Sarah's Sleepover

Food, Nourishment & Feeling Safe

For some children who have experienced trauma, food and nourishment can carry much more meaning than simply satisfying hunger. Experiences of food insecurity, unpredictable mealtimes, changes in caregivers, sensory sensitivities or stressful family experiences can all influence the way a child experiences eating and drinking.

Food can sometimes provide a sense of comfort, familiarity and predictability. A favourite snack, a familiar meal, or sitting together at the table can become part of a child's experience of feeling cared for and safe. For some children, knowing that food will be available when they are hungry can also help build a sense of security and trust over time.

Throughout Sarah's Sleepover, Kathy is often holding and drinking a cup of tea. This is more than a small detail in the story. Kathy's tea represents one of the simple ways adults can care for themselves and regulate their own emotions. The warmth of the cup, the familiar routine of making tea and taking a quiet moment can all provide sensory experiences that help the body slow down and settle.

Warm drinks can also be a gentle grounding experience for children when used appropriately and safely. The warmth, smell, taste and act of taking slow sips can bring attention back to the present moment.

For some children, a warm, familiar drink such as:

- caffeine-free herbal tea, honey and lemon drinks or warm water
- Warm milk, hot chocolate, or malted sleep drinks

Can all become part of a calming routine.

It is important to remember:

- Follow each child's individual needs, preferences, culture and sensory profile.
- Food should never be used as a reward, bribe or behavioural tool.
- Instead, nourishment can be one small part of creating an environment where a child experiences consistency, care and choice.

Sometimes, feeling safe begins with something very simple: a warm drink, something nourishing to eat, and a trusted adult nearby.



You can find more resources at
www.ourlifetales.com.au