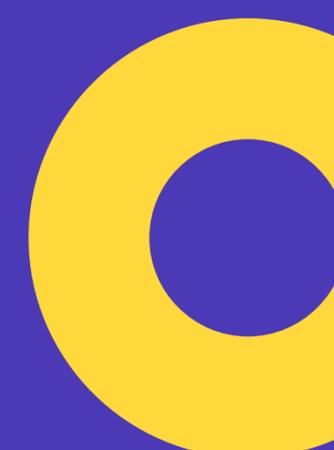
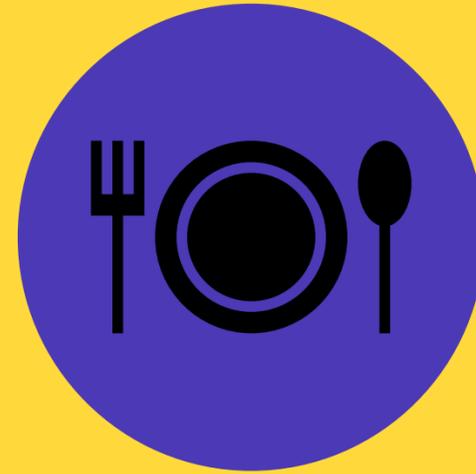
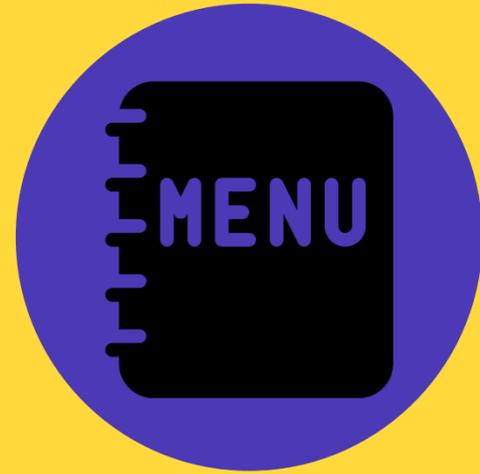


Supporting Healthy Eating at Discovery Child Care Centre

A values driven menu and meal time approach.





**Childhood &
Healthy Eating**

**Menu
Changes**

**Connection to
Values and
Aspirations**

**Mealtimes at
Discovery**

**Getting to YUM!
Strategies for
Meal time**

**An ethical, sustainable, and values driven
approach to food culture at Discovery.**

The Importance of Healthy Eating In Childhood

- Eating well supports the growth and development of children. This supports the holistic development.
- Early childhood eating patterns are strongly correlated to eating habits in adulthood. Studies show that exposing children to different healthy foods through a varied diet results in increased food intake, food preferences, and willingness to try new foods. These habits and preferences carry on throughout adulthood, so it is best to expose children to a variety of healthy foods as early as possible.
- Proper nutrition as a child leads to a decreased risk of several adult health problems such as obesity, hypertension, osteoporosis, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and more.

What did we notice and hear?

- We noticed how our menu did not line up with our values of sustainability & creating liveable futures.
- We noticed how our meals lack culture and diversity in offerings.
- As a licensed centre, we are required to follow Canada's Food Guide. Canada's Food Guide has shifted from a focus on food groups to a focus on nutrients.
- We noticed how our menu did not allow for conversations about our values of sustainability or environmental impact.

Canada's Food Guide

Canada's food guide

Eat well. Live well.

