

INTRODUCTION

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 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 – What are we going to do?

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/ WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?***Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods***

The service will:

- Apply current national infant feeding recommendations.
- Provide a suitable place within the service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk.
- While breast milk is best for babies, containing immunological properties that are very important in preventing illness in babies, staff will be aware that it is a mother's individual decision to breast feed/provide expressed breast milk. Mothers of breast-fed babies should be encouraged to provide expressed breast milk or to visit the centre to feed their babies.
- 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 breastmilk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing and bottle feeding.
- Staff will adhere to the following:
 - Thawing: Breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator for 48 hours or in a deep freezer for 6-12 months, depending upon the deep freezer. Frozen breast milk should be thawed quickly – but not put it in boiling water or it will curdle. Place the container under cold running water. Gradually allow the water to get warmer until the milk becomes liquid. It is not recommended to use a microwave to thaw or warm expressed breast milk. Do not shake the thawed breast milk – roll gently to mix.
 - Ensure the temperature is not excessive and there is no danger that the baby could be scalded.
 - Ensure breast milk is clearly labelled with the child's name and the time and date the milk was expressed. Two staff members should check the label of the breast milk before it is given. Throw away any milk that is left over. Do not re-freeze or re-heat left-over milk.

- Ask mothers to supply breast milk in multiple small quantities to prevent wastage.
- Formula:
 - It is recommended that formula is prepared as required. When preparing formula, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.
 - Throw away any formula that is left over
 - Do not freeze or re-heat left-over formula
 - Ensure the bottles are clearly labelled with the child's name and date the formula was made up
- Warming Bottles:
 - Do not warm bottles in the microwave
 - Microwaves ovens distribute heat unevenly – also, water in the milk turns to steam and collects at the top of the bottle. There is a danger that the baby could be scalded.
- In consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age.
- Always bottle feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position.
- In consultation with families, determine appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age.
- In consultation with families, 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

The 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.
- Provide breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon and late afternoon (on demand).
- 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.
- Food will not be used as punishment, either by provisional or denial.
- Safe drinking water will be available at all times.
- We discourage any sweets, chewing gum, chips and soft drinks in the centre.

- We do have special occasions when sweets and chips will be in use. When we use these food items we endeavour to serve item with reduced food colours, additives and preservatives as much as possible.
- Meals and snacks are to be served on a regular schedule but individual needs for quantity and timing are to be accommodated where possible.
- Children will be given the opportunity to pour their own drinks where possible in order to help develop self-help skills.
- If children do not eat their main meal they will be offered a sandwich and will still be offered dessert.
- Drinks: Toddlers & Children
 - Milk is to be served at morning tea
 - Water will be served with lunch and late afternoon tea
 - All dairy products will be using full cream milk
 - Water is available at all times. Children are encouraged to drink throughout the day
- Drinks: Infants
 - We respect a child's individual routine. Parents are encouraged to see the staff to discuss their child's eating habits.
- Commence solids at 4-6months. Starting with cereals, pureed vegetables and fruit (no added sugar or salt).
- Between 7-8months food texture can be lumpier and finger food can be encouraged. Adequate supervision of the child whilst learning to eat these foods is essential.

Promote safety

- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day.
- 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.
- Nuts or any food products containing nuts will be advertised to parents as wishing not to have foods supplied; as we have children in our services with nut allergies.
- Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Always supervise children while eating and drinking.

Safe food handling

- Encourage and provide opportunities for cooking staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.
- Provide food to children that has been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner and to promote hygienic food practices
- Ensure an apron and gloves are worn or food tongs are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- Ensure food is purchased from reputable outlets and that all food handling utensils are clean.
- Ensure staff have long hair tied back.

- 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.
- Staff involved in handling, preparing or serving food (including giving a baby a bottle), will remember these basic points:
 - Wash and dry your hands
 - If a staff member has any cuts or wounds on their hands, they will make sure they are completely covered by a waterproof dressing. The use of disposable gloves over the dressing will provide an extra level of protection.
- To prevent cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods:
 - Keep raw and cooked foods separate (even in the fridge)
 - Do not keep uncooked food above cooked food in the fridge
 - Use separate utensils (including cutting boards, knives etc.) for raw and cooked foods.
- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures .ie. below 5°C or above 60°C.
- While the legal requirement for reheating food is 60°C, it is recommended that food should be reheated to 70°C for 2 minutes. Heating to this temperature will destroy germs that may have grown in the food. The best way of checking food temperatures is with a probe thermometer.
- Children will be discouraged from handling other children’s food and utensils.
- Food-handling staff attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information onto the rest of the staff.
- Ensure the food is allowed to cool before given to the child to eat.
- Keep a non-mercury thermometer in your fridge so that you can check that the temperature is 5°C or less.
- Throw out left overs. Tell parents what their child left, but do not return the left-over food.
- Heat food once only.
- Heat milk for bottles only once.
- Where children are involved in food preparation, this should always be supervised, and hygienic conditions maintained.

Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values

- Ensure that educators sit with the children at meal and snack times to role model healthy food and drink choices and
- 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.

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

- 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.
- Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the service
- 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.
- 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 newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider will:

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.
- Allocate finances for training and food safety.
- Allocate finances to ensure provision of nutritionally balanced and culturally sensitive meals as required.
- 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 by the service.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- 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.
- Ensure children being cared for by the service have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day.
- Ensure that, where food and beverages are supplied by the service, they are:
 - nutritious and adequate in quantity
 - chosen with regard to the dietary requirements of individual children

- Ensure that, where food and beverages are provided by the service, a weekly menu that accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided is displayed at the premises in a location accessible to parents.

Educators will:

- Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary policy.
- Ensure children's individual dietary needs are adhered to.
- Provide positive mealtime experiences for children.
- Respect the individual needs and choices of children.
- Actively supervise children during mealtimes.
- Adhere to the services Hygiene Policy.

Families will:

- Communicate regularly with educators/staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences.
- Contribute menu ideas and recipes.

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 18 months. 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.

RELATED LEGISLATION

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011

LINKS TO:

- National Quality Standard: 1.2.3, 2.1.3, 5.1.2, 6.1.2
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations: Regulations 78-80
- Early Years Learning Framework: Outcome 3 – Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

SOURCES

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) – www.acecqa.gov.au
- Healthy Kids NSW – <https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/>

STRATEGIES – How will it be done?

1. Preparing food

- Staff should tie back long hair and wear a clean apron when working in the kitchen.
- Staff will ensure that rubber gloves are worn during food preparation, that food has been stored properly and purchased from reputable outlets and that all food handling utensils are clean and sterile.
- Staff involved in handling, preparing or serving food (including giving a baby a bottle), will remember these basic points:
 - ✓ Wash and dry your hands.
 - ✓ If a staff member has any cuts or wounds on your hands, they will make sure they are completely covered by a waterproof dressing. The use of disposable gloves over the dressing will provide an extra level of protection.
 - ✓ To prevent cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods:
 - Keep raw and cooked foods separate (even in the fridge);
 - Do not keep uncooked food above cooked food in the fridge;
 - Use separate utensils (including cutting boards, knives, etc) for raw and cooked food.
 - ✓ While the legal requirement for reheating food is 60°C, it is recommended that food should be reheated to 70°C for 2 minutes. Heating to this temperature will destroy germs that may have grown in the food. The best way of checking food temperatures is with a probe thermometer.
 - ✓ Keep food hot (over 60°C) or cold (5°C or less);
 - ✓ Ensure the food is allowed to cool before it is given to the child to eat.
 - ✓ Keep a non-mercury thermometer in your fridge so that you can check that the temperature is 5°C or less.
 - ✓ Throw out left-overs. Tell parents what their child left, but do not return the left-over food.
 - ✓ Heat food once only.
 - ✓ Heat milk for bottles once only.
 - ✓ Where children are involved in food preparation, this should always be supervised and hygienic conditions maintained.

2. Babies Milk

- **Breast milk**

While breast milk is best for babies, containing immunological properties that are very important in preventing illness in babies, staff will be aware that it is a mother's individual decision to breast feed/provide expressed breast milk. Mothers of breast-fed babies should be encouraged to provide expressed breast milk or to visit the centre to feed their babies.

Staff will adhere to the following:

- ✓ Thawing - Breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator for 48 hours or in a deep freezer for 6 – 12 months, depending upon the deep freezer, Frozen breast milk should be thawed quickly— but not put it in boiling water or it will curdle. Place the container under cold running water. Gradually allow the water to get warmer until the milk becomes liquid. It is not recommended to use a microwave to thaw or warm expressed breast milk. Do not shake the thawed breast milk – roll gently to mix.
- ✓ Ensure the temperature is not excessive and there is no danger that the baby could be scalded.
- ✓ Ensure breast milk is clearly labelled with the child's name and the time and date the milk was expressed. Two staff members should check the label of the breast milk before it is given. Throw away any milk that is left over. Do not re-freeze or re-heat left-over milk.
- ✓ Ask mothers to supply breast milk in multiple small quantities to prevent wastage.

- **Formula**

It is recommended that formula is prepared as required. When preparing formula, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

- ✓ Throw away any formula that is left over.
- ✓ Do not freeze or re-heat left-over formula.
- ✓ Ensure the bottles are clearly labelled with the child's name and date the formula was made up.

- **Warming bottles**

- ✓ Do not warm bottles in the microwave.
- ✓ Microwave ovens distribute heat unevenly - also, water in the milk turns to steam and collects at the top of the bottle. There is a danger that the baby could be scalded.

3. EATING HABITS

- Children should be seated while eating or drinking.
- A registrar of child's allergies will be kept at all times.
- Nuts or any food products containing nuts will be avoided at all times.
- Food will not be used as punishment, either by provision or denial.
- Safe drinking water will be available at all times.
- We discourage any sweets, chewing gum, chips and soft drinks in the centre.
- We do have special occasions when sweets and chips will be in use. When we use these food items we endeavour to serve items with reduced food colours, additives and preservatives as much as possible.

