

Nutrition and Food Safety Policy and Procedure

Quality Area 2

Purpose

The service is committed to providing an environment that fosters the growth, independence and development of children while protecting their health, safety and wellbeing. This includes the implementation of policies and procedures for nutrition and food safety.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for effective food practices that comply with legislative requirements and meet best practice standards, minimise the risk of scalds and burns from hot drinks, and provide a positive healthy eating environment through the provision of healthy food and drink.

Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, volunteers and visitors at the service.

Background

Food safety is paramount in early childhood service environments, as young children are often more susceptible to the effects of foodborne illness than other members of the community. Safe food practices can also assist in reducing the risk of a severe allergic reaction by preventing cross-contamination.

Early Childhood Education and Care Services are also required by legislation to ensure the provision of healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the Australian Dietary Guidelines. The service recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development and wellbeing of young children.

Principles

The Service is committed to:

- ensuring the safety of all children and adults attending the service
- taking all reasonable precautions to reduce potential hazards and harm to children attending the service, including safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and serving food
- promoting safe practices in relation to the handling of hot drinks at the service
- educating all service users in the prevention of scalds and burns that can result from handling hot drinks
- complying with all relevant legislation and standards, including the Food Act 1984 and the Australian New Zealand Food Standards Code
- promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children

Roles and responsibilities

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor of the Service will:

- when providing food:
 - ensure food supplies have been ordered and arrive in a timely manner
 - always check labels for 'use by' and 'best before' dates, and understand what each term means
 - avoid buying food items in damaged, swollen, leaking or dented packaging
 - never buy a food item if unsure about its quality
 - record the temperature of foods upon delivery
 - ensure chilled, frozen and hot food items are kept from being in the temperature range between 5 degrees and 60 degrees on being delivered to the service

- only select products of a high quality
- sign up to receive food recall notices and act on any information received regarding the recall of any food products.
- unpack products promptly upon arrival at the service
- provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, and alternative foods high in protein
- plan and display the service menu that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets 50% of the daily nutritional needs of children
- 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
- regularly review the menu to ensure it meets best practice guidelines
- develop the menu in consultation with children, staff and families
- consult with health professionals to support menu development including dentists, speech therapists, and dietitians for children with special dietary requirements such as vegetarians and vegans
- respect and accommodate children's cultural or religious dietary practices as requested by families
- when 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
 - encourage children to eat the more nutritious food 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
 - recommend confectionary, deep-fried foods and sugar drinks not to be into the service
- foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices 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
- ensure that educators sit with 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 choices
- create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoy the social interactions with educators and other children
- recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment, and promote water as a preferred drink
- ensure food and beverages are offered to children regularly during the day
- ensure enrolment forms include information relating to a child's food preferences, allergies, intolerances, and also any medical conditions or cultural or religious considerations that involve food or food practices
- consult with families on enrolment to develop individual management plans, including Risk Minimisation Plans for children with medical conditions involving food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements
- ensure children's individual dietary requirements or medical condition plans are communicated to all staff and food handlers including any changes
- contact the local council to determine the service's food safety risk classification and requirements under the Food Act 1984
- keep an up-to-date Food Safety Certificate Register to provide evidence of safe food handling training for all food handlers
- keep records (for at least 3 months) relating to receiving, storing, processing, displaying and transporting food
- ensure the weekly menu is displayed in an accessible and prominent place for parents/guardians to view
- ensure the weekly menu is accurate and describes the food and beverages provided each day of the week
- review the service menu regularly, at least every six months, and record any amendments to the service menu
- ensure the refrigerator and freezer at the service has a thermometer and that the refrigerator is maintained at 5 degrees or below and the freezer is maintained at minus 17 degrees or below
- ensure that all staff are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods per their ASCIA Action Plans

- ensure that staff preparing food for children with food allergies or intolerances are proficient in reading ingredient labels
- provide separate, easily identifiable cutting boards, utensils and kitchen equipment for the provision of food for children with food allergies and intolerances
- ensure unwell staff do not handle food
- 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 condition
- replace any cleaning equipment showing signs of wear or permanent soiling
- ensure food handlers are appropriately and safely dressed for handling and preparing food
- ensure all children and staff wash and dry their hands before handling food or eating meals and snacks
- provide a copy of this policy to all families at the service
- provide opportunities for families to contribute to the review and development of this 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 in providing 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
- 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 lunchboxes, with alternative healthy food to be offered to children

