

# Introduction

Early learning and child care facilities can have a positive effect on children's health by:

- making sure young children are offered nutritious foods
- influencing food choices and attitudes
- supporting children's growth and development
- providing resources to help support families

By working with families, and focusing on creating a healthy eating environment in your facility, you can also have a positive effect on children's home lives. You have the opportunity to influence children's learning ability and growth, and improve their present and future health.

## About this manual

The Best Practices Licensing Manuals for Early Learning and Child Care Centres and Homes outline licensing regulations, guidelines and best practices.

This handbook supports the Best Practices Licensing Manuals by providing practical advice that can be adapted to meet the individual needs of each facility.

This handbook will help you to:

- build relationships with families
- learn more about the nutrition challenges you face
- provide children with healthy, nutritious food choices
- create a healthy eating environment

## Acknowledgments

Thank you to all the registered dietitians and those in the early learning and child care field who contributed their knowledge, experience and ideas to this handbook.



## Allergy disclaimer

The snack and meal suggestions in this handbook do not leave out common food allergens (ex: peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, milk, seafood, mustard, soy, wheat, sulphites). If a child in your care has a known food allergy, consult with the child's family. The list of resources below will help you keep these children safe while in your care.

- Allergy/Asthma Information Association: [www.aaia.ca/en/index.htm](http://www.aaia.ca/en/index.htm)
- Anaphylaxis Canada: [www.anaphylaxis.ca/](http://www.anaphylaxis.ca/)
- Government of Manitoba. Caring for our children with anaphylaxis in a child care program: [www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/pubs/anaphylaxis\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childcare/pubs/anaphylaxis_booklet.pdf)
- Health Canada: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/allerg-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/allerg-eng.php)

**NOTE:** *Information on protecting children with food allergies can also be found on page 14 of this handbook.*

Research shows it is not necessary for families to wait before giving fish, eggs or other foods to babies/children – it will not reduce or prevent allergies to these foods. (*Feeding Your Baby: 6 months-1 year, Healthy Child Manitoba, 2014*)

Licensed child care providers in Manitoba must NOT serve food containing known peanut products to children younger than three years of age.

Child care providers must only serve foods that children have already eaten at home. Therefore, it is important to talk to families regularly about which new foods their children have been introduced to.

## Using the appendix

Throughout this handbook, you will find references to an appendix. It is located near the end of the handbook.

Listed in the appendix are ideas and materials that will support what you've learned in the handbook. Use these materials to put that knowledge into practice (ex: blank forms, snack and lunch ideas, recipes). Photocopy pages, when needed, for use in your child care facility or as handouts for families.

**\*All materials in this handbook can be photocopied for use.**