4. THE DIRECTOR WILL

- Provide Information on child nutrition.
- Ensure adequate signage and training is provided to staff on health and hygiene practices and safe food handling procedures

5. STAFF WILL

- All staff - especially those who work directly with menu planning and food preparation will keep their Professional Development up to date with all food handling and hygiene procedures as well as the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines
- Seek information about the child's eating habits and parents expectations.
- Sit with the children and talk will involve some chat about food nutrition, good manners, hygiene and healthy habits, as well as the child's interests. Meal times are a time for communication.
- Complete a daily child's information sheet advising parents of their child's eating, drinking and sleeping habits for that day
- Plan food awareness activities for children in the centre program.
- Discuss the child's needs with parents
- Before meals, clean tables that are to be used for the meal.
- Wash and dry your hands before preparing or serving food. If you are interrupted to care for another child while preparing food or spoon feeding an infant, be sure to wash and dry your hands again before you continue.
- Check that all the children's hands are washed before they eat or drink.

- Teach children to turn away from food when they cough or sneeze, and then to wash and dry their hands.
- Ensure that if children are serving themselves from the same container, they must be supervised, and utensils used to prevent children from touching food that other children will eat. This will assist to maintain food safety while also encouraging children to develop independence and self-help skills.
- Use a separate spoon for each baby you feed.

6. PARENTS WILL

- Be required to pack a water bottle to bring to each session, but staff will also have water available at all times. (water bottles can be left at the Childcare and Preschool Centres for regular children)
- Receive advice on both suitable and unsuitable food to pack for their children. Families and children will receive information about the range of healthy food groups. Sweet biscuits, lollies, chips, chewing gum or chocolate are to be discouraged.

7. BIRTHDAYS

- The Centres will provide a cake for each child's birthday.

BDCS - CHILDCARE STRATEGIES – How will it be done?

1. EATING HABITS

- Meals and snacks are to be served on a regular schedule but individual needs for quantity and timing are to be accommodated where possible.
- Children will be given opportunities to pour their own drinks where possible in order to develop self-help skills.
- If children do not eat their main meal they will be offered a sandwich and will still be offered dessert.
- Children's dietary requirements will be catered for i.e. food intolerances and allergies.

2. PARENTS

- Parents and carers are asked to provide as much detail as possible on enrolment about suitable foods, including any dietary restrictions due to preference, religion or health.
- Parents with children with special diets may be asked to supply some foods.
- Parents will be encouraged to have input into the Centre menu.

3. CHILDREN

- Will be allowed to have second helpings of fruits.

4. DRINKS

- **Toddlers & Children**

- ✓ Milk is to be served at morning tea.
- ✓ Water will be served with lunch and late afternoon tea.
- ✓ All dairy products will be using full cream milk.
- ✓ Water is available at all times. Children are encouraged to drink throughout the day.

- **For Infants**

We respect a child's individual routine. Please see the staff to discuss your child's eating habits. We recommend:

- ✓ Breast milk or appropriate infant formula until one year of age. If extra fluids are needed, cooled boiled water should be given.
- ✓ Commence solids at 4-6 months. Starting with cereals, pureed vegetables and fruit (no added salt or sugar).
- ✓ Between 7-8 months food texture can be lumpier and finger foods can be encouraged. Adequate supervision of the child whilst learning to eat these foods is essential.

5. SERVES

- The recommended minimum number of serves each day for children aged 4 and above includes:

- ✓ Breads and Cereals- 3
- ✓ Dairy Foods- 2
- ✓ Meat and Meat Alternatives- 1/2
- ✓ Fruits- 1
- ✓ Vegetables- 2

(Research is still being conducted into the recommended servings for children under 4)

<http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/parents-carers/stats-and-facts.aspx>

- The weekly menu is available to view. We are always open to new ideas and recipes.

BDCS - PRESCHOOL STRATEGIES – How will it be done?

1. PARENTS

- Parents/carers will be asked to provide a healthy lunch for their child.
- Food arriving at the Preschool will be appropriately packaged in containers or lunch boxes that are clearly labelled.

2. STAFF

- Food will be stored at safe temperatures. Prepared food such as sandwiches, cut fruit and any dairy products will need refrigerating. Unprepared food such as muesli bars, uncut fruit, snack packs will go straight into the child’s locker.
- Water bottles will always be available for children to access throughout the day. Children will be encouraged to drink water throughout the day and staff will refill children’s bottles with water.
- Emergency food will be available for children who do not have food for the day.
- Parents will be advised when their child is not eating well.
- Unopened food will be sent home, so parents will be aware of their child’s food intake, and possible dislikes of food.

- **Links to National Quality Standard: 2.2.1, 2.2.2**
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011**

Policy Revision History

<i>Date</i>	<i>Authorised By</i>	<i>Description of Amendments</i>	<i>Sections affected</i>
Jan 2021	P. Ritchie – GM		

Review Date: Jan 2022