

## FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

### AIM

- To provide a healthy, nutritious and varied menu for babies, children, staff and families.
- To provide a positive, safe eating environment
- To teach children about food and nutrition in the curriculum
- To communicate with families about their children's nutrition
- To meet all dietary consideration for health and / or cultural and religious reasons
- To ensure health and hygiene guidelines are in place and followed during all food preparation, display and consumption including the Food for Families project, family events and staff meetings.
- Support the five food groups
- Support breastfeeding and appropriate formula/bottle feeding strategies
- Promote a child's optimal growth and development
- Promote appropriate food choices and physical activity

### IMPLEMENTATION

The *Food and Nutrition policy* is consistent with the current *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* (2013). The recommended daily intakes from these guidelines will form the basis of the menu plan. Consult the attached table for more details.

#### **The Centre chef/cook will:**

- Offer a variety of bread, cereal, rice, pasta or other grains each day.
- Plan lunches with one or more serves of vegetables.
- Include a variety of vegetables in meals throughout the week
- Offer both cooked and raw vegetables during the week. Raw, hard vegetables will be served to appropriate age groups and served in a way that minimises choking hazards.
- Offer appropriate beverages including water and milk.
- Plan meals to meet the recommended nutritional needs of children of various ages in line with Australian Nutritional Guidelines. The selection of foods will be broad to maximise the opportunity for a balanced intake of vitamins and nutrients.
- Limit menu items with high levels of sugar and fat.
- Plan menus with feedback from other staff at the site and families in mind.
- Display monthly menus in **the parent hub** and via email to provide easy access to families.
- Select and prepare food to minimise risk of choking. Children's age and development will be considered when presenting food e.g. finger food, blended food and food requiring utensils. Raw fruits and vegetables likely to cause choking will be grated, cooked or mashed. Meat will be cut into small pieces.
- Ensure medical recommendations are followed where children have food allergies confirmed by a medical practitioner and communicate these to educators who directly care for the child via **individual health care plans**.
- Cater for variations in diet as required by health, cultural or religious needs/beliefs/concerns. Information will be shared via **individual health care plans**. Professional support will be sought where appropriate if concerns arise in regard to adequate nutritional intake. In order to minimise wastage, the Centre provides limited alternative foods.
- If any difficulties arise with special dietary requirements, negotiate these with the family and Director.
- Refrain from using nut products in foods prepared for children as nuts are a high risk food due to potential extreme allergic reactions.
- Use halal meat in all meat dishes except where pork products are used.

**Leadership will:**

- Seek information from families regarding their child's eating patterns and special dietary needs. This information will be obtained at the time of enrolment and as circumstances regarding their child's nutritional requirements change.
- Ensure medical recommendations are followed where children have food allergies confirmed by a medical practitioner and communicate these to educators who directly care for the child via **individual health care plans**.
- Provide all necessary information to the cook and staff of special dietary considerations necessary for a child's wellbeing.
- Support breastfeeding and breast milk provision for staff and families including providing a breastfeeding room.
- Cater for allergies or intolerances at staff events. i.e. providing gluten free foods, lactose free etc.
- Oversee a register of children with allergies and special dietary requirements, displayed prominently in the kitchen with photographs of the child with special requirements highlighted.
- Negotiate and completed oral eating and drinking care plans or other health support agreements with families who have children attending the site who require modified diets or additional support at mealtimes.

**Team Leaders will:**

- Ensure children are seated and supervise at all times when eating (at tables, on floor or outside on blanket).
- Observe children during mealtimes and foods eaten/enjoyed and amounts recorded. Parents/ carers are able to discuss their child's eating habits with educators on request.
- Offer amounts of food to children appropriate for their age group per *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*. Guidelines for children aged 13-23 months are limited and should be used as a guide only. Individual weight gain and development needs to be taken into consideration (adult discretion required). Children may be offered small serves more frequently depending on their nutritional needs.
- Remind families not to leave food in children's bags. If additional food is being provided by families, it must be handed over to an educator at arrival time and collected during pick up.
- Ensure a register of children with allergies and special dietary requirements is displayed prominently for relevant staff to see, with photographs of the child with special requirements highlighted.

