

NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY POLICY

As per *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*, our Service has a *Nutrition and Food Safety Policy* and procedures in place to ensure quality practices relating to nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements are followed at all times.

Our Service recognises the importance of safe food handling and healthy eating to promote the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care. We acknowledge that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children.

We are committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
79	Service providing food and beverages
80	Weekly menu
90	Medical conditions policy
91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

170	Policies and Procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First Aid Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy Enrolment Policy Excursions / Incursions Policy	Family Communication Policy Governance Policy Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Medical Conditions Policy Multicultural Policy
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PURPOSE

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) services are required by legislation to ensure the provision of healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. It is essential that our Service partners with families to provide education about nutrition and promote healthy eating habits for young children to positively influence their health and wellbeing. Dietary and healthy eating habits formed in the early years are shown to continue into adulthood and can reduce the risk factors associated with chronic adult conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Our Service recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development, and wellbeing of young children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children in our care. This policy affirms our position on the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in our care and the promotion and education of healthy choices for optimum nutrition.

We believe in providing a positive eating environment that reflects dietary requirements, cultural and family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, approved provider, nominated supervisor, visitors, **students, volunteers** and management of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service has a responsibility to help children to develop good food practices and approaches, by working with families and educators.

All food prepared by the Service or families will endeavour to be consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and provide children with 50% of the recommended dietary intake for all nutrients. Mealtimes reflect a relaxed and pleasant environment where educators engage in meaningful conversations with children. This assists in creating a positive and enjoyable eating environment.

NUTRITION

ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT BREASTFEEDING AND APPROPRIATE INTRODUCTION OF SOLID FOODS

Our Service will:

- provide a suitable place within the Service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk
- support mothers **who are breastfeeding their infant**
- ensure the safe handling of breast milk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing, and bottle feeding
- in consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age
- always bottle-feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position
- always supervise babies while drinking and eating, ensuring safe bottle-feeding and eating practices at all times.

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian guide to healthy eating and the dietary guidelines for children and adolescents

OUR SERVICE WILL:

WHERE FOOD IS BROUGHT FROM HOME:

- provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and that are suitable for children's lunchboxes
- encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious food provided
- strongly discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt, and/or sugar, and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include sweet biscuits, some muesli bars, breakfast bars and fruit filled bars, and chips
- food items that should not be brought to the Service include confectionary (lollies, sweets, chocolate, jelly) and sugary drinks (cordial, energy drinks).

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ MANAGEMENT/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- ensure educators and staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* in relation to this policy and relevant procedures to ensure awareness of safe food handling practices while promoting healthy eating
- ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment
- ensure food and beverages are offered to children regularly during the day
- ensure enrolment forms include information relating to child's food preferences, allergies, intolerances, cultural or religious considerations or medical conditions which involve food or food practices
- consult with families on enrolment to develop individual management plans, including completing **Medical Risk Minimisation Plans** for children with medical conditions involving food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements as per *Medical Conditions Policy*
- ensure children's individual dietary requirements as per enrolment information or medical condition plans are communicated to all staff
- ensure any changes to children's individual dietary requirements are recorded and communicated to all staff

EDUCATORS/ FOOD HANDLERS WILL:

- ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment
- be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances, and special dietary requirements and consult with families and management to ensure individual **Medical** *Management Plans* are developed and implemented, including completing **Medical** Risk Minimisation Plans for children with medical conditions involving food as per *Medical Conditions Policy*
- ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking
- ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking
- ensure all children are always supervised children whilst eating and drinking
- consider the needs of various age groups at the service- meal times may be offered progressively or at different times
- ensure infants are fed individually by educators
- ensure age and developmentally appropriately utensils and furniture are provided for each child
- encourage toddlers to be independent and develop social skills at mealtimes
- establish healthy eating habits in the children by incorporating nutritional information into our program
- talk to families about their child's food intake and voice any concerns about their child's eating
- encourage parents to the best of our ability to continue our healthy eating message in their homes

FOOD HYGIENE

Food poisoning is caused by bacteria, viruses, or other toxins being present in food and can cause extremely unpleasant symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and fevers. Children under five years of age are considered a high-risk group as their immune systems are still developing and they produce less of the stomach acid required to kill harmful bacteria than older children or adults (Foodsafety.gov. 2019).

Our Service will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning.

