



## 4.09 Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements

### Written By

Narelle Myers

### Aim

Our care and education service will:

- role model healthy eating and activity throughout the day to all children and families
- promote the six key Munch and Move messages to promote healthy, active habits in children from a young age
- 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
- support families in educating their children about healthy food choices

Research has shown that one in five pre-schoolers are either overweight or obese. By the time children in NSW reach kindergarten, almost 18% are either overweight or obese. The *2007 National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey* found that the dietary patterns of many Australian children are less than optimal with high consumption of salt and saturated fat, and low consumption of fruit and vegetables.

Given that children are increasingly spending long periods of time in centre-based care, early childhood educators can role model healthy eating and encourage young children to make healthier food choices. This will contribute to the prevention of weight problems in children, allowing children to thrive physically, socially and intellectually, and in turn contribute to prevention of nutrition-related chronic diseases.

### Strategies

#### **Professional development of staff and educators:**

- All educators will attend *Munch and Move* professional development training or receive similar training and information
- 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 service:**

### **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 and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements;
- Ensure that the service displays an accessible menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided by the service each day; and
- 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 service.

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

- All children will 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 service displays an accessible menu which accurately describes the food and beverages provided by the service each day;
- The menu is diverse and will reflect the cultural backgrounds of families and the local community;
- Educators and staff implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children; and
- 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.

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

- Healthy eating is promoted through role modelling and eating with the children;
- 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;
- Staff will adhere to best practices around safe storage and heating of both expressed breast milk and formula; and
- They implement adequate health and hygiene practices and use safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children; and
- 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.

### Supporting families

- Staff and educators will support families' choices regarding infant feeding, including breastfeeding and bottle feeding;
- The service 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 well-being of their child/ren.
- The service will provide families with daily information about their child's intake of food and drinks throughout the day.

### 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 identity;
- Families will be provided with current information about recommended guidelines around dietary requirements, screen time and physical activity.

### Policy Availability

This nutrition/food/beverages policy will be readily accessible to all staff, families and visitors, and ongoing feedback on this policy will be invited.

### Review

Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of the nutrition/food/beverages policy regularly. Updated information will be incorporated as needed.

### Evaluation

The service offers appropriate and healthy food and beverages to all children and meal times will be relaxed and model healthy eating to children.

#### Relevant Legislation

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

#### Resources & References

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

#### Date Adopted:

October 2017

#### Review Date:

October 2020