

POLICY

Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Policy

Purpose

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) services are required by legislation to ensure the provision of healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the Australian Dietary Guidelines (**National Regulation 78-79**). It is essential that ECEC services partner with families to provide education about nutrition and promote healthy eating habits for young children to positively influence their health and wellbeing. Dietary and healthy eating habits formed in the early years are shown to continue into adulthood and can reduce the risk factors associated with adult chronic conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Implementation

Service Commitment

Emanuel Woollahra Preschool recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development and wellbeing of young children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children in our care. This policy affirms our position on the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in our care and the promotion and education of healthy choices for optimum nutrition.

Our service is committed to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages outlined in the NSW Health's Munch & Move program into our curriculum and to support the National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings outlined in the Get Up & Grow resources.

Further, Emanuel Woollahra Preschool recognises the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that the ECEC service has an important role in encouraging, supporting and educating families in healthy eating.

Strategies

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Afternoon Tea

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for afternoon tea snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain products and dairy products.
- Plan and display the service menu (at least two weeks at a time) that is based on sound menu planning principles and meets the daily nutritional needs of children whilst in care (i.e. caring for Children 'Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning').
- Vary the snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food options.

Where food is brought from home:

Parent's supply morning tea and lunch daily:

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes (i.e. caring for Children 'Lunchbox Checklist for Food Brought from Home for 2 to 5 year olds').
- Encourage children to eat a variety of the nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, vegetables, fruit, cheese and yoghurt.
- Encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat.
- Discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, and fruit filled bars.
- Emanuel Woollahra Preschool is NUT and MEAT FREE

POLICY

Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Policy

All services:

- Ensure water is readily available (both indoors and outdoors) for children to consume throughout the day (**National Regulation 78**).
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements and consult with families to develop individual management plans (**National Regulation 79**).
- Ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking. Ensure that food is appropriately sized according to development and age.
- Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Always supervise children while eating and drinking.
- Promote good oral health through learning experiences and daily 'swish and swallow' practice.
- Ensure any fundraising promotes healthy or active lifestyles and advocates for children's wellbeing.

Provide age appropriate food and drinks to children that have been stored, prepared and served in a safe and hygienic manner to promote hygienic food practices

- Ensure tongs are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- Children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, warm running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- Food is stored and served at safe temperatures i.e. below 5oC or above 60oC.
- Use separate cutting boards; utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods.
- Children are discouraged from handling other children's food and utensils.
- Ensure staff handling food attend relevant training courses and share knowledge with all educators.

Provide a positive eating environment that is relaxed, social and reflects cultural and family values

- Ensure that educators sit with the children at meal and snack times to role model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided.
- Recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through strong partnerships with families and community.
- Create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children.
- Encourage preschool-aged children to help set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink – providing opportunities for them to develop independence, confidence and self-esteem.
- Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats.
- Be patient with messy or slow eaters.
- Encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat.
- Never use food as a reward or withhold food from children for behaviour management purposes.

Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood education and care staff and families about healthy food and drink choices, including trying new healthy foods

- Foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through daily discussions, displays, and intentionally planned or spontaneous related learning experiences throughout our service curriculum.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for all educators and staff members responsible for providing food and drinks to the children to participate in regular professional development opportunities to broaden their knowledge and understanding of children's nutritional requirements.
- Provide opportunities for families to attend information sessions related to children's nutrition and wellbeing.

POLICY

Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Policy

Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the service

- Provide a copy of the Nutrition Policy to all families upon orientation at the service.
- Involve families in the review of this policy (procedure).
- Have regular communication with families about their child's eating habits and any concerns that the service might have.
- Request that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the service, and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate resolution so that children's individual dietary needs are met.
- Communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the service, including related professional development, and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.
- Communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on appropriate food and drinks to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

Responsibilities of the Approved Provider

- Ensure the service operates in line with the Children Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Ensure that the service implements adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.
- Must ensure that the Nominated Supervisor of the service and any staff members and volunteers of the service implement adequate health and hygiene practices as well as safe food handling, preparing and storing of food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for (**National Regulation 77**).
- Must ensure that the food and beverages provided to children being educated and cared for at the service, are nutritious and adequate in quantity. Approved Provider must also ensure that the food and beverages chosen meet the individual needs and dietary requirements including development and cultural, religious or health requirements of each child (**National Regulation 79**).
- Must ensure that the weekly menu is displayed in an area that is accessible to families and that is accurate describing the food and beverages offered to the children each day (**National Regulation 80**).

Responsibilities of the Nominated Supervisor

- Ensure adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food are implemented at the service to minimise risks to children (**National Regulation 77**).
- Ensure children being cared for by the service have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day (**National Regulation 78(2)**).
- Ensure that, where food and beverages are supplied by the service, they are nutritious and adequate in quantity chosen with regard to the dietary requirements of individual children.

Responsibilities of the Educators

- Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Policy.
- Ensure children's individual dietary needs are adhered to.
- Provide positive meal time experiences for children.
- Respect the individual needs and choices of children.
- Actively supervise children during meal times.

POLICY

Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Policy

- Adhere to the services Hygiene Policy.
- Water is to be served with lunch meals.
- Where children are hungry outside of eating times, they should be provided with something small to tide over until meal time.

Responsibilities of the Families

- Communicate regularly with educators/staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements. and dietary needs, including food preferences.
- Contribute menu ideas and recipes.
- Share any concerns about your child's eating habits with the educators.

Emanuel Woollahra Preschool is NUT FREE and MEAT FREE

Legislation and Sources

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

Children (Education and Care Service National Law Application) Act 2010 (NSW)

<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

Department of Education - <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care>

Department of Health - <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/publications/publishing.nsf/Content/nhsc-guidelines~aus-guide-healthy-eating>

Early Childhood Australia - <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/parent-resources/childrens-health-nutrition/>

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) - http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf

Education and Care Services National Regulations (Children (Education and Care Services))

Get up & Grow Resource – Department of Health and Ageing

National Quality Framework (NQF) - <http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/>

Related Telephone Numbers

- Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate 1800-619-113
- NSW Health 9301-9000

Review

Date Reviewed: 2 September 19

Next Review Date: 2 September 20