

Bertram Hawker

Kindergarten: Nutrition, food, drink, and dietary requirements policy



Purpose

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.

As part of our commitment to children's health, safety, and wellbeing, we role-model food safety and hygiene practices, as well as supporting healthy food and drink choices according to each child's needs. (Reference: [ACECQA Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary guidelines policy guidelines](#))

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.

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, by having a water station with drink bottles available all day; having a water bottle filling station; routine reminder at breaks and mealtimes to drink water; and offering drinks appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis.

- Support sufficient food availability to meet children's dietary requirements. For example, having extra supplies to supplement lunchboxes on a need basis and negotiation with families for emerging feeding issues.
- Provide opportunities for children to experience a range of food and to learn about healthy food choices from educators and other children, such as through tasting, touching, smelling, cooking, healthy lifestyle play-based learning, and cultural experiences.
- Incorporate children's choices and decision making into educational programming and at mealtimes, including learning to prepare and eat food safely, food choice and amounts, balancing appetite needs.
- Create a relaxed eating environment where children have sufficient time to enjoy their food and social interaction with others. We 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.

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 kindergartens' risk minimisation strategies to support children with anaphylaxis, food and drink allergies, food and drink intolerances and restrictions. [Supporting children and students with anaphylaxis and severe allergies](#)
- Inform and support families to understand that children's voice and agency are 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.

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. Lunch tables and picnic mats are cleaned after use, with pink cloths that are only used for food surfaces and floor mop that is only used for picnic mats. Lunch tables are also wiped prior to using for food purposes. We support children's and visitors' awareness of hand hygiene

and encourage handwashing on arrival and before and after handling food. Cloths and mop heads are washed weekly. Refer to the cleaning routine displayed in the Induction Folder and next to the art sink area.

- 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. We encourage families to use insulated lunch boxes and ice-bricks. We store lunchboxes inside a temperature-controlled environment.

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. Optional content – For example through composting, recycling; reducing and discouraging packaging, single use plastic waste, re-usable food storage containers and bringing own water bottle.
- 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 or principal

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 or principal.

Families

Provide information to the preschool director or principal 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 or principal.

Governing council

Endorse this policy.

Supporting information

Provide links to other related policies and information. You can use links from the [Nutrition and dietary requirements in preschool](#) EDi page

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