

# NUTRITION, FOOD, BEVERAGES & DIETARY

## POLICY STATEMENT

This policy concerns the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in care and the promotion of normal growth and development.

The service is allergy aware and is committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in *Munch & Move* and to supporting the *Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (birth to 5 years)* and *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* as outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources.

Further, we recognise the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating.

## GOALS

Our service recognises the importance of healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care.

## STRATEGIES

### Encourage healthy habits

Our service will;

- I. Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents
- II. Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes.
- III. encourage the Crunch & Sip initiative within our classroom settings
- IV. Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods
- V. 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.
- VI. Encourage the consumption of water only at our service for children, with fresh water readily available for children to drink and refill their water bottles throughout the day.

Our service discourages the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven-baked crackers and corn chips.

### Promote safety

- I. Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day.
- II. All staff are aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans.
- III. All families are notified of food allergies within the service, to ensure lunchboxes are packed with consideration to these requirements.

- IV. Ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking.
- V. Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- VI. Always supervise children while eating and drinking
- VII. Children are encouraged to have icepacks in their lunchboxes to control temperature of contents.

### Allergy Awareness

Promoting awareness around allergens, and taking a holistic approach to Allergy Awareness including;

- I. Staff training
- II. Development of individual health care plans
- III. Risk minimisation strategies
- IV. Promoting awareness within the community
- V. Age appropriate strategies for children such, ie: not sharing food and washing hands.

### Safe food handling

- I. Children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap and water) before and after handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- II. Educators undergo regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.
- III. Ensure gloves are worn or food tongs are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- IV. Separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken and utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods.
- V. Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils or sharing of foods.

### Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values

- I. 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.
- II. Endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- III. Be responsive to children's cues of hunger or thirst
- IV. 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.
- V. Encourage children 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.
- VI. Encourage children to take responsibility of their own belongings and disposal of their rubbish, recycling and food scraps.
- VII. Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats.
- VIII. 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.
- IX. Respect individual eating paces of children
- X. Encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat.
- XI. Do not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

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## Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood staff and families about healthy food and drink choices

- I. 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.
- II. Encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences.
- III. Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion 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

- I. Provide a copy of the Nutrition Policy to all families upon orientation at the service. Families will be provided with opportunities to contribute to the review and development of the policy.
- II. 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.
- III. 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.
- IV. 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 newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Approved Provider responsibilities

- I. Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.
- II. Ensure that the service implements adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for in the service.

### Nominated Supervisor responsibilities

- I. Offer suitable training opportunities regarding food safety.
- II. Ensure cooking experiences include provision of nutritionally balanced and culturally sensitive meal options.
- III. Ensure adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food are implemented at the service to minimise risks to children.
- IV. Ensure children being cared for by the service have access to safe drinking water at all times and their lunchboxes throughout the day.

### Educator responsibilities

- I. Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Food and Nutrition policy.
- II. Ensure children's individual dietary needs are adhered to.
- III. Provide positive meal time experiences for children.
- IV. Respect the individual needs and choices of children.
- V. Actively supervise children during meal times.
- VI. Adhere to the services Hygiene Policy.

- VII. Adhere to dietary restrictions outlined within the service (nut-free, etc) and ensure these risk foods are not included in their own meals.

### Family's responsibilities

- I. Communicate regularly with educators / staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences.
- II. Adhere to dietary restrictions outlined within the service (nut-free, etc) and ensure these risk foods are not included in child's lunchboxes.
- III. Provide nutritious food for their child in their lunchboxes
- IV. Feel welcomed and encouraged to contribute to cultural specific cooking experiences.

## RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS, LEGISLATION

### National Quality Standards

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice – Standards 1.2.3  
Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety – Standards 2.1.3  
Quality Area 5: Relationships with Children – Standards 5.1.2  
Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standards 6.1.2  
EYLF Outcome 3 – Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

### Office of the Childrens Guardian: Child Safe Standards

Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.  
Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved.  
Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.  
Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.

### Legislation

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167  
Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 78-80  
Work Health and Safety Act 2011

## RESOURCES / USEFUL LINKS

Healthy Kids NSW – [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au)  
Nutrition Australia – [www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org)  
Food Standards Australia New Zealand – [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)

## MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every two years. Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved. In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.