

NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY POLICY

As per *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*, our Service has a *Nutrition and Food Safety Policy* and procedures in place to ensure quality practices relating to nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements are followed at all times.

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. We acknowledge that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children.

We are committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. We support and promote the Australian Government's *Get Up & Grow-Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and *Eat for Health* resources.

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
160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator

162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and Procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First Aid Policy Anaphylaxis Management Policy Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy Breastfeeding Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy Enrolment Policy	Excursions / Incursions Policy Family Communication Policy Governance Policy Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Medical Conditions Policy Multicultural Policy
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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.

We believe in providing a positive eating environment that reflects dietary requirements, cultural and family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children, as we commit to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages outlined in the *Get Up & Grow resources* and to support the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings*.

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

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, approved provider, nominated supervisor, visitors, students, volunteers 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.

All food prepared by the Service or families will endeavour to be consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and provide children with **a nutritious and balanced menu**. 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. Food will be prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Program. All kitchens and food preparation areas will comply with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) and any relevant local jurisdictional requirements (i.e., local council registrations and inspections). All staff involved in the stages of food handling have the skills and knowledge to ensure food safety is a priority.

Recent changes to the Food Standards Code and Food Act 2003 (Standard 3.2.2A) involve the appointment of a Food Safety Supervisor who must be available to supervise food handlers at the Service. It is a requirement that both the Food Safety Supervisor and all food handlers attend food safety training. Additionally, records must be maintained relating to receiving, storage, processing, displaying and transportation of food. These records must be retained for a period of 3 months.

NUTRITION

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the dietary guidelines for children and adolescents

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
- provide information to families on how to read the *Nutritional Information Panel* on food and drink labels
- provide space in a refrigerator to keep lunchboxes or insulated lunch bags to be stored
- ensure insulated lunchboxes are unzipped to allow cool air to circulate
- 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
- strongly 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 sweet biscuits, chocolate, lollies, some pastry items and chips.
- food items that should not be brought to the Service include confectionary (lollies, sweets, chocolate, jelly), deep fried foods (chicken nuggets, fish fingers) and sugary drinks (cordial, energy drinks).

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ MANAGEMENT/ NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- ensure educators and staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* in relation to this policy and relevant procedures to ensure awareness of safe food handling practices while promoting healthy eating
- ensure new staff and educators are aware of food practices and procedures as outlined in this policy during induction and orientation
- ensure staff responsible for preparing, serving and supervising food for children with food allergies undertake the *All about Allergens for Cooks and Chefs* and *All about Allergens for Children's Education and Care (CEC)* online courses- [Food Allergy Aware Training](#)
- ensure that a notice is displayed prominently in the main entrance of the Service stating that a child diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis is being cared for or educated at the Service, and provide details of the allergen/s (Reg. 173(2)(f)) [note: this notice should not identify the child]
- ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment
- ensure food and beverages are offered to children regularly during the day
- ensure enrolment forms include information relating to child's food preferences, allergies, intolerances, cultural or religious considerations or medical conditions which involve food or food practices

- consult with families on enrolment to develop individual management plans, including completing medical risk minimisation plans for children with medical conditions involving food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements as per *Medical Conditions Policy*
- ensure children's individual dietary requirements as per enrolment information or medical condition plans are communicated to all staff and food handlers
- ensure any changes to children's individual dietary requirements are recorded and communicated to all staff and food handlers
- appoint a Food Safety Supervisor to oversee food handlers
- ensure the Food Safety Supervisor hold a valid Food Safety Supervisor certificate and training
- ensure all staff handling food attend basic safe food handling training, including an appropriate Food Safety and Food Hygiene Certificate
- comply with Food Safety Standard 3.2.2A requirements
- keep an up-to-date *Food Safety Certificate Register* to provide evidence of safe food handling training for all food handlers
- encourage and provide opportunities for staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition and food safety practices
- ensure parents/guardians are notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in a serious incident/situation at the Service. Details of the incident/situation are to be recorded on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*.
- notify the regulatory authority of any serious incident or complaints alleging the safety, health or wellbeing of children has been compromised within 24 hours of the incident or the time that the person becomes aware of the incident or complaint

