Conyngham Street Community Children's Centre
LEARNING TOGETHER, EVERY DAY.

Policy 2.16

Nutrition & Food Safety

National Quality Standards (NQS)

Our Service recognises the importance of healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in their care. This policy concerns the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in care and the promotion of normal growth and development.

We are committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages from SA Health (Healthy eating resources for Early Childhood) and to supporting the National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings as outlined in the Get Up & Grow resources.

Furthermore, our Service recognises the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating.

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

RELATED POLICIES

Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy Breastfeeding Policy	Inclusion Policy Diversity 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 from SA Health into our curriculum and to support the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, 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.

All food prepared by the Service or families will endeavour to be consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and provide children with 50% of the recommended dietary intake for all nutrients. Food will be served at various times throughout the day to cater for all children's nutritional needs.

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 sharing a small amount of the food on offer with the children. This assists in creating a positive and enjoyable eating environment.

Food will be prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Program. All kitchens and food preparation areas shall comply with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand. (FSANZ)

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.
- Always bottle-feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position.
- Ensure appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age.
- Adjust the texture of foods offered between 6 and 12 months of age to match the baby's developmental stage.
- Offer a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups.
- 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

Our Service will:

Where food is provided by the service:

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, dairy products, lean meats and alternatives.
- Plan and display the service menu that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets the daily nutritional needs of children whilst in care.
- 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.
- respect and accommodate children's cultural or religious dietary practices as requested by families

Management/Nominated Supervisor/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 diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans.
- 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 while eating and drinking.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for cooking staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.
- Ensure the weekly menu is displayed in an accessible and prominent area for parents to view.
- Ensure the weekly menu is accurate and describes the food and beverages provided each day of the week.
- Ensure food is presented attractively
- Ensure infants are fed individually by educators

- Ensure age and developmentally appropriately 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 by 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.
- Ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are taken daily, working in compliance with the National Food Authority.

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.

Online shopping

- ensure food items are delivered in packaging that keeps food out of 'danger zones' (5 °C to 60 °C) 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 and freezer has a thermometer and that the refrigerator is maintained at 5 °C or below and the freezer is maintained at -17 °C or below
- ensure fridge and freezer 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
- ensure all bottles and jars are refrigerated after opening
- store dry foods in labelled and sealed, air-tight containers if not in original packaging.
- store bulk dry foods only in food-safe and airtight containers
- store cleaning supplies separate to food items.

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, or
- use a thermometer to ensure that hot food is maintained at above 60°C until ready to serve.

- 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 (if required, for example for a child who was sleeping at lunch time) 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
- avoid cross-contamination by ensuring that separate knives and utensils are used for different foods
- avoid cross-contamination by ensuring that colour-coded cutting boards are used (note that it doesn't matter which colour you use for which food providing signs are displayed to alert all staff).
- ensure that gloves are changed between handling different foods or changing tasks
- ensure that staff preparing food for children with food allergies or intolerances are proficient at reading ingredient labels
- ensure all educators and staff are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans
- ensure that children with food allergies and/or intolerances are served their meals and snacks individually on an easily identifiable plate (e.g. different colour), and that food is securely covered with plastic wrap until received by the child to prevent possible cross-contamination.
- ensure that unwell staff do not handle food.

All staff handling food will:

- ensure children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water, and single use disposable towels or individual hand towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks
- ensure gloves (and food tongs) are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- 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
- ensure food-handling staff members attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information on to the rest of the staff.

Creating a positive learning 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.
- 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.
- Do 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

Communicating with families

Our Service will:

- Provide a copy of the Nutrition and Safe Food Policy to all families upon orientation at the Service.
- Families will be provided with opportunities 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.

Source

Australian Breast-Feeding Association Guidelines: https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
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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).
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Food Act 2003
Food Regulation 2015

Food Safety Standards (Australia only). (2015): http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/safetystandards/Pages/default.aspx
Food 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
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Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).
Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (amended 2020).
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 Ageing. Infant Feeding Guidelines. (2013): https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf
National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/
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

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
July 2018	• New policy	July 2021
May 2020	• Checked sources for currency • Grammatical editing	May 2023
May 2023	• Food hygiene section • Storing food • Preparing and serving food • inclusion of cultural or religious dietary practices • minor additions- discretionary foods, online shopping • checked for currency	May 2026