

## FOOD, BEVERAGE AND NUTRITION POLICY

### Rationale

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Child Care Centre (TQEHCCCC) is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment of the highest standard for children, educators and parents.

Our centre recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care.

Young children are acquiring new skills and learning about the world around them and this includes establishing healthy eating habits. The eating habits formed in early childhood significantly influence our eating habits as adults.

Foods offered to children will be reflective of their cultural, religious beliefs and specific dietary requirements.

We are committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in the National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings as outlined in the Get Up and Grow resources.

### National Regulations

Regulations	77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
	78	Food and beverages
	79	Service providing food and beverages
	80	Weekly menu
	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

### NQS

QA2	2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle - Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
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### EYLF

LO 3.2	Children take increasingly responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.
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### Scope

This Policy applies to the Nominated Supervisor, The Board, Educators, Families, Children, Students and Volunteers.

## Related Policies

Food Handling and Hygiene Policy  
Dental Care Policy  
Orientation and Enrolment Policy  
Inclusion Policy  
Medications and Medical Conditions Policy  
Student and Volunteer Policy

## Implementation

### Provision of a Healthy Menu

- A variety of nutritious food will be incorporated into the centre's menu's including:
  - Fruit and vegetables
  - Beans and legumes
  - Grain (cereal) foods, breads
  - Milk, yoghurt, cheese and cream
  - Lean meat and chicken, fish,
  - Eggs, and legumes/beans
  - Foods low in added sugar, salt and fats.
  - Water will be available at all times throughout the day.
  
- Food provided is consistent with Eat for Health: Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guidelines for Get up and Grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood.
  
- The menu aims to provide at least 50% of the recommended dietary intake of key nutrients for children in child care.

### To support this:

- The centre cook will plan and provide seasonal menus on a four-week rotation which will be reviewed by the Nominated Supervisor on a yearly basis.
  
- The weekly menu provides for beverages, morning and afternoon tea and lunch meals.
  
- Displaying the weekly menu on the front entrance door, kitchen door and near the daily information charts in all children's rooms, where it can be easily viewed by parents.

- The weekly menu will be balanced and incorporate lean meat, poultry, fish, legumes and vegetarian meals
- Menus will incorporate meals from a variety of cultural backgrounds to reflect the diverse backgrounds of the children attending the centres.
- The menu provides children with the opportunity to experience a variety of foods with a range of flavours, colours, textures and aromas, such as foods from different cultures.
- We will communicate with families about their children's nutrition needs and meeting other food allergy and dietary considerations.
- Educators aim to accommodate children's individual eating requirements whenever possible and additional food is available to children who are hungry.
- At all times food provided will be developmentally appropriate and meet the social and cultural needs of children.
- Water will be provided at all meal times and be available and accessible to all children throughout the day.
- Food will not be used as a punishment or reward whether by its provision or denial.
- Children will have opportunity to have some choices.
- Our centre encourages birthday celebrations and we ask families to provide vanilla, soy vanilla, lactose free vanilla ice cream or 99% fruit juice ice blocks as a birthday cake alternative.
- Families bringing in food into the centre for social events will be asked to label food including a list of all ingredients. Nuts and nut derived products are potentially fatal to some children, so we ask families to follow the centre's 'nut free' approach. (Refer to Medications and Medical Conditions Policy).
- On enrolment, parents will provide the centre with details of their child's special dietary requirements such as food allergies or intolerances, cultural, religion or food preferences.
- Children with special dietary requirements will be provided for and their relevant information with photo attachment will be displayed in the kitchen.
- Families are reminder that due to the special dietary needs of some children within the centre that no food or drink items are brought into the centre.
- All educators will undergo yearly Food Safety Training.

- Educators follow all regulatory food handling and safety practices at meal times, in line with the current regulatory requirements for food storage, food handling, preparation, disposal and food safety training. (Refer to Food Hygiene Policy).