Educators, staff and 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 management plans are developed and implemented, including Risk Minimisation Plans for children with medical conditions involving food
- ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking
- supervise children whilst eating and drinking and ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking
- participate in regular professional development to maintain and improve knowledge about early childhood nutrition and food safety
- participate in 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
- consult with children, families, staff and dietitians regarding reviewing the service menu
- follow guidelines for serving different types of food and serving sizes
- display nutritional information for families and keep them regularly updated
- consider the needs of various age groups at the service and also consider offering meals at different times for different age groups
- provide age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture for each child
- never use food as a form of punishment or as a reward or bribe
- never allow children to be force-fed or required to eat food they do not like or more than they want to eat
- talk to families about their child's food intake and voice any concerns about their child's eating
- ensure pets or animals are not present in kitchen or food preparation areas
- check and record refrigerator and freezer temperatures daily
- store raw foods below cooked foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross-contamination
- not store fresh meat in the refrigerator for more than 3 days
- store all foods in the refrigerator in strong food-safe containers with either a tight-fitting lid or tightly applied plastic wrap or foil
- ensure 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, and details of any allergens present in the food
- transfer the contents of opened cans into appropriate containers
- refrigerate all bottles and jars after opening
- place 'left-over' hot food in an appropriate sealed container in the refrigerator as soon as steam has stopped rising. Food can be cooled quickly to this point by placing it in smaller quantities in shallow containers reducing the amount of time the food is sitting between 5 degrees and 60 degrees

- do not use disposable containers
- store dry foods in labelled and sealed air-tight containers if not in their original packaging, and in cupboards or in a walk-in pantry, on shelving no lower than 30cm from the floor
- do not place anything on the floor of a walk-in pantry
- store bulk dry foods only in food-safe and air-tight containers
- use the first-in, first-out rule for all foods to ensure rotation of stock so that older stock is used first
- store cleaning supplies and chemicals separately from food items
- ensure any breastmilk or infant formula is stored within the main section of the fridge and clearly labelled with the child's name and the date of preparation
- ensure all cooked food is cooked through and reaches 75 degrees
- document periodic recordings of food
- serve all food promptly once it has been prepared.
- use a thermometer to ensure that hot food is maintained at above 60 degrees until ready to serve
- ensure that prepared cold food is stored in the refrigerator maintained at below 5 degrees until ready to serve
- discard any cooked food that has been left at below 5 degrees and 60 degrees for more than two hours
- reheat cooked food to a temperature of 70 degrees, but only ever once
- keep cooked and ready-to-eat food separate from raw foods
- defrost foods that require defrosting in the refrigerator or microwave
- wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly under clean running water before preparation
- thoroughly dry any unused fruit or vegetables before returning to storage
- immediately discard any food that has been dropped onto the floor
- thoroughly clean kitchen utensils and equipment between using with different foods and/or between different tasks
- avoid cross-contamination by using separate knives and utensils for different foods, and separate cutting boards for different types of foods
- change gloves between handling different foods or changing tasks
- provide food to children with food allergies and/or intolerances individually on an easily identifiable plate, and securely cover that food with plastic wrap until received by the child
- store any left-over food immediately in the refrigerator or throw it away
- clean all food preparation areas and surfaces before, after and during food preparation
- record cleaning and sanitising of food contact surfaces
- ensure that all cooking and serving utensils are cleaned and sanitised before use
- clean dishwashing sponges, brushes and scourers after each use and allow them to air dry or place them in the dishwasher
- clean spills as quickly as possible and dispose of rubbish and food scraps frequently
- thoroughly clean and air-dry floor mops after each use
- use gloves or tongs when handling 'ready to eat' foods
- store all food at safe temperatures, with consideration to the safe eating temperature requirements of children
- discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils
- attend relevant training courses and provide relevant information to other staff
- encourage older toddlers and pre-schoolers to assist with setting and clearing the table and serving 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, and if a child is not hungry, do not insist they eat
- be patient with messy or slow eaters
- encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat
- role-model and discuss safe food handling with children
- avoid giving food as a reward.
- sweets, chocolates and packaged biscuits are only provided in limited amounts at special events/parties
- ensure a balance of food groups is provided during celebrations and events.
- meals prepared are low in sugar and salt and artificial flavours are avoided.
- community gardens and local harvesting of food at the service is promoted.

