

POLICY: 5.1 Food Safety and Nutrition Policy

Procedure: 5.2 Nutrition and Beverages

Children need a balanced healthy diet to promote the growth and development of each child's minds and bodies. This procedure encourages families and educators to supply a healthy balance of nutritious food and drink for each child, and aims to ensure mealtimes are a happy and social occasion.

5.2.1 Linking to Policy

This procedural guidance should be read in conjunction with the service **5.1 Food Safety and Nutrient Policy** and will assist the Approved Provider, Management, Staff (Nominated Supervisors, Coordinators, and Administrative Staff members) educators, educator assistants and parents to implement the policy. The procedure covers:

[5.2.2 Roles and Responsibilities](#)

[5.2.3 Parental Involvement](#)

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5.2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Nominated Supervisor and Coordinators will ensure when assessing and monitoring the Educators, they:

- have the capacity for children to have access to safe drinking water.
- can offer food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child throughout the day.
- have access to the ***Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings*** – a copy will be made available
- are willing to undertake ongoing professional development opportunities to refresh their knowledge of children's dietary needs, food handling, and hygiene procedures as required.
- provide food that is nutritious and adequate in quantity, and take account of each child's dietary requirements, growth and development needs and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements when planning menu's *if applicable).
- display a menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided each day, and the menu is diverse, reflecting the cultural backgrounds of families and the local community.

- can communicate openly with parents about any food they provide to their child.
- are aware of the need to implement adequate health and hygiene practices (handwashing) and use safe practices for handling, preparing, and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service. (Food requiring cooling are storage refrigerator).
- are aware of the 4.4 Medical Conditions Policy when managing health concerns related to food allergies.

The Coordinators will

- discuss with all parents on enrolment any food allergies and restrictions (including cultural or religious), which are required to be managed by the Educator.
- ensure the details of any food restrictions are noted on the enrolment form and other relevant forms, and discuss these with the relevant Educator.
- will ensure the educator has all the information required to support each child's inclusion.
- be available to assist the educator with matters pertaining to each child's dietary requirements.

The Educator will

- review the enrolment records of each child; and
- discuss any dietary requirements or dietary restrictions with the parents before the child commences care.
- seek support from a Coordination Unit for any matter relating to the child's dietary needs that cause them concern.

5.2.3 Parental Involvement

Parents will be:

- encouraged to provide food from home for their children, which also meets the recommended Australian Nutritional Guidelines (Nutrition Australia)
- supply the educator with the necessary information on appropriate food choices for their children to have while attending child care.
- invited to contact the educator at any time to discuss any comments or concerns or feedback in relation to this Policy and their child's particular dietary requirements for health or other reasons.

5.2.4 Nutrition & Provision of Food & Beverages

Educators will ensure:

- food and drink are offered to each child in care frequently, and at appropriate intervals throughout the day.
- that where a child is in care all day for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea the child has at least 50% of their dietary requirements met.

- children needing breakfast or dinner need to have 75% of their nutritional needs met. Refer to the Recommended Daily Intake guidelines below.
- children have access to safe drinking water at all times [R.78].
- if the food offered to children is supplied by parents, it must be adequate and nutritious. Prepackaged food with high sugar and salt will be discouraged.
- there is a variety of food and the types of food chosen, having regard to the child's age, health, dietary needs, culture and religion.
- they consult with parents taking into consideration children who have special dietary, cultural, and/or religious needs.

Parents will

- be encouraged to supply food that will meet the child's nutritional needs for the time that the child is in care.
- not provide highly processed food, food that are high in sugar, and food that contain low nutritional value.
- in instances where there is not enough food provided for the child, the educator will provide food for the child. Notify the parent of this, and the fee for food provided will apply. The educator will discuss the child's needs with the parent and document what food was made available

Recommended daily intakes

Recommended average number of standard serves per day

Toddlers	Vegetables and legumes	Fruit	Grains (cereal)	Lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, seeds, legumes, beans	Milk, yoghurt, cheese & alternatives	Allowance for additional serves from any food group*
Girls and boys 1-2 years	2-3	0.5	4	1	1-1.5	0
Girls and boys 2-3 years	2.5	1	4	1	1.5	0-1

Children	Vegetables and legumes	Fruit	Grains (cereal)	Lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, seeds, legumes, beans	Milk, yoghurt, cheese & alternatives	Allowance for additional serves from any food group*
Girls 4-8 years	4.5	1.5	4	1.5	1.5	0-1
Girls 9-11 years	5	2	4	2.5	3	0-3
Boys 4-8 years	4.5	1.5	4	1.5	2	0-2.5
Boys 9-11 years	5	2	5	2.5	2.5	0-3

5.2.5 Meal Times

Educators will

- encourage children to try food, with likes and dislikes being respected.
- NOT use food as a form of punishment or reward.
- inform parents of how and what their child has eaten during the day.
- endeavour to make mealtimes enjoyable for all children, sitting with children when possible.
- demonstrate good hand washing practices and food handling practices and will ensure that children wash their hands before mealtimes and before handling food.
- provide a comfortable area to ensure that children are sitting down while eating and drinking. Mealtimes should be comfortable and enjoyable for all age groups.
- encourage children to participate in food experiences, to develop an awareness of healthy eating habits, to gain knowledge of other cultures and celebrations, to develop self-help skills, and independence.
- ensure cooking experiences involving children are supervised, and children practice appropriate food handling procedures.