### Special Dietary Needs

- The requirements of children with special dietary needs (allergies, religious beliefs) will be respected and followed by all educators and must be provided to the centre in writing.
- When a child's alternate dietary requirements are due to either a suspected or confirmed medical condition (such as an allergy or intolerance) confirmation by a Health Care Professional (Doctor, Nutritionists or Dietician), detailing possible side-effects, symptoms and a proposed Action Plan is required.
- Parents or Legal Guardians with children who have diagnosed food allergies, food intolerances and special diets will consult with the Nominated Supervisor to develop individual management plans.
- When a child is on a special diet for non-medical reasons the family will be asked to complete a Modified Diet Care Plan. (See Attached Plan).
- It is the family's responsibility to provide accurate and relevant information including notification when children's particular dietary requirements are no longer required.
- Children with food allergies and intolerances will have a detailed **Action Plan** which will be discussed with educators. It will be clearly identified with the child's photo and relevant information which will be located in each child's particular room.
- Ensure all relief educators, staff, students and volunteers are made aware of the children with food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary needs and cultural preferences.
- Educators and staff supervise/monitor the children during meal times always referring to food allergy chart.
- Update allergy charts yearly or more often if required and notify the cook of changes such as new children enrolled and during transition times.
- The centre is nut free aware and we ask parents to follow the centre's nut free approach.

- Educators and staff participate in Anaphylaxis Training as a part of their First aid training.

### **A Positive and Safe Eating Environment**

#### **We support safe eating practices throughout the centre by ensuring that:**

- Food should be an appropriate size and texture for the age and ability of the child so they can easily chew and swallow their food.
- Children will not be forced to eat and not be given or have access to food that may cause choking.
- Children and educators will remain seated while eating and/ or drinking.
- Children are supervised at all times while children are eating and/or drinking.
- Ensure infants are fed individually by educators.
- For babies, all meat and chicken is lean and will be cut into bite sized pieces.
- Hard fruits and vegetables will be cooked or grated before being given to children over 2years and will be mashed and pureed for children under 2 years.
- Unsafe foods such as popcorn, celery and apples and raw carrot will not be provided; whole grapes and whole tomatoes will be cut into smaller sizes for children over 2 years.
- Fruit skin will be removed for Babies and Toddlers.
- Food and drink will not be used as an incentive or reward for children.
- Each child's appetite will be respected and if a child is not hungry or is satisfied, educators will not be coerced to eat.
- Serving smaller portions and encouraging children to chew properly and not rush.
- Ensure age and developmentally appropriately utensils and furniture will be provided for each child.

#### **Educators promote a positive, supportive and social eating environment by:**

- Creating a relaxed and pleasant environment where educators can sit with the children and role model healthy food and drink choices and engage in meaningful conversations with children about the foods and drinks provided.

- Mealtime environments will be set up in a way which is inviting to children and provides opportunities for social interaction amongst the children and educators, allowing them to have enough time to enjoy their meal.
- Encouraging older toddler and kindy children to assist to set and clear the table and to serve their own food and drink; providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem.
- Children will be encouraged and supported to try new foods and will be offered choices at mealtimes and snacks.
- Respecting children's food preferences, and encouraging children to try different foods.
- Celebrating and discussing cultural food events and practices with children.

**Educators promote children's understanding of food, nutrition and hygiene through:**

- Provide a curriculum which includes a variety of learning experiences which promotes children's healthy eating; including the importance of oral health, physical activity, the body's food requirements, origins of food, cultural and religious aspects of food.
- Encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences through gardening, food preparation and cooking, dramatic play experiences, books and excursions.
- Discuss and role model food safety and handling practices with children and embed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in everyday activities and experiences.
- Provide families with daily information about their child's food and beverage intake and share any concerns about their child's eating.
- Educators and staff are supported to access professional development and resources to enable them to deliver healthy eating and oral health education.

**Communicating with Families**

Nominated Supervisor, Educators and Centre Cook will communicate effectively with families about their child's nutrition by:

- Displaying the weekly menu on the centre's front entrance door, kitchen door and near the daily information charts in all children's rooms, where it can be easily viewed by parents.

- Advising parents and legal guardians if their children are not eating well and discussing and planning for their child's individual food preferences.
- Welcoming feedback or contributions to the menu planning.
- Sharing nutritious recipes with families through centre newsletter and centre recipe book.
- Documenting the food eaten daily by the children for the parents to read.
- Provide a copy of the centre's Food and Nutrition Policy and discussing it with new families prior to enrolment.
- Encourage parents to the best of our ability to continue our healthy eating message in their homes.
- Encourage families to provide healthy food for their children at home which is consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and display nutritional information for families and keep them regularly updated.
- Displaying general information about healthy food and nutrition on the noticeboard in the rooms and in the centre's newsletter.
- Encouraging families to share information regarding their religious values and /or cultural traditions which may be observed in the centre with the serving of special food.