Induction and ongoing training

This policy will be accessible by service staff via the intranet and by families via the website. A hard copy of the policy will be available through the Service. Nominated supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff access to the policy and any supporting documents and undertake induction training prior to the policy being implemented. All service staff

are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy and ongoing training will be provided using a range of learning platforms.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Monitoring of compliance with this policy and the related procedure will be overseen by the policy owner. The review process for this policy will begin eight (8) weeks prior to the scheduled review date and include a consultation period with families, educators, compliance team and any other relevant stakeholders and will be facilitated by the Policy Officer.

All service staff will receive communication about any changes in or review of the policy or procedure. Training will be provided where required to ensure an understanding of the changes. Families will be notified of any changes 14 days prior to the implementation. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the MACSEYE Code of Conduct.

Related documents

Administration of First Aid Policy
 Anaphylaxis Management Policy
 Diabetes Management Policy
 Excursions and Incursions Policy
 Enrolment and Orientation Policy
 Governance and Leadership Policy
 Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
 Medical Conditions and Administration of Medication Policy

Legislative requirements

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)	
Quality Area 2	Children’s Health and Safety
EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW REGULATIONS	
Regulation 77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
Regulation 78	Food and beverages
Regulation 79	Service providing food and beverages
Regulation 80	Weekly menu
Regulation 90	Medical conditions policy
Regulation 91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
Regulation 160	Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider and family day care educator
Regulation 162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
Regulation 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170	Policies and Procedures to be followed
Regulation 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

RELATED LEGISLATIONS
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
Food Act 1984 (Vic)
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Adequate supervision	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.
Approved provider	A person who holds a provider approval (National Law). A provider approval authorises a person to apply for one or more service approvals and is valid in all jurisdictions.
Dietary requirements	Food and beverages provided by a service must have regard to individual children's dietary requirements, meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each child's growth and development needs any specific cultural, religious or health requirements.
Education and care service premises	In relation to a centre-based service, means each place at which an education and care service operates or is to operate.
Food safety	Safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children.
MACSEYE	Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Early Years Education Ltd, a subsidiary of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd established to conduct early childhood education and care services.
National Law	Unless otherwise specified, the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 or, in Western Australia, the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012. This applied law system sets a national standard for children's education and care across Australia. See the ACECQA website for the Application Act or legislation that applies in each jurisdiction.
National Regulations	The Education and Care National Regulations. The National Regulations support the National Law by providing detail on a range of operational requirements for an education and care service.
Nominated supervisor	In relation to an education and care service, means a person who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is nominated by the approved provider of the service under Part 3 to be a nominated supervisor of that service; and unless the individual is the approved provider, has provided written consent to that nomination (National Law).
Person in day-to-day charge	A person is in day-to-day charge of an education and care service if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the person is placed in day-to-day charge by the approved provider or a nominated supervisor of the service; and the person consents to the placement in writing (National Regulations). There are minimum requirements for the person in day-to-day charge.
Person with management or control	In relation to an education and care service, means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if the provider or intended provider of the service is a body corporate, an officer of the body corporate within the meaning of the Corporations Act 2001 of the Commonwealth who is responsible for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or if the provider of the service is an eligible association, each member of the executive committee of the association who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or if the provider of the service is a partnership, each partner who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service; or in any other case, a person who has the responsibility, alone or with others, for managing the delivery of the education and care service (National Law).
Risk minimisation plan	Your service's medical conditions policy must include a risk minimisation plan to be developed in consultation with families of children with a specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition. This is to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the risks of the child's specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition are assessed and minimised practices and procedures for the safe handling, preparation, consumption and service of food are developed and implemented practices and procedures to ensure that families are notified of any known allergens that pose a risk to a child and strategies for minimising the risk are developed and implemented practices and procedures ensuring that all

Term	Meaning
	<p>educators, staff and volunteers can identify the child, the child's medical management plan and the location of the child's medication are developed and implemented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> practices and procedures ensuring that the child does not attend the service without medication prescribed by the child's medical practitioner for that child's specific health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition are developed and implemented.

Policy information

Policy information			
Policy title:	Nutrition and Food Safety Policy		Version: 1.0
Authorised Executive:	Director Quality, Safety and Compliance	Responsible Manager:	General Manager, OHS, Wellbeing and Child Safety
Approving authority:	Managing Director	Approval date:	6/9/2024
Effective date:	6/9/2024	Review date:	6/9/2024

Version control		
Version	Date	Changes
1.0	6/9/2024	Policy developed