

Nutrition & Food Safety Policy

National Quality Standard (NQS)

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

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

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law	
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
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

Related Policies

Bottled Breast Milk
Sterilising Bottles and Teats Policy
Infant Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy
Multicultural Policy

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 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 message.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, 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. 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.
- 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:

Where food is provided by the Service:

- 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 (at least two weeks at a time) 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.
- 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 presently attractively
- Ensure infants are fed individually by educators
- Ensure age and developmentally appropriately 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 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, warm 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.

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 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.

Source

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority.

- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Guide to the National Quality Standard
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand
- Safe Food Australia, 2nd Edition. January 2001
- Infant Feeding Guidelines 2012
- Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013
- Eat for health: Dept. Health and Ageing and NHMRC
- Food Safety Standards for Australia 2001
- Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994
- Food Act 2003
- Food Regulation 2004
- VIC Food Authority
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
- Dental Association Australia
- Australian Breast Feeding Association Guidelines
- Revised National Quality Standard 2018

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
May 2017	Further research has been conducted, updating the rationale and terminology throughout the policy. Have incorporated embedding healthy eating and physical activity in the daily program	May 2018
October 2017	Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard	May 2018
February 2018	Terminology update in opening statement	
May 2018	Minor grammatical changes made to content. (Not critical to it's delivery)	May 2019