

Nutrition, Food and Beverages

Background

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).

Policy statement

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

Strategies and practices

- At enrolment, parents provide the Service with details of their child's food and drink allergies. 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 are asked to update this information when any changes occur. QA 2.2.1
- The Service serves all of the children's food and drink requirements over the day (except for nursery enrolments under 6 months) – and with the exception of babies' bottles. The food and drink are nutritious, appropriate to each child and consistent with Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia. QA 2.2.1
- The daily menu accurately describes the food for each day and is displayed prominently for parents. QA 2.2.1
- 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 displayed in the food preparation areas and strategically throughout the Service. Relief staff are informed of these dietary requirements when they begin their shift. QA 2.1.1, 2.3.2
- The healthy eating message is promoted and positively reinforced amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, the website and up-to-date materials from recognised authorities. QA 2.2.1
- Educators promote healthy eating in children by including the topic in daily routines and in other intentional teaching such as role-modelling, discussions, songs, stories, games, using different cultural meal settings, and cooking experiences. QA 2.2.1
- Meal times are relaxed, pleasant and unhurried. Educators sit and eat with the children, maintaining good personal nutrition, and talk with them on topics of interest, including, but not limited to, healthy food and nutrition. QA 2.2.1, 5.1.2
- 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. QA 2.2.1

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- Drinking water is readily accessible to children at all times, and educators encourage children to drink water at frequent intervals. QA 2.2.1
- Staff follow all regulatory requirements for preparing and serving food. These include handwashing, wearing gloves, using tongs to handle food, ensuring children do not share utensils or use those that have been dropped. QA 2.1.3
- Parents of children under 3 years are informed of their child's food and beverage intake on the Room Register. QA 2.2.1
- Birthdays are often an important part of a child's life, and educators and children are encouraged to celebrate them at the Service. Parents are welcome to bring a cake / cupcake to share. Ingredients lists needs to be provided. QA 2.2.1
- The Service is a nut free aware, and no nuts or nut products are served. QA 2.2.1

Responsibilities of parents

- 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
- Excursion 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 2011

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 health needs are supported
	2.1.3	Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	2.2.1	Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child
	2.3.1	Children are adequately supervised at all times
	2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury

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5.1.2

Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning

Sources

- Better Health. (2016). *Breast milk – expressing breastmilk*. http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Bottle_feeding_with_expressed_breast_milk accessed 6 February 2016
- Early Years Learning Framework 2009.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011.
- Queensland Health. (n.d.). *Formula Feeding*. <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/ph/documents/childhealth/28107.pdf> accessed 6 February 2016

Further reading and useful websites

- Australian Breastfeeding Association – <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/> accessed 6 February 2016
- Better Health Channel. (2011). *Fact sheet: Child care and healthy eating*. <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/childcare-and-healthy-eating> accessed 6 February 2016
- Nutrition Australia. (2009). *Get up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for early Childhood (Staff and Carer handbook)*. [https://www.health.gov.au/zinternet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/2CDB3A000FE57A4ECA257BF0001916EC/\\$File/HEPA%20-%20B5%20Book%20-%20Staff%20and%20Carer%20Book_LR.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/zinternet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/2CDB3A000FE57A4ECA257BF0001916EC/$File/HEPA%20-%20B5%20Book%20-%20Staff%20and%20Carer%20Book_LR.pdf) accessed 6 February 2016
- Nutrition Australia. (2016). Resources and Factsheets. <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resources> accessed 6 February 2016
- Nutrition Australia – *Nutrition services for early learning services*. <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic/nutrition-services-early-learning-centres> accessed 6 February 2016
- 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 6 February 2016
- Queensland Health – <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/> accessed 6 February 2016
- Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne – <http://www.rch.org.au/home/> accessed 6 February 2016

Policy review

Bella Grace Early Learning Centre encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part of the Service’s commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Date reviewed: July 2017

Next review Date: July 2018