

# Nutrition, Food and Beverages Policy

## BELLA GRACE EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

### Background

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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; *Framework for School Age Care*, page 30).

### Policy statement

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This Policy details the Service's approach to mealtimes when the food and beverages consumed by children while at the Service are provided by 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

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- At enrolment, parents provide the Service with details of their child's food and drink allergies and of any cultural considerations regarding food. 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.
- The Service serves all the children's food and drink requirements over the day – with the exception of nursery enrolments under 6 months of age and babies' bottles. The food and drink are nutritious, appropriate to each child (as detailed in the enrolment form) and consistent with Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- The weekly menu accurately describes the food and beverages for each day and is displayed prominently for parents.
- The Service maintains a list and photographs of children with special food requirements for health, medical or cultural reasons (e.g. allergies, intolerances). This information is displayed on the food service trolleys and strategically throughout other areas of the Service. Relief staff are informed of these dietary requirements as required.
- The healthy eating message is promoted and positively reinforced amongst families through notice boards, newsletters, information nights, the website and up-to-date materials from recognised authorities.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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- Food is never used to reward or punish children.
- Safe drinking water is readily accessible to children at all times, and educators encourage children to drink water at frequent intervals.
- 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.
- Parents of children under 3 years are informed of their child's food and beverage intake on the Room Register. Educators discuss face-to-face with parents, any concerns about a child who has not eaten well.
- 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 or other cultural food to share. We require a full list of ingredients.
- Educators follow the Service's Expressed Breast Milk (EBM) and Formula – Storing and Heating Procedure when storing and heating babies' bottles.
- The Service is a nut free zone, and no nuts or nut products are served.
- The Service provides staff with appropriate training in safe food handling. They are provided with current information on nutrition for young children, with regard also to cultural preferences.

## 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 wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
	2.1.3	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
	5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included

## Sources

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- Better Health. (2017). *Breast milk – expressing breastmilk*. <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/breastfeeding-expressing-breastmilk> accessed 24 December 2017
- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011

## Further reading and useful websites

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- Australian Breastfeeding Association – <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/> accessed 24 December 2017
- Better Health Channel. (2011). *Fact sheet: Child care and healthy eating*. <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/childcare-and-healthy-eating> accessed 24 December 2017
- 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 24 December 2017
- Nutrition Australia. (2017). *Factsheets*. <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resources> accessed 24 December 2017
- Nutrition Australia – *Promoting health by encouraging food variety and physical activity*. <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic/nutrition-services-early-learning-centres> accessed 24 December 2017
- 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](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/n34.pdf) accessed 24 December 2017
- Queensland Health – <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/> accessed 24 December 2017
- Royal Children’s Hospital Melbourne – <http://www.rch.org.au/home/> accessed 24 December 2017

## Policy review

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The Service 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 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.

### REVIEW DETAILS:

Review Date	Details of Changes
January 2018	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 Feb 2018
April 2018	Reviewed. Minor wording changes.