

## I love cooking, my mum loves cooking, my dad loves cooking....everyone loves cooking! Barbara (2013)

This term we have been looking at Nutrition. Nutrition is very important for everyone, but it is especially significant for children because it is directly linked to all aspects of their growth and development; factors which influence their future health. As educators we have the opportunity and resources to help promote a better quality of life by introducing the children to suitable nutrition trends. Children are able to fight

off illness, such as colds with improved efficiency with the support of proper nutrition.



We started this project at the very beginning by growing our own food. We grew some herbs and vegetables in the veggie patch. The children planted the seeds and undertook daily maintenance of the plants. The children were very interested in how plants and trees mature. The Kindy B children enjoyed gardening. It is not only fun but

the children gained so much from taking part, as well as contributing to the Campus Kindergarten community. New skills they developed included the responsibility of caring for plants, learning the essentials plants need to survive as well as understanding the way plants work. The children explored and learnt more about cause and effect. They also investigated the origins of fresh food.

Children require a variety of nutrient dense foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, meat, fish and adequate calories in order to grow and develop properly. It is important children are consuming the essential nutrients they need to grow. Calcium is of particular importance for children. During National Healthy Bones week (more information can be found at <http://www.healthybones.com.au/>) we made Marconi and Cheese Muffins. These muffins are high in calcium and therefore good for our bones. Building healthy bones by embracing healthy nutritional and lifestyle habits in childhood is important to help prevent osteoporosis in adulthood. Osteoporosis is the disease that causes bones to become less dense and more prone to fractures. The health habits children are forming now make a considerable difference to their bone development. Bones are the structure for a child's growing body.





Next we took a closer look at mealtimes, in particular breakfast. Studies have shown that children who eat breakfast perform better during the day. Children who eat breakfast have better problem-solving abilities, recall, memory, verbal fluency and creativity. Children, who do not eat breakfast or eat an insufficient breakfast, are more likely to have behavioural and emotional issues throughout the day. In Kindy B we had breakfast together. We had porridge

with sultanas and honey. This breakfast provides the children with enough energy to think and learn throughout the morning. Many of the children were passing this nutritional information onto their parents.

We also made vegetable quiches, pizza toppers and veggie balls. Cooking helped the children understand portion size and what ingredients go into various meals. Cooking also gave us the opportunity to discuss what foods are good to eat all the time, such as fruits and vegetables and what foods are good to eat sometimes, such as cookies and chips. Learning how to cook will hopefully give the children the skills they need to prepare food and try to avoid processed meals. All recipes can be found at <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/>



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