

Karcultaby Preschool 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.

Karcultaby Preschool promotes safe and healthy eating habits in accordance with the Australian Dietary Guidelines, the “Get Up and Grow”: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings, and the Department for Education’s wellbeing strategy.

We recognise that early childhood is a critical period for developing lifelong healthy eating habits, which benefit children in several ways:

1. In the short term, healthy eating maximises growth, development, activity levels and general health, while reducing the risk of illness.
2. In the long term, it minimises the risk of diet-related diseases later in life.
3. Good nutrition supports overall health and wellbeing, which are essential for positive engagement in learning experiences.
4. Health and community professionals recommend children eat a variety of foods, including “crunch and sip” fruit and vegetable snacks, to promote speech and dental health.

Therefore:

- Staff at this preschool model and promote healthy eating behaviours.
- Food and drink are consumed in a safe, supportive environment for all children.
- Parents and caregivers are encouraged to provide nutritious foods and drinks guided by the Australian Dietary Guidelines and site policy, with consideration for individual health, allergy, intolerance, and cultural or religious 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 aim to deepen children's understanding of the relationship between food and our environment.

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 always have access to drinking water.
- Support sufficient food availability to meet children's dietary requirements, by offering extra supplies to supplement lunchboxes on a needs basis.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 children at the end of the day. 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.
- 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. Preschool children engaged in decisions about meals and routines and offering choices of 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. Provide families the department [Packing the lunch box](#) resource.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to follow the preschool's nutrition food drink dietary requirements policy and to speak with staff if they have any questions or concerns.

A healthy lunch box may include:

- Sandwiches or wraps with nutritious fillings
- Fresh fruit
- Yoghurt
- Vegetable sticks
- Savoury rice or pasta
- Hummus
- Pita bread
- Salad wraps
- Rice cakes with savoury toppings

Foods such as chocolate, confectionery, sweetened dairy desserts (e.g. custard), and highly processed snack foods are discouraged.

Healthy Snack Time:

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to provide:

- Fresh fruits or vegetables
- Cheese
- Savoury sandwiches
- Air-popped popcorn
- Dried fruit (in small amounts)
- Plain dry crackers

Please note that, due to food safety regulations, we are unable to heat food for lunch. Lunch boxes are placed on the bench upon arrival to support children's agency and ease of access.

- Communicate to families that healthy and safe eating and drinking practices at established mealtimes is a goal the preschool is working towards. This may be communicated regularly or discussed individually as appropriate.
- Communicate relevant, informative and evidence-based nutrition, food and drink information to families in preschool newsletters, discussions, during orientation or by hosting information sessions.

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, by 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.
- Role model and engage children in conversations about hygienic and safe food practices. This will include encouraging children to use their own utensils, encouraging sitting and discouraging children from sharing or handling other children's food and utensils.

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. This involves composting, recycling; reducing and discouraging packaging, single use plastic waste, re-usable food storage containers and bringing own water bottle.

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

Policy Endorsed:

KAS Governing Council 17/06/2026

Review date: 16/06/2028