**Educators will:**

- Ensure the nutrition needs of all children attending the site are met including those with allergies, dietary restrictions, modified diets and/or health support agreements related to eating and drinking in place.
- Communicate with families if they are concerned about a child's nutritional needs not being met (i.e. not eating or drinking at care). This may include completing an eating and drinking log for the child.
- Provide clean and pleasant spaces for a relaxed, unhurried atmosphere for children at mealtimes.
- Discuss foods being eaten by children in a relaxed and culturally sensitive manner.
- Encourage a social atmosphere that allows children to take their time and enjoy social interactions with staff and peers at meal times.
- Not force children to eat under any circumstances.
- Not use food as a reward or punishment under any circumstances, either by provision or denial.
- Offer children healthy foods throughout the day where they have not eaten their main meal.
- Inform families about their child's eating habits each day.
- Create an opportunity to discuss different cultures and family practices, where appropriate.
- Support and model for students and volunteers appropriate behaviours and practices during meals.
- Complete the appropriate food handler's course annually.
- Familiarise themselves with the Centre's policies and procedures around food.
- Allow children access to drinking water at all times during the day.

- Offer babies up to 12 months cooled boiled water to supplement breastmilk or formula.
- Offer solid or soft food to children based on their age and development.
- Sit with children (feeding and assisting younger children) to support children during mealtimes.
- While supervising fruit time, educators may choose to eat a piece of whole fruit during fruit time, provided they have confirmed it is not a known allergen in the room. Only whole fruits are permitted; cut-up fruit or other snacks are not allowed.
- Not eat while serving food
- May eat fruit with children during fruit service, but not at other times of the day. This practice supports the modelling of healthy eating and fosters responsive interactions with children during mealtimes.
- Engage in meaningful conversations with children while eating fruit, using the opportunity to discuss food, model healthy eating habits, and create positive, interactive mealtime experiences that encourage curiosity and connection.
- Encourage children to use eating implements when it is considered developmentally appropriate. Where appropriate, a variety of eating implements will be used. To promote children's competence, an appropriate safe variety of eating implements will be available as play equipment.
- Ask families not to bring food from home to celebrate birthdays or other events. Instead, birthdays will be celebrated with birthday related experiences (songs, making cards and pretend birthday cakes).
- Limit discretionary choices (treat foods) and discuss the differences between everyday foods and occasional foods with children i.e. pastries, cakes, fried foods, lollies, chocolates etc.
- Introduce solids in accordance with *Get Up and Grow* information handouts.
- Encourage play and learning experiences that reflect healthy eating and food choices for children e.g. home corner play, growing herbs and vegetables and cooking.
- Provide children with different experiences in regard to healthy food in conjunction with the planned program, as well as, spontaneous experiences guided by children's interests or cultural celebrations.
- Choose healthy recipes for cooking experiences with children.
- Use daily information sheets to communicate how much a child has eaten to families.

#### **Families will:**

- Discuss with their child's primary carer if individual planning needs to occur for their child's food intake. This ensures all of the Centre's health and safety policies are followed re: storage and serving of food. Any food brought from home must first be discussed with educators and handed over at arrival. Food must not be stored in a child's bag due to risk of allergy cross contamination.
- Provide any medication or equipment needed to support their child eating and drinking as agreed upon with Leadership and detailed in a health support agreement, alongside health care plans.
- Fruit and snacks will be provided for playgroup sessions and families are not to bring food from home. This is to prevent food that can trigger allergic reactions being brought into and contaminating the environment. Guardians will be required to sign a form agreeing to the above.

#### **EVALUATION:**

This policy is viewed to be working effectively when children are provided with a variety of nutritious and culturally appropriate foods that meet their daily requirements.

#### **Links to National Quality Standards:**

##### **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.

#### **Related Policies:**

Administration of First Aid Policy  
Breastfeeding Policy  
Child Safe Environment Policy  
Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy  
Governance Policy

Excursions / Incursions Policy  
Enrolment Policy  
Health and Safety Policy  
Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy  
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy

**Implemented:** January 2011 **Reviewed:** October 2024 **Next Review:** October 2025

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

**Sources and Further Reading:**

Anaphylaxis Australia ([www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au))  
 Australasian Society of Clinical immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) ([www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au))  
 Australia Dietary Guidelines (<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/adg>)  
 Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) ([www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au))  
 Kidsafe ([www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au))  
 Get Up and Grow – Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood  
 (<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/get-up-grow-resource-collection>)  
 Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements (ACECQA)  
 (<https://www.cecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/NutritionFoodBeveragesDietaryRequireGuidelines.pdf>)  
 Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services  
 (<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>)