Eat a variety of healthy foods each day



Have plenty of vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods

Make water your drink of choice

Choose whole grain foods

Discover your food guide at Canada.ca/FoodGuide

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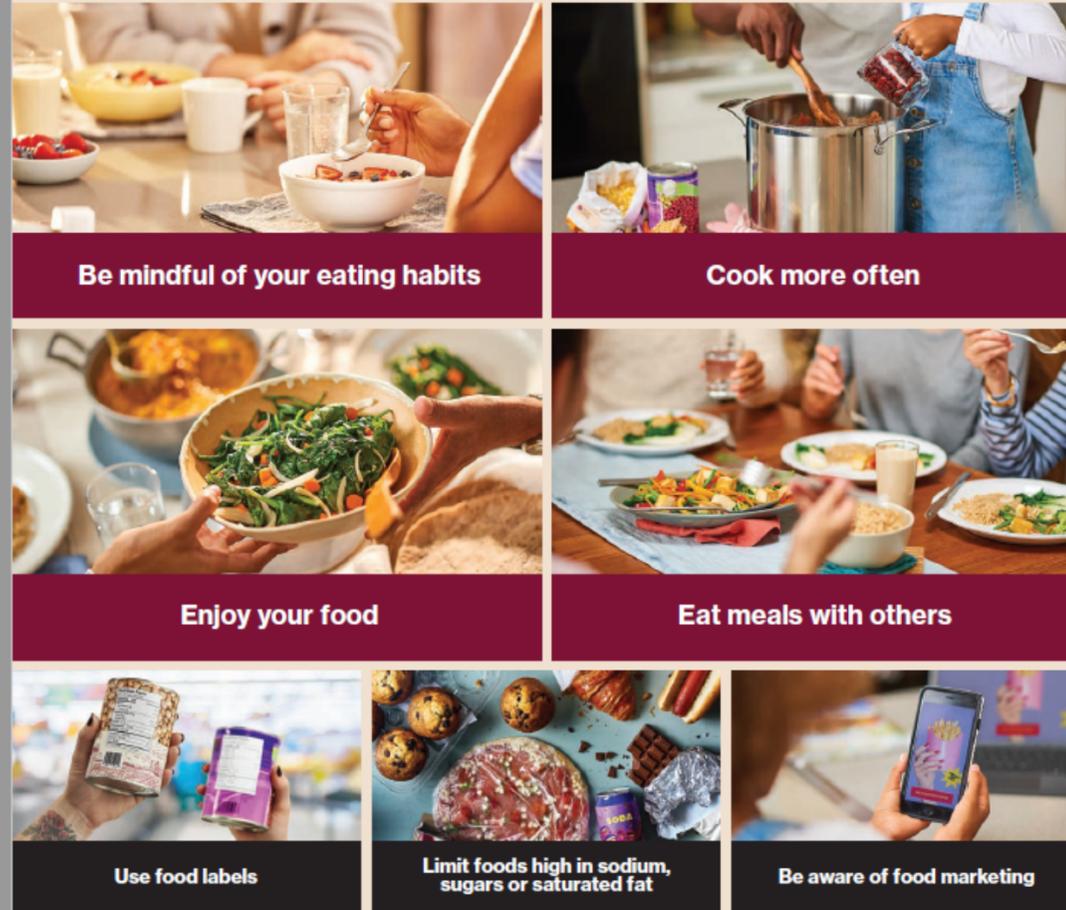
Health Canada Santé Canada

Canada

Canada's food guide

Eat well. Live well.

Healthy eating is more than the foods you eat



Be mindful of your eating habits

Cook more often

Enjoy your food

Eat meals with others

Use food labels

Limit foods high in sodium, sugars or saturated fat

Be aware of food marketing

Discover your food guide at Canada.ca/FoodGuide

Health Canada Santé Canada

Canada

Our Response

Discovery has made the commitment to ensure our offerings for children in all components of our day align with what we believe children deserve. After research, community engagement, and connecting with dietitians, it was clear of the decision that needed to be made. As a result, as of June 14th we will be moving to a fully plant based menu. At the moment we are over 50% plant based. We have shifted our thinking to consider the nutrients that children require for brain development, and life long health. When children are in our care, Discovery is responsible for ensuring children receive 50% of their required nutrients from morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Rather than basing our menu on food group requirements (the old Canada's food guide-which does not take into account nutrient density) we have planned our menus based on nutrient density for optimal brain development and life long brain and body wellness. This aligns with our desires to consider the holistic wellness of children and also aligns with our desires for food literacy and culture to be more evident in our programs. This means our menu goes beyond food groups and ensures that children get all the micro-nutrients and macro-nutrients which their bodies need to thrive. Our menus were created by Julie Nguyen, Karen Eilersen, and in consultation with the University of Guelph Child Care Centre (also plant-based menu), and registered dietitian Pamela Fergusson RD, PhD. Karen is also in the process of completing Plant-Based Nutrition Certificate Course from ECornell University.

What we have learned about children's dietary requirements

Protein: Children ages 1-3 require 5-20% of their caloric intake to come from protein. Children aged 4-18 require 10-30% of their caloric intake to come from protein. (Chickpeas, beans, tofu, soy milk, oatmeal, pumpkin seeds etc.)

Fat: Fat is the most important macronutrient in the diet of children. Children ages 1-3 and 4-18 need 30-40% of their caloric intake to come from fat. This should come mainly from unsaturated fats ideally from plants (Avocados, coconut, seeds, natural oils.)

Calcium: Calcium is important for healthy growth and development, children ages 1-8 require between 700-1000mg of calcium per day. Calcium is easily achieved through a plant based diet (Sunflower seeds, tofu, kale, tahini)

Iron: Iron is a key nutrient for child development and children require 7-10mg of iron per day (Fortified cereal, lentils, oatmeal, beans).

Iodine: An important micro-nutrient for infants and children. Can be found in root vegetables and it is noted to be a good idea to use iodized salt in cooking.

