

NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY POLICY

As per Education and *Care Services National Law and Regulations*, our Service has a nutritional 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 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. We support and promote the NSW Health initiative *Munch & Move* and utilise the Australian Government’s *Get Up & Grow-Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and *Eat for Health* resources.

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

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

Our Service is also committed to ensuring consistently high standards of food preparation and food storage and transportation are adhered to.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, visitors, 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.

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.

Food will be prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Program. All kitchens and food preparation areas will comply with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) and any relevant local jurisdictional requirements (i.e., local council registrations and inspections). All staff involved in the stages of food handling have the skills and knowledge to ensure food safety is a priority.

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 to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while offering appropriate complementary foods from around 6 months of age
- 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:

- respect and accommodate children's cultural or religious dietary practices as requested by families

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

- food items that should not be brought to the service include nuts, food containing nuts and sugary drinks (cordial, energy drinks).

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 new staff and educators are aware of food practices and procedures as outlined in this policy during induction and orientation
- 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 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

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 management plans are developed and implemented, including completing 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

- participate in regular professional development to maintain and enhance knowledge about early childhood nutrition and food safety practices
- display nutritional information for families and keep them regularly updated
- 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
- 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 or 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 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.

Buying and transporting food

Our Service will:

- always check labels for the 'use by' and 'best before' dates, understanding that 'use by' dates apply to perishable foods that could potentially cause food poisoning if out of date, whilst 'best before' dates refer to food items with long shelf life but quality could be compromised
- avoid buying food items in damaged, swollen, leaking or dented packaging
- always check eggs within cartons: Never buy dirty or cracked eggs.
- never buy any food item if unsure about its quality

Storing food

Our Service will:

- ensure the refrigerator and freezer has a thermometer and that the refrigerator is maintained at 5°C or below and the freezer is maintained at -17°C or below
- ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are checked daily
- ensure that all foods stored in the refrigerator are stored in strong food-safe containers with either a tight-fitting lid, or tightly applied plastic wrap or foil
- ensure that all foods not stored in their original packaging are labelled with:
 - the name of the food
 - the 'use by' date
 - the date the food was opened
 - details of any allergens present in the food
- transfer the contents of opened cans into appropriate containers
- ensure all bottles and jars are refrigerated after opening
- not reuse disposable containers (e.g., Chinese food containers).
- store dry foods in labelled and sealed, air-tight containers if not in original packaging
- store dry foods in cupboards or if in a walk-in pantry, on shelving no lower than 30cm from the floor
- store bulk dry foods only in food-safe and airtight containers
- store cleaning supplies and chemicals separate to food items

Preparing and serving food

Our Service will:

- ensure that all cooked food is cooked through and reaches 75°C
- ensure that cooked food is served promptly, or
- wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly under clean running water before preparation
- ensure unused washed fruit or vegetables are thoroughly dry before returning to storage
- ensure food that has been dropped on the floor is immediately discarded
- thoroughly clean kitchen utensils and equipment between using with different foods and/or between different tasks
- ensure that gloves are changed between handling different foods or changing tasks
- ensure that staff preparing food for children with food allergies or intolerances are proficient at reading ingredient labels
- ensure all educators and staff are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans

Cleaning

Our Service will:

- ensure that food preparation areas and surfaces are cleaned both before, after, and during any food preparation
- ensure that all cooking and serving utensils are cleaned and sanitised before use
- ensure that all dishwashing sponges, brushes, and scourers are cleaned after each use and allowed to air dry or placed in the dishwasher
- ensure the food storage area is clean, ventilated, dry, pest free, and not in direct sunlight
- 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.
- 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 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
- 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:

- provide a copy of the *Nutrition and Food Safety 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 Breast-Feeding Association Guidelines: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). *Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements Policy Guidelines*.
- Australian Government Department for Education. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. (2009).
- 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 2018).
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).
- Food Act 2003*
- Food Regulation 2015*
- Food Safety Standards (Australia only). (2015):
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/safetystandards/Pages/default.aspx>
- Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991*
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand. (2016). Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard (3rd Ed.):
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/Pages/safefoodaustralia3rd16.aspx>
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (amended 2020).
- 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/>
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- 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: https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection?utm_source=health.gov.au&utm_medium=callout-auto-custom&utm_campaign=digital_transformation
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011.

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Pip Fisher	Director	12/05/2022
POLICY REVIEWED	MAY 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	MAY 2023
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy maintenance - no major changes to policy hyperlinks checked and repaired as required 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE

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