

# FOOD, NUTRITION AND BEVERAGE POLICY

Children's Services Regulations 2020. Regulation 112.



## PURPOSE

Kew and North Balwyn Playcentre acknowledges the importance of healthy eating, and its contribution to good health and overall wellbeing.

This policy provides guidelines to:

- promote a healthy lifestyle and support children, staff, educators and families at the service to eat nutritious food.
- ensure national and state guidelines and recommendations about nutrition are met
- ensure that the dietary and cultural needs of children and families are taken into consideration when planning menus where applicable and implementing nutritional activities and meal times for children

## POLICY STATEMENT

### 1. VALUES

Kew and North Balwyn Playcentre is committed to:

- creating policies and practices that promote a healthy lifestyle and ensure national and state guidelines and recommendations about safe food preparation, storage and nutrition are met
- ensuring the buildings, grounds and facilities enable healthy eating.
- creating a culture in which all community members are respectfully supported to eat healthily, and be active
- providing children with formal and informal opportunities to learn about food and nutrition
- ensuring staff and educators have access to resources and support for their own healthy eating,
- engaging families, the service community and expert organisations in the promotion and implementation of healthy eating.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, families, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Kew and North Balwyn Playcentre

### 3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

#### Background

There are many benefits to promoting a healthy lifestyle in early childhood education and care settings, including the positive impact this has on each child's learning and development. Being made aware of positive eating behaviour, from an early age can instil good habits that will remain throughout a person's life. Staff are well placed to build this awareness among children and their families, while respecting lifestyle choices, and cultural and religious values.

As a health promoting service it is recognised that every member of the service impacts on children's health. Children, staff, educators and families can be supported to eat healthily through teaching and learning opportunities, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment and developing community links and partnerships.

## Nutrition

The foods we eat provide our body with the nutrients we need to stay healthy. Good nutrition is the balanced eating of a variety of foods and is especially important for children as they require a large amount of nutrients for growth and development. Research has shown that, when offered a variety of healthy foods, children can and do make good choices. It is also important to provide preschool children with a good foundation in healthy eating, as most children have formed lifelong eating habits before they reach school age.

A strong sense of health and wellbeing, supported by good nutrition, can provide children with confidence, energy and optimism that will contribute to their ability to concentrate, co-operate and learn (*Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, – refer to *Sources*). Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, links directly to Outcome 3 in both the *Early Years Learning Framework* and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (refer to *Sources*).

The Australian Government has guidelines, recommendations and resources for healthy eating and physical activity in early childhood settings including the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian Dietary Guidelines* and *Infant Feeding Guidelines*, the *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* resources and the *National Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0-5 Years* (refer to *Sources*). Practical, healthy eating advice is also available to early childhood services and schools via a telephone advice line: the Victorian Healthy Eating Advisory Service (Healthy Eating Advisory Service – refer to *Sources*), run by Nutrition Australia. Early childhood education and care services can also register and implement the *Achievement Program* (refer to *Sources*). This program is designed to create safe, healthy and friendly environments for children, staff educators and families, by promoting physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

## Centre Meal Times

In recognising children as active participants in their own learning, children should be encouraged to make meaningful decisions about elements of their own education and care.

Children are able to choose what to eat from the food provided to them by their families in accordance with dietary recommendations. Children can gather in small groups to enjoy meals together which encourages quieter, more social and meaningful interactions at meal times. Children can make decisions based on their own needs, and can be supported to access their food (as well as their water throughout the day) by educators/staff, who actively participate in meal times.

## **Legislation and standards**

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Children's Services Act 1996*
- *Children's Services Regulations 2020* including Regulations 49-47, 48-49 (if the service provides food), 59, 112
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Food Act 1984* (Vic)
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

## **4. DEFINITIONS**

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this policy

**Adequate supervision:** (In relation to this policy) supervision entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

**‘Discretionary’ foods and drinks:** Food and drink items that are high in fat, sugar and salt, and that contain minimal vitamins, minerals or fibre. These can also be referred to as ‘sometimes’ foods and drinks.

**Healthy eating:** Describes eating patterns that provide all the recommended nutrients for growth and development, and good health and wellbeing, now and in the future. It also refers to preparing, serving and eating food in a way that recognises its importance as a social and cultural activity.