A Values Driven Approach to our Food Encounters

Living Well with Children

We believe children deserve programs that recognize and respond to the needs of our time. We believe we have a responsibility to ensure our decisions in all components of our programs align with the world they are inheriting.

Sustainability

Discovery is committed to sustainable approaches and practices in our ways of being with children, families, and the natural world. We are committed to ensuring our impact on the environment is minimal and we engage in thoughtful, sustainable practices. Our food consumption is something that must be considered for the world that these children are inheriting.

Environmental Impact:

Discovery Child Care Centre does things a little bit differently than everyone else and we want to celebrate that. Our values of environmental impact is unique to us and we noticed that our food consumption didn't fully align with what we aspire to live into. Rethinking this allows us to live more fully and deeply into our values.

Food as Culture

Food Culture is the practices, attitudes, and beliefs, as well as the networks and institutions surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food. Food is something that comes packaged, that is counted and manipulated, and overall disconnected from any real meaning. At some point we, as a society decided to remove the culture from our food and our health began to suffer. We aim to grow a community understanding that our food culture is as much a part of our personal and societal well-being.

What do Children Deserve?

At Discovery, we have a strong image of children. We believe that children deserve full rights and deserve respect, quality, and valuable experiences. We believe food & mealtimes are a part of this experience. We believe children deserve food experiences that live into the image of a child who is worthy of high quality interactions, high quality resources and materials, and culture building environments and experiences.

Long Term Impact for Children's Relationship with Food

Providing opportunities for children to have regular and repeated access to high quality, nutrient dense foods, will set eating patterns and food relationships for the rest of their life. One component of high quality child care is to enable children to make healthy food and physical activity choices on a daily basis and provide them with skills to develop healthy eating and activity behaviours for life.

Think about your early encounters with food? How do you think this reinforces the relationship with food as an adult?

Equity & Universal Design

Universal design is a huge factor in the determination for Discovery to move to a plant based menu. We have a growing number of children who have life-threatening allergies, many coming from dairy and egg. On top of this, these children now require ISP's that currently require children to eat different meals, be separated from the group or highly monitored. We also have a high number of children who are either vegan or vegetarian. Having all of our children being able to eat the same meals in a stress free, family style environment; more closely aligns with what children deserve. This also improves efficiency for the kitchen and improves the health and safety for the children in the centre by removing a vast majority of children's allergens.

Educator Mental Health and Food Experience

The impact of our current food systems contribute to a meal time that is riddled with cross checking, stress, and concerns around health and safety. When we think of an alternative way of being with food, we recognize that the structure must be in place for educators to find joy, ease, and peace in this important facet of the day. Switching to this model allows for educators to focus on engagement, relationship building, and connection.

Impact of the New Menu

- Rather than focusing on what we are not serving, we can instead focus on what this menu allows us to serve. Sourcing local, in season, high quality, nutrient dense ingredients is always our goal. A huge portion of our food budget used to go towards meat, poultry, dairy, eggs, processed grains and carbohydrates. This can now instead be used towards a large variety of nutrient dense, fresh ingredients that can be enjoyed by the entire centre.
- How we feed the children in our care will set them up with the habits that follow them for the rest of their lives. Normalizing healthy whole food will lead to better health outcomes for our children and protect them from many preventable diseases. Feeding our centre meals which everyone within our community can eat promotes the values of inclusion that we aspire for.
- We have put a lot of thought, care, and attention into the planning of our menu, the sourcing of our ingredients, and the preparing of our food. We have put thought into the impact our consumption and waste habits will have on the environment. It is our greatest aspiration that the children in our care can lead a healthy life, with habits and values instilled into them from their early experiences. Our growing awareness of the ways our programs socialize and create culture for children in a particular way have had us questioning: What way do we aspire for children to be socialized in our context? We made this decision to align with what we believe children deserve.

The Division of Responsibility in Feeding

- The division of responsibility was coined by a dietician named Ellyn Satter, who is considered a guru in children's feeding. She teaches that children are born with the ability to regulate their hunger and fullness. When we provide appropriate boundaries about what they will eat and when they will eat it, children will naturally decide how much to eat and self-regulate around food. This reinforces that children can trust and listen to their bodies. This also reinforces our values around consent and children being advocates for their bodies.
- Our job as adults when feeding the child are to decide what they eat (what we offer them), where they eat it, and when they will eat it.
- Children's job when eating are whether they will eat and how much they will eat.

The beauty about this method is that it decreases pressure felt around eating and increases trust between the child and educators.

