

NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY POLICY

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations (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 LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 2A	Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children
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 Anaphylaxis Management Policy Bottle Safety and Preparation 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
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PURPOSE

Our Service is committed to supporting healthy eating and positive food practices for children, recognising the important role nutrition plays in children's growth, development and wellbeing.

We work in partnership with families and align with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* to promote healthy food and drink choices and foster lifelong healthy eating habits.

This policy outlines our commitment to:

- promoting nutritious and balanced food and drink choices
- creating positive, inclusive and culturally responsive mealtime environments
- supporting children to develop healthy relationships with food
- ensuring safe and hygienic food handling practices.

SCOPE

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

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service ensures that the safety, health and wellbeing of children are the paramount consideration in all decision-making. This principle underpins all practices relating to nutrition, food safety, and mealtime environments ensuring that children are protected from harm and supported in their wellbeing at all times.

All food prepared by the Service or families will endeavour to be consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and provide children with a nutritious and balanced menu. Consideration will also be made to each child's dietary requirements, allergies, medical conditions, cultural practices, and family practices to ensure their safety and inclusion.

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
- never prop bottles to allow children to bottle-feed alone
- 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
- provide space in a refrigerator to keep lunchboxes or insulated lunch bags to be stored
- 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 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 and food handlers
- ensure any changes to children's individual dietary requirements are recorded and communicated to all staff and food handlers
- notify parents/guardians as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in a serious incident/situation at the Service. Details of the incident/situation are to be recorded on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*.

- notify the regulatory authority of any serious incident or complaints alleging the safety, health or wellbeing of children has been compromised within 24 hours of the incident or the time that the person becomes aware of the incident or complaint

EDUCATORS/ FOOD HANDLERS WILL:

- ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both indoor and outdoor environments
- 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 and risk minimisation plans are developed and implemented, in accordance with the *Medical Conditions Policy*
- ensure young children do not have access to foods that pose a choking risk
- ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking
- actively supervise children during mealtimes to ensure safety and wellbeing
- 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 and in a safe and responsive manner
- provide age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture for each child
- ensure food is not used as a form of punishment reward or bribe
- ensure children are not force fed, coerced or pressured to eat food they do not want or choose to eat, recognising that such practices may constitute inappropriate conduct and pose a risk to children's safety, wellbeing and dignity
- encourage toddlers to be independent and develop social skills at mealtimes
- promote healthy eating habits through intentional teaching and inclusion of nutrition in the educational program
- communicate with families about their child's food intake and discuss any concerns respectfully
- encourage families, where appropriate, to support consistent healthy eating practices at home

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).

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 gloves (and food tongs) are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods
- 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

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 and unhurried mealtime environment that supports children to eat, communicate and enjoy social interactions
- 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 and cues for hunger and satiety and not pressure or insist that a child eat
- be patient and supportive of children who are developing eating skills, including those who may be messy or slow eaters

- encourage children to try different foods without coercion or pressure
- ensure food is not used as a reward, bribe or withhold food for disciplinary purposes, recognising that such practices may constitute inappropriate conduct
- 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 educational 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 experiences support children to develop knowledge and skills and positive attitudes towards healthy eating. These experiences provide opportunities to explore new foods, share cultural practices and build practical life skills.

Educators will actively supervise children and ensure all cooking experiences are conducted safely, with appropriate hygiene practices and risk minimisation strategies in place.

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

Our Service will:

- request up-to-date information regarding children's allergies, intolerances, medical conditions and dietary requirements, and work in partnerships with families to ensure these needs are safely met
- communicate regularly with families about food, nutrition and learning experiences within the Service
- provide current information and guidance to support families in providing 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, during orientation, and informal discussion.

SOURCES

Australian Breast-Feeding Association Guidelines: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). [*Guide to the National Quality Framework*](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). [*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*
Food Act 2003

[*Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*](#)

[*Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*](#)

Food Authority NSW. (2025). [*Food safety requirements for children's services in NSW.*](#)

Food Safety Standards (Australia only). (2025). [*Food Safety Standards \(Chapter 3\)*](#)

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). (2026)

Food Standards Australia New Zealand. (2025). [*Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard \(4th Ed.\)*](#)

National Health and Medical Research Council. Department of Health and Ageing. [*Eat for Health. Infant Feeding Guidelines. \(2013\)*](#)

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*](#)

[*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	MAY 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MAY 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V15.05.26		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• annual policy review• Purpose and Implementation sections rewritten to reduce duplication and strengthen alignment with required legislation• improved flow and consistency embedded child safety legislation amendments into policy including paramount consideration and inappropriate conduct• replaced some wording with more collaborative, inclusive and dignity focused wording• sources updated as required		
PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS			
MAY 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• annual policy maintenance• updated Food Safety requirements for children’s services- summer heat• additional information added re: management of food allergens• sources checked for currency and updated as required		