**Nutrition:** The process of providing or receiving nourishing substances.

## 5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

- *Australian Dietary Guidelines* 2019, National Health and Medical Research Council: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/belonging-being-becoming-early-years-learning-framework-australia>
- Better Health Channel: [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)
- Dental Health Services Victoria: [www.dhsv.org.au](http://www.dhsv.org.au)
- Food Safety Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services: [www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety](http://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety)
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand: [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- Department of Health (2013) *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood:* <https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-staffcarers>
- *The Achievement Program* is a health and wellbeing initiative for early childhood services, schools and workplaces: [www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au)
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service: [www.heas.health.vic.gov.au](http://www.heas.health.vic.gov.au)
- National Health and Medical Research Council, *Infant Feeding Guidelines: information for health workers* (2013): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/infant-feeding-guidelines-information-health-workers>
- Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (Birth to 5 years): <https://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/npra-0-5yrs-brochure>
- National Health and Medical Research Council, *Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5<sup>th</sup> edition, 2013): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework:* [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

### Service policies

- *Anaphylaxis Policy*
- *Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Food Safety Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*

- *Sun Protection Policy*

## PROCEDURES

### **The Approved Provider and Persons with Management or Control are responsible for:**

- ensuring that the service environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating, oral health and active play (refer to *Definitions*)
- providing ongoing information, resources and support to families, to assist in the promotion of optimum health, including oral health, for young children (refer to *Sources*)
- recognising families, educators and staff as role models and encouraging them to bring/use foods and drinks that are in line with the service's Food, Nutrition and Beverage Policy
- ensuring the implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 46)
- ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy, Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of all children
- ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, indoors and outdoors, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (Regulation 47(1)(a)) (Only tap water is encouraged. No fruit juice or milk) Milk can be provided for babies in clearly labelled bottles.
- ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (Regulation 47(1)(b))
- ensuring educators are supported to access a range of resources to increase their capacity to promote healthy eating initiatives for children
- ensuring staff and educators are supported by having healthy food options in the staff room, for staff meetings and for professional learning
- ensuring that discretionary food and drinks do not appear in any sponsorship, fundraising or marketing activities
- ensuring celebrations and other service events promote healthy food options and limit discretionary options with the exception of children's birthday's where non-food related celebrations only will occur. (*Playcentre provides an end of year celebration/party for all of our children. Discretionary foods as well as healthy options are served at this celebration. Families are provided with a menu in advance and have the option to opt out of any food items served.*)
- ensuring there is a suitable space for breastfeeding and storage of breast milk is available
- ensuring space and facilities are available to allow staff and educators to store and prepare healthy food

### Where food is provided at the service (usually only for end of year celebrations):

- ensuring the provision of nutritionally balanced and culturally sensitive meals, in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, as required
- ensuring that staff who are responsible for menu planning participate in regular nutrition and safe food handling training, and are kept up to date with current research, knowledge and best practice
- ensuring that food and drink provided by the service is nutritious, varied, adequate in quantity and appropriate to children's growth and development, and meets any specific cultural, religious or health needs (Regulation 48(1))
- ensuring that a menu is displayed in a location accessible to parents/guardians, and that it accurately describes the food and drinks to be provided by the service on each applicable occasion (Regulation 49(1)).

### **The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day-to-Day Charge are responsible for:**

- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to learn about and make healthy choices for eating, oral health and active play
- embedding opportunities to learn about healthy eating and oral health and the importance of physical activity in the educational program, throughout the year
- ensuring oral hygiene practices are undertaken at the service where appropriate
- ensuring the implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 46)

- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis
- ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy, Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*)
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of all children
- ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times, indoors and outdoors, and reminding children to drink water throughout the day, including at snack/lunch times (Regulation 47(1)(a)). (Only tap water is encouraged. Please note that Fruit Juice and Milk drinks will be disallowed with the exception of milk in baby bottles.)
- ensuring that food and drinks are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day (Regulation 47(1)(b))
- ensuring that food is not eaten at any other time other than designated, supervised meal times to minimise risk.
- ensuring that children do not enter the service eating food on arrival
- ensuring that cultural and religious practices/requirements of families are accommodated to support children's learning and development
- developing and reviewing guidelines for celebrations, fundraising activities and other service events in consultation with educators, staff, parents/guardians and families to focus on healthy alternatives
- providing families with information and strategies to promote healthy eating, oral health and active play and how to access relevant services
- considering this policy when organising excursions, service events and any sponsorship or marketing opportunities
- ensuring staff and educators are supported by having healthy food options in the staff room, for staff meetings and for professional learning.
- Providing all families with information in relation to food types that could be harmful to other children with a request that these food types not be brought into the centre.
- Checking all food containers to ensure that none of the identified food types or allergens are present in the centre prior to handing these containers to the relevant child.
- Disposing of any foods that are brought into the service that contain or are suspected of containing any of the identified harmful food types or allergens.

Where food is provided at the service:

- ensuring that a weekly menu is displayed in a location accessible to parents/guardians, and that it accurately describes the food and drinks to be provided by the service each day (Regulation 49(1)).

