



2.13 Nutrition and Food Safety Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Our service recognises the importance of 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. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating. Our service therefore recognises the importance of supporting families to provide healthy food and drink to their children. We are committed to implementing and exceeding the healthy eating key messages outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

AIM

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 adult chronic 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, as we commit to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages outlined in the *Kids at Play Active Play* program into our curriculum and to support the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources.

STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

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 be consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and provide children with 50% or more of the recommended dietary intake for all nutrients. Food will be served at various times throughout the day to cater for all children's nutritional needs.

Meal times reflect a relaxed and pleasant environment where educators engage in meaningful conversations with children. When possible, educators will role model healthy eating behaviour, by sharing a small amount of the food on offer with the children. This assists in creating a positive and enjoyable eating environment.

Food will be prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Program. All kitchens and food preparation areas shall comply with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand. (FSANZ)

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 to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while offering appropriate complementary foods from around 6 months of age.
- 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.
- Where breastfeeding is discontinued before 12 months of age, substitute with a commercial infant formula.
- Always bottle-feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position.
- Ensure appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age.
- Adjust the texture of foods offered between 6 and 12 months of age to match the baby's developmental stage.
- Offer a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups.
- 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:

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, dairy products, lean meats and alternatives.
- Plan and display the service menu that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets the daily nutritional needs of children whilst in care.
- Plan healthy snacks on the menu to complement what is served at mealtimes and ensure the snacks are substantial enough to meet the energy and nutrient needs of children.
- Vary the meals and snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas.

Management/Nominated Supervisor/Educators 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 diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans.
- 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 while eating and drinking.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for cooking staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.
- Follow the guidelines for serving different types of food and the serving sizes in the guidelines and may use the Australian Government "eat for health" calculator - www.eatforhealth.gov.au
- Ensure the weekly menu is displayed in an accessible and prominent area for parents to view.
- Display nutritional information for families and keep them regularly updated.
- Ensure the weekly menu is accurate and describes the food and beverages provided each day of the week.
- Ensure food is presented attractively

- Ensure infants are fed individually by educators
- Ensure age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture will be provided for each child.
- Not allow food to be used as a form of punishment or to be used as a reward or bribe.
- Not allow the children to be force fed without being required to eat food they do not like or more than they want to eat.
- Encourage toddlers to be independent and develop social skills at meal times.
- 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.
- Ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are taken daily, working in compliance with the National Food Authority.

Storing, preparing and serving food in a hygienic manner promoting hygienic food practices.

Our service will:

- Ensure gloves (or food tongs) are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods
- Ensure children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- Ensure food is stored and served at safe temperatures i.e. below 5°C or above 60°C.
- Separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken, fruit and vegetables and utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods.
- Discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils.
- Ensure food-handling staff members attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information onto the rest of the staff.

Bottle Warming

- All staff shall be made aware of the risks involved in heating bottles in the microwave.
- All bottles are to be stored in the fridge at all times until heating is to commence.
- Frozen breast milk is to be de-frosted in the fridge until heating. Breastmilk is to be given at room temperature.
- Bottles are not to be re-heated at any time. If a child refuses formula it will be placed on the bench with a lid for no more than one hour.
- If bottles are not used after 1-hour milk is to be discarded.
- Literature is updated and distributed to staff as required to support 'best practice'.

To heat bottles, our service will:

- Heat bottles in bottle warmers provided
- Get the required bottle/bottles out of the fridge and place them in the bottle warmer.
- When heated in the bottle warmer, shake the bottle to ensure even heat distribution. Check temperature by dropping a little of the milk onto your wrist. If not warm enough put the bottle back into the jug or warmer and check at one-minute intervals until warm.

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, and offer milk to children during morning and afternoon tea
- 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 preschoolers 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.
- 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.
- Do not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

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

Communicating with families

Our service will:

- Provide a copy of the Nutrition Policy to all families upon orientation at the service.
- Provide opportunities for families to contribute to the review and development of the policy.
- 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.

Dental Health

We believe it's important for all children to have a high level of dental hygiene. We follow the guidelines of the Australian Dental Association and the State Government Health Departments when caring for children's teeth.

We provide information and guidelines on good dental health practices, which are implemented into the daily routine, including swish and swallow after meal times, providing information about tooth brushing, tooth friendly snacks and drinks and going to the dentist.

To prevent cavities forming, or other adverse dental outcomes, we encourage children to eat nutritious foods and to avoid sticky and sugary foods. All food served and prepared at our service complies with these guidelines by providing an assortment of recommended vegetables, fruits and dairy products. Children will be encouraged to drink water to quench their thirst and remain hydrated throughout the day.

Management/Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person will:

- Ensure that the daily menu contains a nutritional balance of foods which works in collaboration with approved government funded organisations, including 'Kids at Play Active Play' and 'Get Up and Grow'
- Minimise the provision of sugary foods, including chocolate, lollies, sweetened cereals, biscuits and fruit bars
- Always ensure children have access to safe drinking water
- Ensure the routine incorporates 'swish and swallow' after each meal time

Educators will:

- Include dental health practices in the daily program
- Provide opportunities to discuss dental health education with children
- Support children to access dental health resources for research, exploration and identification. These resources will be available through books, posters and visual aids
- Talk with children about dental health during the day, encouraging swish and swallow after meal time and having children partake in drinking water throughout the day
- Pay particular attention to meal and snack times to ensure healthy food is being eaten
- Give children bottles before they go to bed. Allowing the child to finish the bottle before going to bed and not letting milk settle on teeth which can reduce tooth decay.
- Arrange annual visits by dental health professionals as part of the program. Families and children will be encouraged to attend these visits where correct brushing techniques and dental care will be discussed.
- Provide dental care information to families through newsletters, posters, professional visits, web links and brochures.

Dental Emergencies

It is important for educators to be aware of how to manage dental accidents and emergencies. Our service will:

- Collect contact information from families about their family dentist (if any). This process should be done during the enrolment process.
- Follow a dental accident procedure
- Ensure there is an Educator on duty with current first aid qualifications
- Ensure children are supervised at all times to minimise accidents and incidents

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW

- 77 - Health, hygiene and safe food practices
- 78 - Food and beverages
- 79 - Service providing food and beverages
- 80 - Weekly menu
- 90 - Medical conditions policy
- 90(1)(iv) - Medical Conditions Communication Plan
- 91 - Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
- 162 - Health information to be kept in enrolment record
- 168 - Education and care service must have policies and procedures

SOURCE LIST

This section contains websites, industry bodies, or Legislation that have been used to assist in sourcing the information for this policy. It also acts as a guide to sourcing further reading on each relevant policy.

- [Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority](#)
- [Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)
- [Guide to the National Quality Standard](#)
- [Revised National Quality Standard](#)
- [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#)
- [Early Years Learning Framework](#)
- [Food Standards Australia New Zealand](#)
- [Kids Health – Formula Feeding](#)
- [Handling and storage of Breast milk & prepared formula](#)
- [Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood](#)
- [Infant Feeding Guidelines: information for health workers \(2012\)](#)
- [ACT Government - Eat for Health](#)
- [ACT Health](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011](#)
- [Kids at Play Active Play Program](#)

RELATED POLICIES

1.02 Cultural Diversity Policy

2.19 Work Health Safety Policy

POLICY REVIEW

The review schedule has been developed using a risk assessment methodology with consideration given to sector, industry, and legislative changes.

Date reviewed	Policy changed		Modifications	Next Review Date
May 2018	Yes	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard • Terminology update in opening statement • Included Dental Hygiene section 	April 2019