



Nutrition/ Food/Beverages/ Dietary Requirements

Review Date: 24/10/2025

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 preschools recognize 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 - How will it be done?

- 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.
- Encourage the safe handling of breastmilk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing and bottlefeeding.

Promote healthy foods and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents

The service will:

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes (see attachment: Foods to Send ✓).
- 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 sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes (see Attachment foods to leave out of lunchboxes ✗).

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.
- Closely supervise mealtimes and ensure calm seated mealtimes to reduce the risk of choking.

Safe Food Handling

- Encourage and provide opportunities for educators to undertake 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 gloves are worn or food tongs are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- 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.
- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures ie below 5°C or above 60°C.
- Separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken and utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods.
- Children will be discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils.

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 actively engage children in conversations about food and 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.

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.

Strategies - How will it be done?

<p>Approved Provider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Ensure that the preschool implements adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children.
<p>Nominated Supervisor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 have access to food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day. • Ensure that, where food and beverages are supplied by the service, they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » nutritious and adequate in quantity; » chosen with regard to the dietary requirements of individual children.
<p>Early Childhood Educators</p> <p>Responsible Person/s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 meal time experiences for children. • Respect the individual needs and choices of children. • Actively supervise children during meal times. • Adhere to the services Hygiene Policy.
<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate regularly with educators/staff regarding children’s specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences. • Share excess produce, ideas and expertise to enhance the learning of children.

Statutory Legislation & Considerations

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

Sources

Australian Children's Education and
Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) –
www.acecqa.gov.au

Healthy Kids NSW –
www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

Nutrition Australia –
www.nutritionaustralia.org

Food Standards Australia New
Zealand –
www.foodstandards.gov.au

Related Policies

Food Handling and Hygiene

Medical Conditions:
Anaphylaxis Management

Family Participation and
Communication

Enrolment and Orientation

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 preschool 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.

Approved Provider Representative:

Name: Narissa Cuskelly

Role: President

Signature:

Date Adopted: 24/10/2023

REVIEW DATE: 24th October 2025

Policy Adopted	Approved Provider Representative	Review Date
22/06/2017	Belinda Fayle	22/06/2019
07/07/2021	Kieran O'Reilly	07/07/2023
24/10/2023	Narissa Cuskelly	24/10/2025

Foods for Pre-School Lunches

Better Lunchbox Foods



Better foods	Examples	Justification
Fruit	Fresh, tinned Fruit diced in fruit juices Fruit puree	High in fibre, vitamins and minerals; low in kilojoules\calories
Vegetables	Salads, carrots, tomatoes, cucumber, corn cobs etc	High in fibre, vitamins and minerals; low in kilojoules\calories
Water	Plain water is the best drink to quench thirst and should always be the drink of choice	Essential for hydration.
Sandwiches, rolls, fruit bread	Preferably wholemeal or wholegrain with healthy filling such as cheese, meat, salad, but other spreads are acceptable	Children need carbohydrates for energy.
Protein foods	Baked beans, spaghetti, cooked pasta/noodles with sauce, meat, chicken, eggs, etc.	High in protein, (carbohydrates), vitamins and minerals. Meat, chicken, eggs require refrigeration or icepack in lunchbox.
Dairy foods	Plain milk Flavoured yoghurt / fruche Yoghurt tubes, cheese Flavoured dairy desserts such as custard, creamy rice Low fat products for children over 2 years of age.	Calcium content. Flavoured or unflavoured yoghurt is a better choice than other dairy desserts. Look at the label and if the dairy snack doesn't list milk as the first ingredient, it's better left out. Products should have about 170mg of calcium per 100g. Yoghurt or dairy desserts with mixed in lollies are not appropriate All yoghurts and dairy desserts should be kept in the fridge, labelled with the child's name.
Plain Crackers	Plain crackers, rice cakes, corn thins, rice crackers. Wholemeal or multigrain are better choices	Children need carbohydrates for energy. Avoid added artificial flavours and salt.
Cheese and biscuits	Avoid small oven baked savoury biscuits.	These are popular and a good source of calcium. Some may be high in salt so rather than pre-packaged varieties, a better choice would be to make up your own crackers and cheese in a zip lock bag or small container. This reduces cost and packaging.
Un-iced cakes, muffins, slices	Plain un-iced cakes, muffins, scones, pikelets, try to use some wholemeal flour, or include fruit or vegetables in the recipe. Un-iced fruit slices especially if fruit or vegetable based and low in fat.	Lower in fat and sugar and higher in fibre than those listed in the Better left out section.
Popcorn	Plain unflavoured without butter or salt.	Popular – good alternative to chips – Lower in fat and salt.

Please Do Not Pack



Better left out	Examples	Justification
Sticky sweet foods	Muesli bars – all types. Breakfast bars, Fruit filled bars, Fruit roll ups Dried fruit leathers/ bars Rice bar treats	Stick to teeth and cause dental caries. High in sugar.
Salty, fatty foods	Potato chips / crisps, corn chips, cheesy extruded snacks, vege chips. Small oven baked savoury biscuits. 2 minute noodles.	Salt and fat content too high – can be a risk factor for heart disease and high blood pressure. Fat can contribute to obesity. Low in vitamins and minerals.
High fat and or high sugar foods	Lollies, <u>chocolate</u> , carob and yoghurt coated sweets, cough lollies, liquorice etc. Iced muffins, iced cakes or iced buns including lamingtons, chocolate cake or chocolate muffins, muffin bars, breakfast cereal bars Donuts, pastries, croissants Chocolate coated or cream-filled sweet biscuits Chocolate spread with spoon Sweet dip and biscuit packs Sweet biscuits Savoury biscuits (Shapes, etc.) Jelly	Can contribute to obesity, low in vitamins and minerals Can contribute to dental caries. Often high in fat
Sweet drinks	Flavoured milk Cordial Blackcurrant syrups Soft drinks Flavoured mineral water Any drink with caffeine e.g. Coke “Diet” soft drinks	Can contribute to obesity and dental caries. Low in vitamins and minerals Not appropriate for age group.
Fruit Juice	Fruit juice – including 100% juice and ‘fruit juice drinks’	Low in fibre but high in vitamins, can contribute to obesity if more than one glass is consumed per day. Better to eat the fresh fruit and drink water or milk.