EDUCATORS/ FOOD HANDLERS 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 dietary requirements and consult with families and management to ensure individual medical management plans are developed and implemented, including completing medical risk minimisation plans for children with medical conditions involving food as per *Medical Conditions Policy*
- 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

- participate in regular professional development to maintain and enhance knowledge about early childhood nutrition and food safety practices
- participate in safe food handling training on a regular basis, including the completion of an appropriate Food Safety and Food Hygiene Certificate
- keep records relating to the safe handling of food, where required
- display nutritional information for families and keep them regularly updated
- ensure age and developmentally appropriately utensils and furniture are 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 mealtimes
- 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
- ensure pets or animals are not present within the kitchen or food preparation areas

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).

During warmer weather, the risk of foodborne illnesses increases. Our Service will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning including:

- maintaining proper temperature control for perishable foods
- ensuring refrigerators are set to recommended temperature of 5 °C or below, regularly monitoring and recording temperatures to guarantee food safety
- emphasising hand hygiene for staff and children and encourage frequent handwashing before and after meals
- implementing food safety practices to minimise the risk of cross-contamination
- ensuring staff are aware of heightened increase in allergic reactions and maintain consistent allergen management

- consider the impact of the sun on food safety when eating meals outside
- use insulated containers to keep perishable food cool and avoid leaving food exposed to direct sunlight.

BUYING AND TRANSPORTING FOOD

Our Service will:

- ensure food supplies have been ordered in a timely manner
- always check labels for the 'use by' and 'best before' dates, understanding that 'use by' dates apply to perishable foods that could potentially cause food poisoning if out of date, whilst 'best before' dates refer to food items with long shelf life but quality could be compromised
- avoid buying food items in damaged, swollen, leaking or dented packaging
- always check eggs within cartons: Never buy dirty or cracked eggs
- never buy any food item if unsure about its quality
- ensure fresh meat, chicken, or fish products cannot leak on to other food items
- ensure chilled, frozen, and hot food items are kept out of the 'danger zone' (5 °C to 60 °C) on the trip back to the Service by:
 - not selecting chilled, frozen or hot food items until the end of the shopping
 - placing these items in an insulated shopping bag or cooler
 - immediately unpacking and storing these items upon the return to the Service

ONLINE SHOPPING

- ensure food items are delivered in packaging that keeps food out of 'danger zones' as described above and within delivery window as provided by the company
- ensure products selected are high quality
- ensure products are unpacked promptly upon receiving goods
- use online service company with product and guarantee

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 and recorded daily (*See Refrigeration Temperature Control Register*)

- 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 and chemicals separate to food items

PREPARING AND SERVING FOOD

Our Service will:

- ensure that all cooked food is cooked through and reaches 75°C
- ensure that cooked food is served promptly, or
- ensure that prepared cold food is stored in the refrigerator maintained at below 5°C until ready to serve
- keep cooked and ready-to-eat foods separate from raw foods
- ensure foods are defrosted in the fridge or microwave
- wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly under clean running water before preparation
- ensure unused washed fruit or vegetables are thoroughly dry before returning to storage
- 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
- avoid cross-contamination by ensuring that colour-coded cutting boards are used (note that it doesn't matter which colour you use for which food providing signs are displayed to alert all staff).