### **Food from Home**

- Families are requested not to bring food or drink into the centre for their child, or to be left in their child's bag. Bringing food from home, into the centre, maybe accessible to other children and can provide a risk to those children who have food allergies or intolerances
- The centre provides a range of nutritious and culturally diverse foods and water is always available and accessible for children.

### **Supporting appropriate Dental Health and Hygiene**

- The centre will actively encourage good dental health practices including eating and drinking habits.
- Children will be encouraged to drink water when thirsty and to remain hydrated. This also helps reduce the acidity in the mouth to a neutral pH level and removes some of the remaining food particles on the teeth and gums.

- Providing food at snack times can help protect the teeth from decay e.g. milk, cheese and yogurt. These foods will increase the levels of calcium in the saliva, protecting the teeth.
- The centre will ensure that children who drink a milk bottle finish their drink before going to sleep. The prolonged contact of fluids such as cordials, juices and to a lesser extent milk with the teeth will increase the risk of dental caries (decay). (**Refer to Dental Policy**).

### **Guidelines for Infant Feeding**

Ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and educators are aware of:

- Procedures for preparing, heating and storing bottles of formula and breast milk.
- Adhere to the procedure for the safe storage and heating of food provided in bottles.

**Our centre adheres to the guidelines for children less than 12 months:**

#### **Breast Milk**

The centre supports breastfeeding mothers at the centre by providing a quiet and private area for the mother and child and the safe storage of breast milk on the premises.

#### **Breast Milk Procedure**

Breast milk that has been expressed should be brought to the service in a clean sterile container labelled with the date the milk was expressed and the child's name.

#### **Educators will:**

- Place the breast milk in the fridge or freezer as soon as families arrive at the centre.
- Warm and/or thaw breast milk by standing in a container of warm water; NOT IN THE MICROWAVE.
- Test the temperature of the milk by testing several drops on your wrist, before giving it to the child.
- Left over breast milk that has been heated will be discarded and not re-heated.
- Always bottle-feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position.
- Always supervise babies while drinking and eating - ensuring safe bottle-feeding and eating practices at all times.

#### **Infant Formula**



- Formula bottles must be prepared by families or families can supply pre-measured boiled water and formula in a dispenser. All containers and bottles must be clearly labelled.
- Bottles will be store in the fridge clearly labelled.
- The contents of partially used bottles will be discarded after one hour and any used formula will be discarded.
- Educators will always supervise babies while drinking and eating, ensuring safe bottle feeding and eating practices at all times.

### **Warming Bottles**

- All bottles will be heated in a container of hot, not boiling water, for no longer than 10 minutes.
- Bottles will not be heated in the microwave.
- After heating, bottles are gently shaken to distribute the heat evenly and the temperature is checked by testing several drops on the inside of the educator's wrist.

### **Introducing solids**

To meet the infant's increasing nutritional and developmental needs; solid foods will be offered at around 6 months, however it may commence earlier after consultation between parents and educators.

Infants will only be fed foods they have been introduced to previously at home.

The centre menu follows the recommend schedule for introducing solids which will include iron-rich foods and food of the right texture for the age and developmental stage of the children.

### **Signs your baby is ready to move on to solid foods are:**

- Good head and neck control and can sit upright when supported
- Shows an interest in food or other people eating (or reaches for food), or tries to put things their mouth.
- Opens their mouth when you offer them food on a spoon.
- Seems to want more food, even after a full formula feed.

### **Suitable fluids for all children**

- Breast Milk, infant formula and boiled water will be offered to babies less than 12 months.
- Children over 12 months will be offered full cream milk and alternatives if dairy free or water
- No soft drinks, cordial, full strength fruit juice or sweetened milk will be given to children.

## References

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>

Early Years Learning Framework

<https://docs.education.gov.au/>

Guide to National Quality

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf>

Promoting Healthy Eating and Nutrition in Child Care Services 2012: <https://www.ecrh.edu.au/>

Eat for Health: Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guidelines for Get up and Grow:

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>

Conningham Community Child care Centre Inc (policy adapted from)

SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership, (second edition) 2005: *Planning Nutritious Child Care Centre Menus and Guidelines for Food and Nutrition Policy in Child Care Centres.*

Get up and Grow Staff Handbook: <https://www1.health.gov.au/>

Department of Education, Training Employment (2001), Health Support planning in Schools, Preschools and Childcare

Services: <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/>

Childcare Centre Desktop. <https://www.childcarecentredesktop.com.au/>

Goolwa Children's Centre Nutrition and Food Policy: <http://goolwacc.sa.edu.au/>

Reviewed	Reviewer	Approved	Next review
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