

# NUTRITION / FOOD / BEVERAGES / DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

## PRINCIPLE

Healthy eating, good nutrition and oral health have a major influence on children's wellbeing and health and a direct impact on their development and growth.

To provide appropriate nutrition to children, promote healthy eating and meet the requirements of the National Quality Standard 2.1.3 and National Legislation, services are to refer to *Healthy eating in the National Quality Standard – A guide for early childhood education and care services* <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/regulation/HealthyEatingNQS.pdf>

The educators, staff and management at our children's services acknowledge the importance of healthy eating and oral health behaviours, which contribute to overall health and wellbeing. This policy confirms our commitment to:

- encourage children to make healthy food and drink choices
- promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle, which includes drinking water, eating healthy food and maintaining oral health.

## DEFINITIONS

**Nutrition** is the process of providing or obtaining the food and beverages necessary for health and growth and development.

**Healthy Eating** is eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day. These are:

- Fruit
- Vegetables and legumes/beans
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese, and alternatives
- Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds.

**'Discretionary'/'Sometimes' foods and drinks** are high in saturated fat, added sugar, and/or added salt. They typically have very little nutritional value and are often processed and packaged.

**Oral Health:** A standard of health of the oral and related tissues that enables an individual to eat, speak and socialise without active disease, discomfort or embarrassment and that contributes to general wellbeing.

**Food Literacy:** Food literacy is "a collection of inter-related knowledge, skills and behaviours required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food to meet (dietary) needs".

## GUIDELINES

### Children' Services will ensure:

1. All children have access to safe drinking water (preferably tap) at all times, and are offered beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day (*Education and Care Services National Regulation 78*) (*Children's Services Regulation 47 – Occasional Care only*).

2. Food or beverages provided to children is nutritious and adequate in quantity, and is chosen having regard to the dietary requirements of individual children taking into account, each child's growth and development needs and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements (*Education and Care Services National Regulation 79*) (*Children's Services Regulation 48– Occasional Care only*).
3. Services that provides food and beverages (other than water) to children display a weekly menu at the service that is accessible to families of children being educated and cared for by the service; and accurately describes the food and beverages to be provided by the service each day (*Education and Care Services National Regulation 80*) (*Children's Services Regulation 49 – Occasional Care only*).
4. Staff/educators, volunteers and students at the service implement adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and disposing of food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service. (*Education and Care Services National Regulation 77*) (*Children's Services Regulation 46 – Occasional Care only*).
5. Staff/educators, volunteers and students are aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances, dietary needs and cultural food requirements. Refer to *Medical Conditions Policy* for management of allergies and intolerances.
6. Child enrolment records include special considerations for the child, such as cultural or religious dietary restrictions, as well as any health- related dietary restrictions (*Education and Care Services National Regulation 160; 162*).
7. Medical Risk Minimisation Plans are developed in consultation with families for children with medical conditions that can be food impacted. Refer to *Medical Conditions Policy*.
8. Ongoing communication is developed and maintained between families, educators, staff and cooks, so that all are aware of children's nutrition and any special dietary requirements.
9. Educators and staff are supported to access professional development and resources to enable them to deliver healthy eating and oral health education.
10. Educators and staff are supported to consume healthy food and drinks and maintain good oral health whilst at work. Staff meetings, celebrations, fundraising and service events will promote healthy food options with discretionary/sometimes food options limited.
11. Healthy eating and oral health information and policy requirements are included in the educator and staff orientation /induction.
12. Healthy eating and oral health is included in the educational program to support children's awareness and understanding of healthy eating and oral health. Children are involved in decision making about healthy food and beverage choices, such as having children participating in cooking experiences and assisting with food preparation.
13. Families are guided in providing healthy food and drink options for their child, where food is brought from home, that is consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines – Refer to (*Appendix 4.1 – Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*).
14. Healthy eating and oral health information is provided to families, such as information about accessing local dental services such as GV Health Dental and Rumbalara Dental Services where children will receive priority access. Recipes and how to create a nutritious meal will be shared with families.
15. Oral hygiene practices are undertaken and promoted at the service when appropriate.
16. A relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes is provided where children are provided adequate time to eat and become involved in social interactions with educators and other children.

17. Staff/educators are encouraged where able to sit with children during mealtimes and role model, implement and encourage healthy eating and nutrition practices.
18. Children are supervised while eating and drinking, and food and drink are not to be used as an incentive.
19. Partnerships are established with relevant organizations and health professionals to support healthy eating and oral health practices where appropriate.
20. This policy is provided to all stakeholders (including management, staff, volunteers, families and children) to provide feedback and input during the review process.

## Long Day Care

### **Children' Services will ensure:**

1. The Feed Australia online menu planning tool is referred to when developing menus  
<https://www.feedaustralia.org.au/online-menu-planning-tool.html>
2. The menu is regularly reviewed using the Feed Australia online menu planning tool to ensure it is adherence with Australian Dietary Guidelines. The menu will be made available to families via Hubhello and displayed clearly within the service.
3. If any Long Day Care programs register with Smiles 4 Miles they are to complete a menu assessment using the Healthy Eating Advisory Service's menu assessment tool, Foodchecker.
4. Food safety education and training is promoted for all staff involved in handling of food and assist with the implementation of the food safety program.
5. Food preparation facilities are available to and accessible by all staff members of the service- to cook or heat food, wash up and refrigerate food as well as suitable eating arrangements for children at the premises.
6. Families are supported to make choices regarding infant feeding, including breast feeding and bottle feeding and are to be provided a supportive environment for mothers to breast feed.
7. The safe handling of breastmilk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming and preparing and bottle feeding. Refer to (*Appendix 14.2 - Safe Handling of Breastmilk and Infant Formula*).
8. Educators complete (*Appendix 14.3 Breastmilk/ Infant Formula Feeding Record*) for each child that is bottle feed.
9. Families are informed of their child's food and beverage intake either by verbal communication, or in a written/electronic form.
10. Babies are never to be left alone when feeding from a bottle as this carries a risk of choking. Babies and older children should never be given bottles to take to their cots or beds, as this can cause tooth decay from the milk sugars and damage teeth. Cups for children over the age of 6 months can be introduced to teach infants the skill of sipping from a cup.

## Related Policies

- Emergency Situations
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Excursions
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases
- Governance and Management of the Service
- Medical Conditions
- Providing a Child Safe Environment

## National Quality Standards - 2.1.3; 6; 7

**Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 – 77, 78, 79, 80,160; 162; 168(2)(a)(i)**

**Children’s Services Regulations 2020 - 46; 47; 48; 49 - Occasional Care only**

## Sources and Reference Tools

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *Education and Care Services National Law 2010*
- *Children’s Services Regulations 2020(OCC only)*
- *Guide to the National Quality Standards*
- *ACECQA – Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements Policy Guidelines*
- *EYLF - Belonging, Being and Becoming (New Version)*
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service –DHHS - Menu planning guidelines for long day care
- *Food Safety Standards. Food Standards Australia New Zealand Food Authority (FSANZ)*  
[www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)
- *DET – Healthy eating in the National Quality Standard*  
<http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-services/healthy-eating-national-quality-standard>
- *Australian Dietary Guidelines*  
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-dietary-guidelines>
- *Get Up and Grow: Health Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood:*  
<https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/phd-gug-staffcarers>
- *Feed Australia* <https://www.feedaustralia.org.au/onlinemenuplanningtool.html>
- *Smiles 4 Miles Program* <https://www.dhsv.org.au/oral-health-programs/smiles4miles>
- *Healthy Eating Advisory Service* <https://heas.health.vic.gov.au/im-working-in/early-childhood-services/>

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