



## Nutrition & Food Safety Policy

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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. 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.

### 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
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and 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.

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

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, 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.

Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and to promote hygienic food practices.

Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood educators and families about healthy food and drink choices.

Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the service.

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 which reflects cultural and family values.

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* and the *Australian Dietary Guidelines and Infant Feeding Guidelines*.

## 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.
- 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.

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.

- 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 lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, some muesli bars, breakfast bars and fruit filled bars, and chips.

#### **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 whilst 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](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)
- Display nutritional information for families and keep them regularly updated.
- Ensure the weekly menu is displayed in an accessible and prominent area for parents to view.
- 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 is 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 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.

#### **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.

### ***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.
- Store raw foods below cooked foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross contamination by foods dripping onto other foods.
- 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.
- Place 'left-over' hot food in an appropriate sealed container in the refrigerator as soon as the steam has stopped rising. Food can be cooled quickly to this point by placing in smaller quantities in shallow containers, reducing the amount of time sitting in the 'danger zone'.
- 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.
- Not place anything on the floor of a walk-in pantry (as containers of any type create easy access to shelves for mice and rats).
- Store bulk dry foods only in food-safe and airtight containers.

- Use the FIFO (first in, first out) rule for all foods (dry, chilled, and frozen) to ensure rotation of stock so that older stock is used first.
- Store cleaning supplies separate to food items.

### ***Preparing and serving food:***

Our Service will:

- 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.
- Avoid cross-contamination by ensuring that separate knives and utensils are used for different foods.
- Ensure that gloves are changed between handling different foods or changing tasks.
- Ensure that unwell staff do not handle food.

### ***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 before use.
- Ensure that all dishwashing sponges, brushes, and scourers are cleaned after each use and allowed to air dry.
- 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.

### ***Personal hygiene for food handlers:***

Our Service will ensure:

- Strict hand-washing hygiene is adhered to, including washing hands each time they return to the kitchen before continuing with food preparation duties.

- Wounds or cuts are covered with a brightly coloured, waterproof dressing (that will easily be seen if it falls off), and gloves will be worn over any dressings.
- Staff who are not well will not prepare or handle food.

### **All staff handling food 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 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.
- Ensure food-handling staff members attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information on to 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 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.
- 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 experiences may sometimes be carried out with the children as a part of the program. 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:

- Ensure a copy of the Nutrition & Food Safety Policy is available to all families 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 Dietary Guidelines and Infant Feeding Guidelines.
- Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. (2009).
- Food Act 2003*
- Food Regulation 2015*
- Foodsafety.gov. (2019): <https://www.foodsafety.gov>
- 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 (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Standard. (2017).
- 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](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: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-staffcarers>
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011.

## REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	May 2019	NEXT REVIEW DATE	May 2020
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food hygiene section added, comprising of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buying and transporting food</li> <li>- Storing food</li> <li>- Preparing and serving food</li> <li>- Cleaning</li> <li>- Personal hygiene for food handlers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Heading added to existing information – ‘All staff handling food will:’</li> <li>• New section added: Cooking with Children.</li> <li>• Additional information inserted into existing points (highlighted)</li> <li>• New source added</li> </ul>		
POLICY REVIEWED	May 2019	NEXT REVIEW DATE	May 2020
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rearranged the order of points for better flow</li> <li>• Points added (Highlighted).</li> <li>• Sources checked for currency.</li> <li>• Sources/references corrected, updated, and alphabetised.</li> <li>• Incorrect links deleted and replaced with correct ones.</li> <li>• Minor formatting for consistency throughout policy.</li> </ul>		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
May 2018	Minor grammatical changes made to content. (Not critical to its delivery)		May 2019
October 2017	Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard		May 2018
February 2018	Terminology update in opening statement		
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