

Nutrition, food, drink, and dietary requirements policy

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. Partner with families and community to create a positive eating and food learning environment. For example, invite family and community members to share garden produce, bush tucker fruit or surplus foods to provide children with seasonal snack table and / or ingredients to prepare and share.
- Ensure children have access to drinking water at all times. By having a water station with drink bottles available all day; routine reminder at breaks and mealtimes to drink water.
- Support sufficient food availability to meet children's dietary requirements. Extra supplies to supplement lunchboxes on a need's basis and negotiation with families for emerging feeding issues.

Optional content

- 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.
- 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.
- Not use food to reward or to address behaviours of concern.
- Create a relaxed eating environment where children have sufficient time to enjoy their food and social interaction with others.
- Outline how your preschool will celebrate days of significance including children's birthdays. For example, we will celebrate children's birthdays by singing the happy birthday song; if birthday items are bought in to share, they may be offered to families at the end of a session. This helps promote our healthy eating message as well as minimising any intolerance or allergy risk.

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. Strategies your preschool implements to create an allergy-aware environment such as, at times the service may ask that some food or drink products are not brought in to the preschool (refer to the department's [Supporting children and students with anaphylaxis and severe allergies](#)); information will be provided to families about ingredients used during cooking experiences.
- 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.

Provide information to families on the types of food and drinks recommended for children's lunchboxes. For example using the department [Packing the lunch box](#) resource or alternative resources and links to resources.

- Communicate relevant, informative and evidence-based nutrition, food and drink information to families in your newsletters, discussions, during orientation.
- Consult with Aboriginal families, education and support workers and invite local community Elders/members to support individual children's cultural needs and all children's cultural understandings.
- Consult with culturally and linguistically diverse families and provide access to interpreting or translator services as required.

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. Through supplying hand washing stations, hand sanitiser and hand hygiene posters.
- 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. Through using insulated lunch boxes and ice-bricks, refrigeration, or storing lunchboxes inside a temperature-controlled environment.
- Support staff children's and visitor's awareness of hand hygiene.

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

- 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 vegetables in 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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