**All educators/staff are responsible for:**

- complying with the service's *Food, Nutrition and Beverage Policy*
- being aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment at the service or on initial diagnosis
- implementing measures to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy, Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*)
- being aware of, and planning for, the dietary needs of all children
- ensuring that the service environment and the educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating.
- discussing healthy eating choices with children and introducing the concept of 'sometimes' and everyday foods and drinks
- role-modelling positive eating, drinking and physical activity behaviours and promoting a healthy relationship with food
- ensuring that food and drink are not used as an incentive, bribe or reward at any time
- exploring and discussing diverse cultural, religious, social and family lifestyles
- considering this policy when organising excursions and service events
- supporting students and volunteers to comply with this policy while at the service
- keeping parents/guardians informed of current information relating to healthy eating, oral health and active play

- ensuring that fresh drinking water (preferably tap water) is readily available at all times indoors and outdoors, and reminding children to drink regularly throughout the day, including at snack/meal times. Please note that fruit juice and milk is disallowed with the exception of milk in baby bottles.
- ensuring that children can readily access their own clearly labelled drink containers (
- providing food and drinks at regular intervals, and encouraging children to actively participate in, and enjoy, snack/meal times without feeling rushed
- providing a positive eating environment and sitting and interacting with children at meal times
- encouraging children to be independent at snack/meal times e.g. opening lunchboxes, pouring drinks, self-feeding, serving and using utensils in a culturally sensitive way
- providing adequate supervision (refer to *Definitions*) for all children at all times, including at meal times
- warming baby bottles using an approved bottle warming appliance, not boiling expressed breast milk (or formula) as this can destroy the nutrients and not microwaving which can cause hot spots in breast milk that can harm the child
- Educators and staff are not responsible for the preparation of bottles. These should arrive pre prepared and should be handed to staff on arrival with directions for use.

Where food is provided at the service:

- displaying menus, sharing recipes and encouraging feedback about the food provided at the service.

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- complying with the requirements of this policy
- providing details of specific nutritional/dietary requirements, including the need to accommodate cultural or religious practices or food allergies, on their child's enrolment form, and discussing these with the Nominated Supervisor prior to the child's commencement at the service, and if requirements change over time (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy, Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*)
- communicating regularly with educators/staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences
- encouraging their child/ren to drink an adequate amount of water (preferably tap water), and discouraging 'discretionary' drinks. Please note that fruit juice and milk drinks should not be provided with the exception of milk in baby bottles.
- providing healthy, nutritious food for snacks/meals, including fruits and vegetables in line with the service's *Food, Nutrition and Beverage Policy*,
- **excluding unhealthy options** from the food provided. (Children will be discouraged from eating unhealthy "discretionary foods" at our service and unhealthy food items will be returned home)
- excluding, from the food provided for their child, any of the identified allergens harmful to other children in our service in accordance with the information provided on enrolment, or regularly updated through email, centre signage and other forms of correspondence.
- **Checking all food packaging and identifying all ingredients to ensure that all food sent to the service is safe for all children in attendance.**
- Ensuring that their child/ren do not arrive at the service holding or eating any food.
- Providing replacement food for their child in any circumstance under which the food provided for their child is deemed harmful and, as a result, is removed from the service (disposed of) for the safety of identified, vulnerable children.
- Preparing all baby bottles (if formula is used) and clearly labelling all bottles with the child's name.
- Providing information regarding feed times for baby bottles and handing this information together with all baby bottles to staff on arrival at the service. (Bottles should not be left in children's bags and will be stored in centre refrigerator)
- Ensuring that only non-food related items are sent to the service for the purpose of Birthday celebrations.

**Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.**

**Evaluation**

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy

- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required with all members of the service
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any change to this policy or its procedures unless a lesser period is necessary because of a risk.

## GENERAL DEFINITIONS

**Approved Provider:** An individual or organisation that has completed an application and been approved by the Regulatory Authority as fit and proper to operate one or more education and care services. Where the applicant is an organisation, each person with management and control (see definition below) of that organisation must complete a separate application form.

**Educator:** An individual who is qualified to provide education and care for children as part of an education and care service.

**Learning frameworks:** Education and care services are required to ensure that the program delivered to all children being cared for and educated by the service is based on and delivered in a manner that accords with an approved learning framework. In Victoria, the approved frameworks are:

- *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)*
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)*

**Nominated Supervisor:** A person who has been nominated by the Approved Provider of the service who has consented to that nomination in writing can be the Nominated Supervisor. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor with responsibility for the service in accordance with the Regulations.

**Person with management or control:** The Committee of Management. 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

**Person in day-to-day charge:** A person is in day-to-day charge if (a) the person is placed in day-to-day charge by the approved provider or a nominated supervisor of the education and care service after meeting the definition for a service supervisor certificate; and (b) the person consents to the placement in writing

**Regulatory Authority / Department of Education and Training (DET):** The Victorian State Government department with Primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in Victoria

**Responsible Person:** The Approved Provider (if that person is an individual, and in any other case the person with management or control of the service operated by the Approved Provider) or a Nominated Supervisor or person who has been placed in day-to-day charge of the service

## ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT 1: Australian Dietary Guidelines

## AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of North Balwyn Playcentre Inc. on 21st October 2020

**REVIEW DATE:** 21/10/2021



# Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day.  
 Drink plenty of water.

Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties



Vegetables and legumes/beans



Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans



Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat



Fruit



Use small amounts



Only sometimes and in small amounts