Classroom Strategies for Reluctant Eating

- The power of **YET**. Mealtimes are a great opportunity for educators to model the values we have of a growth mindset. We are making the decision to choose to move away from language such as "picky eaters" and "they don't like this." This lives into a fixed mindset and assumes a child has no room for growth in this area. We know that palettes are continuously changing, so food preferences will change even if the same foods are being offered.
- It can take 10-15 exposures of a new food before the child will consider trying it. (This could be upwards of 6 months!)
- Like always, encourage smaller portions of more reluctant foods and work up from there. This can avoid negative feelings towards their meal.
- Continue to create a positive environment at all mealtimes. Tell stories, ask questions, weave in the inquiries, and encourage conversations about favourite foods. This is another opportunity to enrich the environment with connections with the family relationships as well.



WEEK	MEAL	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
W1	AM	WW Pita, Apple Sauce	WW Bread, Wow Butter, Fresh Fruit	Overnight Oats & Mixed Berries	WW Bagel, Sunflower Butter, Chia Jam	Cherios, Plant-based milk
	LUNCH	Red Lentil & Hemp Heart, Bell Pepper Spaghetti Bolognese, Fruit	Chickpea, Sweet Potato and Green Bean Curry, Couscous, Fruit	Mixed Beans, Broccoli and Carrot Rotini Stir Fry, Fruit	Pan Seared Tofu, Pea & Corn Fried Rice, Sauteed Spinach, Fruit	White Bean Minestrone Soup, Olive Garlic Bread, Fruit
	PM	Banana Raisin Oat Cookies, Fresh Fruit	Pineapple Slaw, Mini Naan	Tropical Smoothie, Roasted Chickpeas	Blueberries Muffin	Sweet Potato Hummus, Veggie Platter
W2	AM	Cherios, Plant-based milk	WW English Muffin, Wow Butter, Fresh Fruit	Blueberries Kale Smoothie Bowl w. Hemp Hearts	WW Soft Apple Cookies, Fresh Fruit	Overnight Oats & Mixed Berries
	LUNCH	Mixed Beans, Bell Pepper, Snow Pea Rotini Stir Fry, Fruit	Chickpea Turmeric Pilaf with Carrot, Pea, Corn, Sliced Cucumber, Fruit	Lentil, Mushroom, Hemp hearts, Spaghetti Bolognese, Fruit	Butternut Squash, Lentil, Green Bean Curry, Brown Rice, Fruit	Apple Lentil Potato Coconut Cream Soup, Bread, Fruit
	PM	Banana Berry Muffin	Roasted Chickpea, Fresh Fruit	WW Tea Biscuits, Chia Jam, Fresh Fruit	Hummus, Veggies Platter	Toasted Coconut, Date, Oat Power Bar, Fruit
W3	AM	Cherios, Plant-based milk	Overnight Oats & Mixed Berries	English Muffin, Wow Butter, Fruit	Tropical Smoothie	WW Bagel, Sunflower Butter, Chia Jam
	LUNCH	White Bean Mac & Cheese with Hemp Hearts, Peas, Fruit	Baked Falafel, Pumpkin Soup with coconut milk, Fruit	Pan Seared Tofu with Sweet Potato Tomato Sauce, Brown Rice, Fruit	Bell Pepper, Spinach, Black Eye Bean Rotini Stir- Fry, Fruit	Chickpea Salad Wrap (with Tortilla, shredded Carrot, Cucumber), Vegetable Soup, Fruit
	PM	Mini Naan, Fruit Salad	Toasted Coconut, Date and Oat Power Bar, Fruit	Mixed Berries Muffin	Banana Raisin Oat Cookies, Fresh Fruit	Sweet Potato Hummus, Veggie Platter
W4	AM	WW Bagel, Sunflower Butter, Chia Jam	Cherios, Plant-based milk	Strawberries Muffin, Fresh Fruit	WW Soft Apple Cookies, Fresh Fruit	Overnight Oats & Mixed Berries
	LUNCH	Three Sisters Stew with Pinto Beans, Corn & Squash, WW Bannock, Fruit	Pan Seared Tofu Fried Rice w. Green Pea, Corn, Sliced Cucumber, Fruit	Split Pea Soup with Vegetable, WW Corn Bread	Mixed Beans, Kale, Red Pepper and Rotini Stir Fry, Fruit	Chickpea, Sweet Potato and Butternut Squash Curry, Quinoa, Fruit
	PM	Hummus, Veggies Platter	Banana Raisin Oat Cookies, Fruit	Blueberries Kale Smoothie, Roasted Chickpeas	Baby Carrots, Hummus, WW Crackers	Banana Cake

Snacks served with water, lunches served with fortified Plant Based Milk

Coconut milk, olive oil, hemp hearts, flax seeds, sunflower seeds provide sources of important fat in the children's diet

