

# NUTRITION / FOOD / BEVERAGES / DIETARY REQUIREMENTS POLICY

**Aim:** Our centre will role model healthy eating and activity throughout the day to all children and families.

Our centre will develop menus in accordance with the Australian Government *Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood Settings*, and the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*.

We will support families in educating their children about healthy food choices.

Our service aims to promote good nutrition and healthy food habits and attitudes to all children and families at the service. We also aim to support and provide for children with food allergies, dietary requirements or restrictions, and specific cultural or religious practices.

## **Strategies:**

### **Professional Development of staff and educators**

- All educators will have access to the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings.
- Staff employed to prepare meals will be qualified in an approved training course on food handling, nutrition and hygiene, and be provided with ongoing professional development opportunities to refresh their knowledge of children's dietary needs, food handling and hygiene procedures.

### **Provision of food and drinks at the centre**

#### **The Approved Provider will:**

- Ensure that all children have access to safe drinking water at all times.
- Ensure that all children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day.
- Ensure that food and beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity, and take each child's individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs, likes, dislikes and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements.
- Ensure that the centre displays an accessible menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided by the centre each day.
- Ensure that educators and staff are aware of the need to implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the centre.

#### **The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that:**

- All children have access to safe drinking water at all times.
- All children are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day.
- Food and beverages provided are nutritious and adequate in quantity, in consideration of growth and development needs, any known food allergies and intolerances of specific children, and in line with recommended dietary guidelines, and will take into consideration each child's individual dietary requirements, growth and development needs and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements.
- The centre displays an accessible menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided by the centre each day.
- The menu is diverse and will reflect the cultural backgrounds of families and the local community and is based on Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- Educators implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to the children.
- Ensure that as per the Medical Conditions Policy the centre shall remain a nut free centre and that all dietary requirements relating to medical conditions are adhered to.
- Ensure routines are flexible enough so that children who do not eat during routine meal or snack times, or who are hungry, are provided with food. Educators will not force children to eat food they do not like or more than they want.
- Ensure food is consistent with the Government's:
  - Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013  
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n55>

A Summary of the Guidelines is available at  
[http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrd/publications/attachments/n55\\_australian\\_dietary\\_guidelines\\_summary\\_book\\_0.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrd/publications/attachments/n55_australian_dietary_guidelines_summary_book_0.pdf)

and/or

- Infant Feeding Guidelines 2012  
[http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/n56\\_infant\\_feeding\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/n56_infant_feeding_guidelines.pdf)

A summary of the Infant Feeding Guidelines is available at  
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n56>

- Follow the guidelines for serving different types of food and the serving sizes in the Guidelines and may use the Australian Government “eat for health” calculator  
<http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/eat-health-calculators>

#### **Staff and Educators will ensure that:**

- Healthy eating is promoted through role modeling and eating with the children and learning about food and nutrition is integrated into the program.
- Children are encouraged to make healthy food choices.
- All mealtimes are positive, relaxed and social.
- Children are encouraged to try new foods and their food likes and dislikes are respected.
- Children are positively involved in mealtimes.
- Educators will adhere to best practices around safe storage and heating of expressed breast milk.
- They implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children.
- Ensure that as per the Medical Conditions Policy the centre shall remain a nut free centre and that all dietary requirements relating to medical conditions are adhered to.
- The introduction of solids to babies and toddlers will be done in consultation with families and in line with recognised guidelines.
- Age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture are provided for each child.

#### **Supporting families**

- Staff and educators will support families' choices regarding infant feeding, including breastfeeding and bottle feeding.
- Our centre will provide families with up to date information on dietary requirements of young children to ensure optimal growth and development and provide families with opportunities to discuss ways to maximise the health and wellbeing of their child/ren.
- Our centre will provide families with daily information about their child's intake of food and drinks throughout the day.
- Families are welcome to provide feedback on the current menu and provide suggestions or ideas for new meals to be tried at the centre.
- Recipes for food and the menu shall be available to families.

#### **Education and Information**

- Educators will engage children in learning experiences that are fun and enjoyable and incorporate key messages around healthy eating.
- Implemented learning experiences will be guided by the EYLF principles and incorporate the child's interests.
- Families will be provided with current information about recommended guidelines around dietary requirements, screen time and physical activity.

#### **Practice:**

- Fresh foods will be given preference to processed foods.
- Food low in sugar, salt and preservatives will be given preference.
- Children will have access to bread or fruit if they are hungry between meals.
- Water will be available at all times.
- Written and verbal communication will be maintained regarding child's daily eating habits.
- Where possible, special diets will be provided after parent-cook consultation.
- Parents will be encouraged to share recipes commonly used at home.
- Gloves will be worn or food tongs used by any staff directly handling cooked food.
- All snack food will be kept covered.

- Children and staff will wash their hands before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- Menus will provide a wide variety of suitable foods.
- Food will provide variety in colour, taste and texture.
- Encourage breastfeeding.
- Infant formula to be made according to the directions on the tin and not kept for more than 24 hours.
- Soy or Lactose free dairy products will be provided for children who cannot tolerate cows milk.
- Children's cultural and religious needs will be taken into consideration.
- Children will not be put to bed with a bottle.
- Children under 12 months of age will be provided with cooled boiled water.
- Cow's milk and solid foods can be introduced as per current recommendations.
- At least one staff member at the centre will have completed a Nutrition and Menu Planning Course.

Educators will have completed Food Handling Training.

**Source:** - Australian Dietary Requirements Infant Feeding Guidelines 2012  
 - Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
 - National Quality Standard  
 - Staying Healthy - Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services 5th Edition 2012  
 - Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood Settings  
 - The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.  
 - National Health and Medical Research Council.  
 - Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW)

**Date:** **October 2019**

*\*This policy is the property of Eikoh Seminar Australia Pty Limited and must not be reproduced without the consent of management.*