preparation or service, to address these behaviours.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Centre Considerations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recipes for menu items should be reviewed for preparation complexity and cooking time.</li> <li>• Menu food, labour and operating costs must be considered.</li> <li>• Kitchen equipment and space should be taken into consideration when planning a menu.</li> <li>• All aspects of food safety should be a priority in meal preparation and service.</li> </ul>