



Nutrition & Food Safety Policy

National Quality Standard (NQS)

As per Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, our Service has a nutritional 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 acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating. Our Service therefore recognises the importance of supporting families to provide 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 NSW Health initiative *Munch & Move* and utilise the Australian Government's *Get Up & Grow-Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and *Eat for Health* resources.

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

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
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
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

Family Communication Policy

Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy

Governance Policy

Child Safe Environment Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Control of Infectious Diseases Policy

Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

Enrolment Policy

Medical Conditions Policy

Excursions/Incursions Policy

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 adult chronic 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 NSW Health's *Munch & Move* program into our curriculum and to support the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources.

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, visitors, 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.

Meal times reflect a relaxed and pleasant environment where educators engage in meaningful conversations with children. When possible, educators will role model healthy eating behaviour, by having their lunch with the children. This assists in creating a positive and enjoyable eating environment.

NUTRITION

Encourage and support breastfeeding and appropriate introduction of solid foods

Our Service will:

- 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.
- Ensure the safe handling of breast milk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing and bottle feeding.
- In consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age.
- Where breastfeeding is discontinued before 12 months of age, substitute with a commercial infant formula.
- Always bottle-feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position.
- Encourage appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age.
- 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.

As food is brought in from home our Service will:

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes.
- Provide information to families on how to read the Nutritional Information Panel on food and drink labels.
- 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 lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, some muesli bars, breakfast bars and fruit filled bars, and chips.
- Food items that should not be brought to the service include confectionary (lollies, sweets, chocolate), deep fried foods and sugary drinks (cordial, energy drinks).

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 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 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.
- Ensure any changes to children’s individual dietary requirements are recorded and communicated to all staff.

Educators 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 management plans are developed and implemented, including completing 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 while eating and drinking.
- Display nutritional information for families and keep them regularly updated.



- Consider the needs of various age groups at the service – meal times may be offered progressively or at different times.
- Ensure infants are fed individually by educators
- Ensure age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture will be 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 meal times.
- 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.

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). Our Service will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning.

Buying and transporting food:

Our Service will:

- 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: 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 onto 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 getting 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 has a thermometer and that the refrigerator is maintained at 5°C or below.
- Ensure fridge temperatures are checked daily.
- Store raw foods below cooked foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross contamination by foods dripping onto other foods.
- 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 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.
- Ensure breastmilk or infant formula is stored within the main section of the fridge and clearly labelled with the child's name.

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.



- Ensure that prepared cold food is stored in the refrigerator maintained at below 5°C until ready to serve.
- Discard any cooked food that has been left in the 'danger zone' for two or more hours. Do not reheat.
- Reheat cooked food to a temperature of 70°C (but only ever reheat once. Discard if the food is not eaten after being reheated).
- Keep cooked and ready-to-eat foods separate from raw foods.
- 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.
- Ensure that gloves are changed between handling different foods or changing tasks.
- Ensure all educators and staff are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans
- Ensure that staff preparing food for children with food allergies or intolerances are proficient at reading ingredient labels.
- Ensure that unwell staff do not handle food.
- Ensure left-over food is stored immediately in the fridge or thrown away
- Ensure the safe handling of breastmilk, including during transportation, storage, thawing, warming and during preparation.

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 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.
- Long hair is tied back.
- Strict hand-washing hygiene is adhered to, including washing hands each time they return to the kitchen before continuing with food preparation duties.
- Staff who are not well will not prepare or handle food.

All staff handling food will:

- Ensure gloves (or food tongs) are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- Ensure children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water, and single use disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- 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.

Creating a positive leaning 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 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.
- 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 Policy to all families upon orientation to 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.



Source

- Australian Breast-Feeding Association Guidelines: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/>
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. (2009).
- 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 2018).
- Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011)
- Food Act 2003
- Food Regulation 2015
- Food Safety Standards (Australia Only). (2015).
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/safetystandards/Pages/default.aspx>
- Food Safety Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand (2016). *Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard (3rd Ed.)*:
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/Pages/safefoodaustralia3rd16.aspx>
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017)
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017).
- 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. Department of Health and Aging. *Infant Feeding guidelines*. (2013):
https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines
- National Health and Medical Research Council. *Eat for health*:
<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au>
- NSW Food Authority: <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>
- NSW Government. *Healthy Kids*. (2019). *Munch and Move*:
<https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/about-munch-move.aspx>
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- 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*:
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-staffcarers>
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011.

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
May 2017	Further research has been conducted, updating the rationale and terminology throughout the policy. Have incorporated embedding healthy eating and physical activity in the daily program	May 2018
October 2017	Updated references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard	May 2018
February 2018	Terminology update in opening statement	
May 2018	Minor grammatical changes made to content. (Not critical to its delivery)	May 2019
February 2019	Added on pg. 2 <i>Inform families at enrolment of our support of breastfeeding.</i> <i>Ask families at enrolment and again at commencement of care about their requirements for breastfeeding and a feeding plan is completed in consultation with the mother.</i>	May 2019
May 2019	Food hygiene section added, comprising of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buying and transporting food - Storing food - Preparing and serving food - Cleaning - Personal hygiene for food handlers Heading added to existing information – ‘All staff handling food will:’ New section added: Cooking with Children. Additional information inserted into existing points New source added and sources checked for currency. Rearranged the order of points for better flow. Minor formatting for consistency throughout policy.	May 2020
May 2020	Minor additions – discretionary foods, online shopping. Addition of health professional’s information to ensure best practice. Sources checked for currency.	May 2021
May 2021	Minor editing Sources checked for currency	May 2022
August 2022	Policy reviewed and included suggested guidelines from ACECQA Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements Policy Guidelines (August 2021). Hyperlinks checked and repaired as required	May 2023



Signature of Director: _____

Busy Kids Child Care