

Nutrition, food, drink, and dietary requirements policy



ANGLE VALE
preschool

Purpose

We believe that early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong, healthy eating habits which can benefit children in three ways:

- Nutritious foods provide sustained energy to the body, which is vital for positive engagement in learning experiences
- Healthy eating maximises children's growth, development, and good health
- Establishing healthy habits minimises the risk of diet related diseases later in life

Under the [Education and Care Services National Regulations \(2011 SI 653\) - NSW Legislation](#), all early childhood education and care services must have policies and procedures in place in relation to nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements.

Policy principles

The principles we apply to our decisions and practices about nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements include:

- We prioritise children's health, safety and wellbeing. This includes safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food as well as providing a safe and positive environment for consuming food and drink brought from home.
- We promote a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating and physical activity appropriate for each child.
- We value and respect each family's culture, customs and religious traditions, and support children's dietary requirements, food and drink restrictions and food preferences.
- We support children to develop a strong sense of wellbeing and self-determination in how they view and consume food and drink as a core step of learning to self-manage their personal wellbeing.
- We support children and families understanding and access to food and drink appropriate for age and in sufficient quantities and quality to sustain energy through the preschool day.
- We offer progressive eating times, to respect children's individual appetites and provide a more relaxed mealtime atmosphere. When children are trusted to eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full, they learn essential self-regulation skills.

Nutrition, food and drink practices and strategies

Promote a positive eating and food learning environment

We will:

- Role model and promote positive eating practices, including foods consistent with the [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#) at mealtimes.
- Support individual children's health, development and growth, including taking into consideration the impacts of medical conditions and disability on children's nutrition, food, drink and dietary needs.
- Support children and families' specific cultural, spiritual and religious values and requirements.
- Ensure children have access to drinking water at all times. For example, with access to a water cooler for re-filling drink bottles.
- Support sufficient food availability to meet children's dietary requirements. For example, by offering the breakfast café and shared fruit in the afternoons.
- Use mealtimes and routines to engage in conversations with children about their food, and to help them to recognise when they are hungry or full.
- Create a relaxed eating environment where children have sufficient time to enjoy their food and social interaction with others.

Communicate positive and culturally responsive food practices with families

We will:

- Consult with families about individual children's developmental needs, dietary requirements and dietary restrictions (including, health and medical needs, food and drink allergies, food and drink intolerances and developmental, cultural and religious food restrictions). This information will be included in the children's enrolment records.
- Support the development of inclusive health support planning to meet children's nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements and eating environment through implementing the department's [Health support planning for children and students in education and care settings](#)
- Inform families of the preschools' risk minimisation strategies to support children with anaphylaxis, food and drink allergies, food and drink intolerances and restrictions.
- Inform and support families to understand that children's voice and agency is a part of the educational program, including mealtimes and other food and drink related experiences.
- Consult with families about their cultural, spiritual and religious values and requirements to support individual children's needs and all children's cultural understandings.
- Communicate relevant, informative and evidence-based nutrition, food and drink information to families in your newsletters, discussions, and during orientation.

Provide hygienic and safe food practices

We will:

- Ensure children and staff implement safe hygiene and hand washing practices and safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and eating food.
- Actively supervise children at all times when they are eating and drinking, ensure they are seated and provide adequate time to eat and drink, to minimise risk of choking. Choking hazards (food types and sizes) will be considered when preparing, cooking or sharing foods with children, appropriate to age and ability.
- Ensure all staff comply with the department's [Anaphylaxis and allergies procedure](#) including promoting an allergy-aware environment and developing and implementing risk minimisation strategies.
- Ensure food is stored within food safe limits. For example, through asking families to provide food using insulated lunch boxes and ice-bricks.
- Role model and engage children in conversations about hygienic and safe food practices. This will include encouraging children to sit whilst eating and discouraging children from sharing or handling other children's food.

Create an inclusive and family-friendly environment

We will:

Provide a supportive environment for families to feed their babies and young children, including comfortable seating and facilities to heat bottles.

Promote environmentally responsible practices

We will:

- Promote environmentally responsible and sustainable food and drink practices for food and drink bought to our preschool. For example, through composting, collecting food scraps to feed to the chickens, recycling and encouraging nude food.
- Encourage engagement and opportunities to extend children's understanding about nature and the environment and how food is grown, hunted, gathered, processed and prepared. This includes looking after our chickens, tending the garden.

Roles and responsibilities

Preschool director

Lead the development and implementation of this policy in consultation with families and educators and ensure it reflects your preschool community and that it is accessible and communicated to all families and educators.

Ensure compliance with the department's related policies and procedures including:

- [Supporting children and students with anaphylaxis and severe allergies](#)
- [First aid procedure](#)

- [Health support planning for children and students in education and care settings](#)

Respond to instances of variations in practices to this policy on a case-by-case, ensuring each child's developmental and cultural needs are supported and families' decisions and food choices are respected.

Support educators to access professional development opportunities to broaden their understanding of children's nutrition, eating behaviours and creating positive and safe eating environments and learning.

Educators

Role model food safety practices, healthy eating and drinking practices and support families understanding of the preschool's approach to nutrition and healthy eating.

Work with other educators, families, and health professionals to implement action plans to support children with specific dietary, eating and drinking requirements, including children with developmental, health and medical conditions.

Raise any issues or concerns regarding implementation of this policy with the preschool director.

Families

Provide information to the preschool director about their child's dietary requirements and health support needs, together with the appropriate and current documentation, equipment and medication.

Support implementation of the preschool's policy.

Seek information and support from our educators about the preschool's nutrition and food practices and raise any concerns with educators or the preschool director.

Governing council

Endorse this policy.

Supporting information

[Nutrition and dietary requirements in preschool](#)

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