5.2.6 Breast Milk, Milk & Drinks

Breast Milk/Formula/Milk:

- The Service supports a parent's choice to provide breast milk for their child.
- Breast milk must be clearly labelled and supplied in a non-spill airtight container, sterilised bottles or breast milk bags.
- Breast milk must be used within 24 hours unless pre-frozen. Breast milk must be refrigerated.
- Breast milk or formulas are not to be heated more than once and request more bottles than needed to be supplied.

Bottles:

- Infant bottles should be stored at the back of the fridge, not in the door, to ensure that it is refrigerated at the correct temperature.
- Microwaves are not to be used for the heating of bottles due to uneven heating, loss of nutritional value, and increased risk of bacterial contamination.
- Educators will consider safe strategies when warming children's bottles.
- Bottles may be heated by standing them in warm/hot water, and will be tested on the educator's wrist before being given to the child.
- It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the sterilisation of bottles and teats.
- Bottles will not be given if the milk shows signs of deterioration.
- Parents are to ensure that all bottles and cups provided are kept in a clean and sanitary condition.

Drinks:

- Milk needs to be supplied by the parents.
- Water is the preferred drink for children and will be available to children at all times.
- Fruit drinks will be served no more than once a day and only in small quantities.

5.2.7 Supplying Meals

- If the educator supplies meals, a meal allowance may be charged as is set out in the Educator Fee Scale.
- Food supplied by the educators must meet the nutritional needs (refer section 5.2.4), and be in consultation with parents.
- Food and drinks must be nutritious and adequate in quantity and take into account dietary requirements appropriate to each child's growth and development needs, any specific cultural, religious, or health requirements.
- Educators will discuss menus set for the children with parents and where appropriate with children. Menus will be varied.
- An accurate weekly menu that describes the food and beverages to be provided each day must be displayed. If the menu changes (e.g. unavailability of ingredients) parents must be informed of the substitute menu item offered to their child.
- Where the educator provides food and drink, a written menu is to be provided for families as well as displayed.
- Age-appropriate food will be provided, with educators demonstrating an understanding of individual needs, cultural needs, and levels of assistance needed.

Food Preparation:

Educators must carry out good practices in food preparation and storage. *Refer 5.1 Food Handling and Safe Food Storage Procedure for further guidance.*

5.2.8 Food Allergy and Intolerance

Some people have an allergic reaction to foods while others are sensitive or intolerant to some chemicals (natural or added) in foods. These two reactions are not the same.

Food Allergy

An allergic reaction involves the body's immune system. The body may respond to certain foods such as milk, eggs, wheat, nuts, fish and soy.

Immediate onset of symptoms such as asthma, lip and neck swelling, rashes, itching and abdominal reactions such as vomiting and stomach cramps can occur. Symptoms will occur whenever the child is exposed to the offending food. Children may be so sensitive that they cannot touch or smell the offending food without reacting. (see policy – 4.4 Medical Conditions).

If a child is thought to have a food allergy, parents will seek a medical diagnosis. This will ensure that the child is not exposed to danger.

Food allergies must be taken seriously and immediate medical care must be given if a reaction is suspected. The service's Medical Management Plan is to be completed in conjunction with an Anaphylactic Plan where necessary.

Food Intolerance

Food intolerance can occur at any age and does not involve the body's immune system. It is a sensitivity or intolerance to natural and/or added chemicals found in a variety of foods.

Examples of food that may be related to intolerances are preservatives, additives, soy sauce, spices, teas, some fruits and vegetables and chocolate.

Someone with a food intolerance reacts to eating of these foods as they have an additive effect.

The person may be able to eat small amounts of the particular food but the reaction may occur after several days of repeatedly eating the offending food or chemical.

Common symptoms include headaches, flatulence, loose motions, bloating and irritable behaviour in infants and children.

Educators will implement the following procedure for a child with allergy or intolerance in care:

- If allergy or intolerance is suspected, parents will be encouraged to have their child diagnosed by a doctor.
- Know what a child can and cannot eat. Young children often share food, so this is important even when the parents provide the food.
- A doctor or dietician needs to provide parents with written dietary information, which is available to the Educator who needs to know the child's symptoms and appropriate treatment.
- The service's Health Management Plan is to be completed.

Review

	Date	Details
Revision 00	07/2015	Original Policy Issued
Revision 01	12/2016	Reviewed
Revision 02	08/2017	Reviewed
Revision 03	10/2020	Reviewed and separated from Policy

Related Documents

Policies

5.1 Food Safety and Nutrient Policy

Reference

Refer to 5.1 Food Safety and Nutrient Policy

Australian Government Department of Health & Ageing (2009). [Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings](#), retrieved June 2020

Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council (2013). Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th Edition), June 2020 retrieved from <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/ch55>

Nutrition Australia, [Australian Dietary Requirements: Recommended Daily Intake](#) – Retrieved June 2020