Common colours are:

- Green: fruit and vegetables
 - White: bakery and dairy
- ensure that gloves are changed between handling different foods or changing tasks
- ensure that staff preparing food for children with food allergies or intolerances are proficient at reading ingredient labels
- ensure that food allergies and intolerances are catered for by using separate easily identifiable cutting boards, utensils, and kitchen equipment (e.g., using a colour code, or food-safe permanent marker).
- ensure all educators and staff are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans
- ensure that children with food allergies and/or intolerances are served their meals and snacks individually on an easily identifiable plate (e.g., different colour), and that food is securely covered with plastic wrap until received by the child to prevent possible cross-contamination
- ensure that unwell staff do not handle food
- ensure left-over food is stored immediately in the fridge or thrown away

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 and sanitised before use
- ensure that all dishwashing sponges, brushes, and scourers are cleaned after each use and allowed to air dry or placed in the dishwasher
- 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:

- clean clothing is worn by food handlers (distinguished by blue gloves)
- long hair is tied back
- hand and wrist jewellery are not worn while preparing food (e.g., rings and bracelets)
- nails are kept short and clean and no nail polish is worn (as it can chip into food and hide dirt under the nails)
- strict hand-washing hygiene is adhered to, including washing hands each time they return to the kitchen before continuing with food preparation duties
- gloves to be worn when handling food and tongs used
- 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 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 gloves (and food tongs) are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- 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
- ensure separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken, fruit and vegetables, and utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods
- 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 while promoting children's agency and decision-making
- 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 can help develop children's knowledge and skills regarding healthy eating habits. Cooking is a great, fun activity and provides opportunities for children to be exposed to new foods, sharing of recipes and cooking skills. 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:

- provide a copy of the *Nutrition and Food Safety Policy* to all families upon orientation 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.
- discuss discretionary choices- (food and beverages which are not necessary as part of a balanced diet) with families and if necessary, remove items from children's lunch boxes. Alternative healthy food will be offered to children.

FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS FOR STATE/TERRITORIES

Changes to the Food Standards Code have included new food safety requirements under the Food Safety Standard 3.2.2A. Please check your local Food Authority if the new Food Safety Standard applies to your service. See below for links to state regulators.

The new requirements comprise of 3 key elements including:

- Food Safety Supervisor
- Food Handler Training

See [Safe Food Australia](#) (guide to the food safety standards in the Food Standards Code) or email information@foodstandards.gov.au. Food regulators also have information to help food businesses in their jurisdiction understand the requirements of this standard. See the web links below:

- [South Australia](#)

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Nutrition and Food Safety Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP- RELATED RESOURCES

Breast Milk Procedure	Kitchen and Nutritional Practices Audit
Cooking, Cooling, Reheating and Pureed Register	Kitchen Cleaning Checklist
Cultural and Religious Consideration at Meal Times	Kitchen Cleaning Procedure
Daily Kitchen Checklist	Menu Amendment Notifications
Dietary Request Letter	Managing Menus and Food Supplies
Dietary Requirement Form	Menu Evaluation Survey
Food Delivery Register	Menu Planning Checklist
Food Safety Certificate Register	Menu Planning – Vegetarian Checklist
Food Safety Program	Menu Record
Food Safety Standards Guide	Nutritional Practices Procedure
Formula Bottle Safety and Preparation Procedure	Nutritional Practice Survey
	Refrigeration Temperature Control Register
	Right Child, Right Meal Form
	Routine Checklist- Chef/ Cook (HR)
	Supplier Register

SOURCES

Australian Breast-Feeding Association Guidelines: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). [Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements Policy Guidelines.](#)

Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.](#) V2.0.

Australian Government Department of Health *Eat for Health- The Australian Dietary Guidelines*
<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations.](#) (Amended 2023).

Food Act 2003

Food Safety Standards (Australia only). (2024): <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/business/food-safety-standards>
Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991

Food Standards Australia New Zealand. (2023). Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard (4th Ed.):
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/Pages/safefoodaustralia3rd16.aspx>

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. Eat for health: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>

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](#)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00305>

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Raegan Hill	ELC Director	August 2025
POLICY REVIEWED	August 2025	NEXT REVIEW DATE	August 2026
VERSION	V14.05.25		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy maintenance • updated Food Safety requirements for children's services- summer heat • additional information added re: management of food allergens • sources checked for currency and updated as required		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
MAY 2024	• annual policy maintenance • updated Food Safety requirements for children's services- check state/territory requirements • minor edits in policy • sources checked for currency and updated as required		MAY 2025