

WCS Children's Services

HEALTH - Nutrition (Parent Provided) Policy

Purpose

Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. Education and care settings provide many opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and other children (*Early Years Learning Framework*, page 30; *Framework for School Age Care*, page 30).

Policy Statement

This Policy details the Service's approach to mealtimes when the food and beverages consumed by children while at the Service are provided by their parents/guardians. It also describes the way educators use mealtimes for a happy and social occasion, and for developing lifelong healthy food choices.

Strategies and practices

- The Service's *Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy* is accessible to parents/ guardians at enrolment. Parents/guardians are provided with information about nutritious, age-appropriate food and drink, and with healthy lunch box tips.
- At enrolment, parents/guardians provide the Service with details of their child's food and drink allergies and of any cultural preferences in food. The enrolment form has provision for parents to provide the Service with details of any special dietary requirements (e.g. allergies, culture, religion, food preferences). Parents/guardians are asked to update this information when any changes occur. This information is needed for those times when children may be offered items not from home (e.g. birthday cake, cooking).
- With the exception of drinking water, parents/guardians are encouraged to supply all of their children's food and drink requirements while at the Service and for excursions. Parents/guardians are encouraged to pack in their children's lunch boxes food that is consistent with *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*.
- The healthy eating message is promoted and positively reinforced amongst families through a variety of means.
- Educators promote healthy eating in children by including the topic in daily routines, modelling, discussions, songs, stories, games, using different cultural meal settings, and cooking experiences.
- Meal times are relaxed, pleasant and unhurried. Children choose what to eat from their lunch boxes. Educators sit and eat with the children, maintaining good personal nutrition. They help them open any sealed containers, and talk with them on topics of interest, including, but not limited to, healthy food and nutrition.
- The Service maintains a list and photographs of children with special food requirements for health or medical reasons (e.g. allergies, intolerances). This information is visibly displayed. Relief educators are informed of these dietary requirements when they begin their shift.

- Developmentally appropriate eating utensils and furniture are provided for each child. Children, including toddlers, are encouraged to be independent and develop social skills at meal times.
- Food is never used to reward or punish children.
- Whilst children are encouraged to eat healthy food from their lunchboxes, they are not required to eat food they do not like or to eat more than they want.
- Safe drinking water is readily accessible to children at all times, and educators encourage children to drink water at frequent intervals.
- Children who are hungry at other than meal times are given food from their lunch boxes.
- Educators follow all regulatory food handling and hygiene practices at meal times. These include hand washing, wearing gloves or using tongs to handle food (non-touch technique), ensuring children do not share eating utensils or use those that have been dropped. (Refer to the Service's *Food Preparation, Storage and Handling Policy; Food Safety Plans* where applicable).
- Parents/guardians are informed of their child's food and beverage intake. Educators discuss face-to-face with parents/guardians any concerns about a child who has not eaten well, as requested.
- Educators monitor the safety and suitability of foods. They send home foods likely to cause choking for children less than three years old, such as peanuts, popcorn, carrot sticks and celery sticks.
- Storage of children's lunch boxes is available in the refrigerator until meal times. Any food requiring warming is also heated according to that Health regulations.
- Birthdays are an important part of a child's life, and educators and children are encouraged to celebrate them at the Service. Parents/guardians are encouraged to bring a cake to share. Refer to Service procedure.
- Where the Service is nut free, educators take all reasonable steps to ensure this mandate is upheld. Educators remove from lunch boxes any products suspected of containing nuts, and these products returned to parents/guardians when they collect their child, and all older children are discouraged from consuming nut products.
- Educators receive current information on nutrition for young children, with special regard to cultural preferences.

Additional safe practices for babies

- Educators follow the Service's written Expressed Breast Milk (EBM) and Formula – Storing and Heating Procedure when storing and heating babies' bottles.
- Babies are fed individually by educators, when required.

Responsibilities of parents/guardians

- To provide food and beverages for their child which are consistent with the Service's *Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy*.
- To provide the Service with details of their child's known food allergies at enrolment, and to inform the Service immediately any changes occur.

- To discuss their child's food allergies, if any, with them (older children) and to ensure they understand the importance of not sharing food.

Links to other policies

- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Injuries, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Student, Volunteers and Visitors Policy

Links: Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2018

Regs	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
	78	Food and beverages
	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

QA	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
	2.1.3	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
	6.1.2	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

Sources, further reading and useful websites

Sources

- Better Health. (2012). *Breast milk – expressing*. http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Bottle_feeding_with_expressed_breast_milk accessed 20 March 2012
- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, 2017
- National Quality Standard 2011, 2018
- Queensland Health. (n.d). *Formula Feeding*. <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/childhealth/28107.pdf> accessed 21 March 2012
- Dr. B. Abbey and P. Maclean, NQS - the complete system of policies, procedures and forms, www.childcarebydesign.com.

Further reading

- Better Health Channel. (2011). Fact sheet: Child care and healthy eating.
[http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcv2/bhcv2/ByPDF/Childcare_and_healthy_eating/\\$File/Childcare_and_healthy_eating.pdf](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcv2/bhcv2/ByPDF/Childcare_and_healthy_eating/$File/Childcare_and_healthy_eating.pdf)
- Nutrition Australia. (2009). *Get up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for early Childhood*
[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A8053821E32DED8DCA25762C001D60CA/\\$File/P3-5616%20Family%20Book%20Combined%20SCREEN.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/A8053821E32DED8DCA25762C001D60CA/$File/P3-5616%20Family%20Book%20Combined%20SCREEN.pdf) accessed 10 March 2012
- Nutrition Australia. (n.d). *Factsheets for Healthy Eating*
<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resources>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. (2003). *The Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia incorporating The Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers*
http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/n34.pdf accessed 10 March 2012

Useful websites

- Australian Breastfeeding Association – www.breastfeeding.asn.au/
- Nutrition Australia – www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic/nutrition-services-early-learning-Services
- Queensland Health – www.health.qld.gov.au
- Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne – www.rch.org.au

Policy Review

This policy is a living document and will be monitored and reviewed as issues are identified. Proposed changes will be circulated and discussed by all programs and any external stakeholders for approval.

Person Responsible for Review:

Manager, Children's Services

Implementation Date:	3 November 2014	Review Date:	July 2017
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Modification History

Date	Sections and/or Paragraphs	Source	Details
2016/07	Whole document		Reformat
2018/01	Quality Areas	Revised National Quality Standard 2018	

Related Documents

Refer to HR Manual –cross reference to WCS documents such as: WCS Services Guide, WCS Values and Strategic Plan.

Approved by Susan Henderson, Manager, Children's Services.



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