CLEANING

Our Service will:

- ensure that food preparation areas and surfaces are cleaned both before, after, and during any food preparation
- ensure refrigerators and freezers are cleaned regularly and door seals checked and replaced if not in good repair

- prevent pest infestations by cleaning spills as quickly as possible and ensuring rubbish and food scraps are disposed of frequently
- ensure that floor mops are thoroughly cleaned, and air dried after each use
- replace any cleaning equipment that shows signs of wear or permanent soiling.

ALL STAFF HANDLING FOOD WILL:

- ensure children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water, and single use disposable towels or individual hand towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks
- ensure food is stored and served at safe temperatures (below 5°C or above 60°C), with consideration to the safe eating temperature requirements of children
- discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils

CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Our Service will:

- ensure that educators sit with the children at meal and snack times to role-model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided
- choose water as a preferred drink
- endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children
- encourage older toddlers and pre-schoolers to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink, providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem while promoting children's agency and decision-making
- respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats.
- be patient with messy or slow eaters
- encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat
- not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes
- role-model and discuss safe food handling with children

SERVICE PROGRAM

Our Service will:

- foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the children's program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating
- encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences
- provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices
- embed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in everyday activities and experiences.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Cooking can help develop children's knowledge and skills regarding healthy eating habits. Cooking is a great, fun activity and provides opportunities for children to be exposed to new foods, sharing of recipes and cooking skills. On these occasions participating educators will be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to.

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

Our Service will:

- request that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the Service and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children's individual dietary needs are met
- communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the Service and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home
- communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.
- discuss discretionary choices- (food and beverages which are not necessary as part of a balanced diet) with families.

SOURCES

- Australian Breast-Feeding Association Guidelines: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
[Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. \(2023\). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*.](#)
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). *Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements Policy Guidelines*.
- Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. V2.0](#).
- Australian Government Department of Health *Eat for Health- The Australian Dietary Guidelines*
<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).
Food Act 2003
[Food Authority NSW. \(2023\). *Food safety requirements for children's services in NSW*.](#)
Food Regulation 2015
- Food Safety Standards (Australia only). (2024): <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/business/food-safety-standards>
Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand. (2023). Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard (4th Ed.):
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/Pages/safefoodaustralia3rd16.aspx>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013):
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-dietary-guidelines>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. Department of Health and Ageing. Infant Feeding Guidelines. (2013):
https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf
- National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>
- NSW Food Authority: <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>
- NSW Government. Healthy Kids. (2019). Munch and Move: <https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/about-munch-move.aspx>
- The Australian Dental Association: <https://www.ada.org.au/Home>
- The Department of Health. Get Up & Grow: [Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood – Staff/Carers Book](#)
- Victoria State Government Education and Training Nutrition Australia [Healthy eating in the National Quality Standard A guide for early childhood education and care services](#)
[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011.

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	MAY 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MAY 2025
VERSION	V13.05.24		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy maintenance • minor edits in policy • sources checked for currency and updated as required 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
JULY/MAY 2023	<p>JULY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • updates to the Food Safety Standards (effective Dec 2023) <p>MAY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • continuous improvement/reflection section added • Childcare Centre Desktop Related resources section added • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in ‘Sources’ 	MAY 2023	
MAY 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required 	MAY 2023	
OCTOBER 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy reviewed and included suggested guidelines from ACECQA Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements Policy Guidelines (August 2021) • Additional sections added for AP, Management, NS and Educator and food handlers 	MAY 2022	
MAY 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minor editing • inclusion of cultural or religious dietary practices • sources checked for currency 	MAY 2022	
MAY 2020	<p>minor additions- discretionary foods, online shopping</p> <p>addition of health professional’s information to ensure best practice</p> <p>sources checked for currency</p>	MAY 2021	

MAY 2019	<p>Food hygiene section added, comprising of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buying and transporting food - Storing food - Preparing and serving food - Cleaning - Personal hygiene for food handlers <p>Heading added to existing information – ‘All staff handling food will:’</p> <p>New section added: Cooking with Children.</p> <p>Additional information inserted into existing points (highlighted)</p> <p>New source added</p>	MAY 2020
MAY 2018	<p>Minor grammatical changes made to content. (Not critical to its delivery)</p>	MAY 2019
MAY 2017	<p>Further research has been conducted, updating the rationale and terminology throughout the policy.</p> <p>Have incorporated embedding healthy eating and physical activity in the daily program</p>	MAY 2018
OCTOBER 2017/ FEBRUARY 2018	<p>Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard</p> <p>Terminology update in opening statement</p>	MAY 2018