**Resources/Associated Forms:**

- [Special Diet Form](#)
- Individual health care plans found at <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/working-us/service-providers/health-care-plans-individual-care-information-health-professionals>
- Daily Information Sheets
- Emergency Contact Sheets/Allergy Sheets
- Signs detailing proper bottle heating methods

## SERVE SIZES



### Vegetables and legumes/beans

#### Serves per day

	2-3 years	4-8 years	9-11 years	12-13 years	14-18 years
Boys	2½	4½	5	5½	5½
Girls	2½	4½	5	5	5

A standard serve of vegetables is about 75g (100-350kJ) on:

- ½ cup cooked green or orange vegetables (for example, broccoli, spinach, carrots or pumpkin)
- ½ cup cooked, dried or canned beans, peas or lentils\*
- 1 cup green leafy or raw salad vegetables
- ½ cup sweet corn
- ½ cup potato or other starchy vegetables (sweet potato, taro or cassava)
- 1 medium tomato

\*preferably with no added salt



### Fruit

#### Serves per day

	2-3 years	4-8 years	9-11 years	12-13 years	14-18 years
Boys	1	1½	2	2	2
Girls	1	1½	2	2	2

A standard serve of fruit is about 150g (350kJ) or:

- 1 medium apple, banana, orange or pear
- 2 small apricots, kiwi fruits or plums
- 1 cup diced or canned fruit (with no added sugar)
- Or only occasionally:
  - 125ml (½ cup) fruit juice (with no added sugar)
  - 30g dried fruit (for example, 4 dried apricot halves, 1½ tablespoons of sultanas)



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

#### Serves per day

	2-3 years	4-8 years	9-11 years	12-13 years	14-18 years
Boys	4	4	5	6	7
Girls	4	4	4	5	7

A standard serve (500kJ) is:

- 1 slice (40g) bread
- ½ medium (40g) roll or flat bread
- ½ cup (75-120g) cooked rice, pasta, noodles, barley, buckwheat, semolina, polenta, bulgur or quinoa
- ½ cup (120g) cooked porridge
- ¾ cup (30g) wheat cereal flakes
- ¾ cup (30g) muesli
- 3 (35g) crispbreads
- 1 (80g) crumpet
- 1 small (35g) English muffin or scone



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

#### Serves per day

	2-3 years	4-8 years	9-11 years	12-13 years	14-18 years
Boys	1	1½	2½	2½	2½
Girls	1	1½	2½	2½	2½

A standard serve (500-600kJ) is:

- 65g cooked lean meats such as beef, lamb, veal, pork, goat or kangaroo (about 90-100g raw)\*
- 80g cooked lean poultry such as chicken or turkey (100g raw)
- 100g cooked fish fillet (about 115g raw weight) or one small can of fish eggs
- 1 cup (150g) cooked or canned legumes/beans such as lentils, chick peas or split peas (preferably with no added salt)
- 170g tofu
- 30g nuts, seeds, peanut or almond butter or tahini or other nut or seed paste (no added salt)

\*weekly limit of 455g



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

#### Serves per day

	2-3 years	4-8 years	9-11 years	12-13 years	14-18 years
Boys	1½	2	2½	3½	3½
Girls	1½	1½	3	3½	3½

A standard serve (500-600kJ) is:

- 1 cup (250ml) fresh, UHT long life, reconstituted powdered milk or buttermilk
- ½ cup (120ml) evaporated milk
- 2 slices (40g) or 4 x 3 x 2cm cube (40g) of hard cheese, such as cheddar
- ½ cup (120g) ricotta cheese
- ½ cup (200g) yoghurt
- 1 cup (250ml) soy, rice or other cereal drink with at least 100mg of added calcium per 100ml

- To meet additional energy needs, extra serves from the Five Food Groups or unsaturated spreads and oils, or discretionary choices may be needed by children who are not overweight but are taller, more active or older in their age band.

- An allowance for unsaturated spreads and oils for cooking, or nuts and seeds can be included in the following quantities: 4-5g per day for children 2-3 years of age, 7-10g per day for children 3-12 years of age, 11-15g per day for children 12-13 years of age and 14-20g per day for adolescents 14-18 years of age.

- For meal ideas and advice on how to apply the serve sizes go to:

[www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION GO TO [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)